

THE PERSPECTIVE

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The Sprightly and Most Noble Chancellors of the High Council of the Perspective

Megan Kennedy, Leftmost Chancellor

Eran Feintuch, Most Beardliest Chancellor

Dinusha Warusavitharana, Most Accentric Chancellor

WHEN PLASTER FIGHTS BACK: MY KATRINA SPRING BREAK

By Megan Kennedy

Most of the time, on holiday breaks, I loaf around at home in St. Louis, play with my mom's dog, watch the Food Network and pretend I'm actually going to touch some sort of homework-like task. I generally return back to these hallowed halls of Truman slightly more well-rested, well-fed and behind in my homework, as so many do. This year, however, I decided to forgo the comforts of home and embark on an adventure of cold showers, cold hot dogs, toxic mold, traffic violations and crowbars. This year, I went to New Orleans.

The trip was organized under the umbrella of Campus Crusade for Christ, but it wasn't a particularly religious venture. The goal was to break stuff—to gut flood-damaged houses so the owners could begin rebuilding. Commercial gutting can run several thousand dollars even for a small house, but it doesn't require any particular skills or training,

just a crowbar or a hammer and an overhand swing. Oh, and an OSHA/NIOSH approved N-95 or N-100 respirator mask, so the black mold doesn't melt your lungs. And possibly a Tyvek body suit. Tetanus shots help, too.

According to the Crusade organizers, 4000 college kids from across the country participated last week, including 108 from Truman. My work group spent all week gutting a home in the Broadmoor neighborhood, where water rose over eight feet after the levee breaches. Other groups worked in St. Bernard Parish southeast of the city, where all but one building was severely damaged by the flooding and an oil spill had contaminated whole neighborhoods. After several diversions due to lack of space, we ended up staying at the Grand Palace Hotel on Canal Street, which flooded only four feet deep and boasted mattresses, broken windows, mildewy closets and intermittent plumbing. This wasn't the worst place we could've stayed, though, and the staff did put up with a lot of shit from us, includ-

ing having 4000 college students camped out in the lounge to await FEMA's gourmet meals, such as cold hot dogs, crunchy rice and a thin red gruel they attempted to pass off as chili. It looked almost as dangerous as the mold.

Gutting isn't particularly difficult: you have to take out all the furniture, take up all the flooring, and then tear down the walls until all that's left is the studs. The ceiling has to come down, too, if it's become moldy. Gutting is, however, hard work, just because of all the whacking and ripping and dragging involved. Plus, plaster walls don't like being hit, and fight back, usually by falling on you. I guess it's a sort of mutual assured destruction strategy. They didn't count on us having goggles, however, or nifty Tyvek suits courtesy of the National Missionary Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, who warned us

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MAGNETIC POETRY: ANONYMOUS STUDENT WORK

Dream of beauty you peaches
who lust for drool

The egg said go on the winding
road with a friend
& the vision no juice or milk can
recall

An apparatus
Shows true
Forestly love

HOW DANIEL TUCKER HAS RUINED MY LIFE

By "Anonymous"

This is no ordinary letter, describing no ordinary problem, which was caused by no ordinary person. In the proud history of my almost one-year stint as a Writing Consultant, I have never experienced such a strong desire to yell loudly than I do on Wednesdays at 7:00 am when the jarring sound of my alarm jolts me awake. And when I am jolted awake, don't think for a moment that I am alone, oh no! There is a face in my head and a voodoo doll on my desk which reminds me of why it is that I am awake.

You all know the name, you all know the face, but if I were to tell you that one among us is responsible for the ruin of your every other Wednesday morning, could you guess who it was? I'll tease you no longer with my rhetorical questions when we all know that it is he, the one, the only, Daniel Tucker!

For those of you who may not be convinced that a revolution is due on the behalf of this very not-team player, I beg you read on, and be educated.

When I say I experience a strong desire to yell loudly, I am sincere, but I cannot yell! I cannot because I would wake up my roommate and then there would be trouble. Unlike Daniel, I try to avoid trouble; thereby I must stifle my natural reactions and my freedom of speech and vol-

ume! This has caused me a great deal of stress and a mild stutter.

Furthermore, as I drop off into sleep throughout my classes, my grades must certainly be falling which has a direct causal link to the time at which I wake every other Wednesday; (never mind the all-nighters I pull of my own accord and the mornings I rise before the sun to compensate for a tardy start on a mega paper) thinking of how best to incite his ruin. I become crazed, obsessed, I cannot focus on daily tasks, my hygiene is not-existent, all I can do is battle with that voodoo doll (which by the way is very impressively reminiscent of Daniel's mocking visage), poking its eyes, and jabbing its kidneys in hopes of making him ineligible to participate in daily activities, yielding him expelled, and our meeting thereby later. But it doesn't work! His powers of meditation and self-reflection are too strong for my black magic!* See bottom for call to action*

As a third poignant and stirring point, I feel that my mental and emotional health has suffered on behalf of Daniel's selfish actions. I spend days and nights worrying about how I am going to get up at that early hour, I lose sleep thinking about how I am going to lose sleep. I have lost my appetite thinking about Wednesday morning

snacks so that I can eat as much of them as possible to make my early wake-up worth my while.

It is undeniable that at any other time of the day, he is a nice, funny, smart, and extraordinarily handsome young stud, but at that hour I think he is a mean and selfish attractive young man. I think that he should, as any reasonable person would, give up his liberty to graduate on time and take interesting courses in the name of I, of we, the Writing Center Staff. On behalf of Daniel's vile self interest, I have attained a stutter, a sleeping and eating disorder, failing grades, and a poopy attitude.

* This is not a personal vendetta, but a social issue of mammoth proportions! I cry out to you who write, you who think, you great minds of grammar and syntax, we must issue a sentence of execution to Daniel the Terrible! If nothing else, a dirty look will suffice! As a supplemental act of due compensation, be it hereby suggested that Mr. Tucker pay a monetary compensation to each member of the Writing Center Staff for the rest of their lives for the yearly salary deficit they will face due to the shoddy jobs they will get due to the poor grades they receive for this semester transgression. Consider this your scarlet letter, Daniel and take it anything, anything, but seriously.

"On the other hand, you have different fingers."

—Jack Handy

MAGNETIC POETRY (CONT.)

"Wax" by Georgia

The egg said trudge together with juice & sausage

Why must I recall sordid visions through water

Summer days leave you bare from love's sad blow

Cry girl

You smell enormous.

NEW ORLEANS, CON'T.

Con't from page 1

that we'd all have strange, debilitating diseases in ten years from exposure to the mold. Real positive guys, those Southern Baptists.

When we weren't hitting things with crowbars, we got to explore the city a bit, which, as I said, was a gustatorial necessary. One evening I spent four hours roaming the French Quarter in search of a sandwich called a muffuletta, or possibly a muffalatto, or possibly Muffasa. I confess initially suspected it to be a vicious rumor. It turns out to be real, though: a concoction of meat, cheese, and olives looming over the horizon like a Japanese movie monster. (Seriously, it was big-

ger than my head.) Another evening we ate at a restaurant just because the greeter/waitress was from Springfield, Illinois, and she tried to sell us a twenty-dollar alligator tenderloin while warning us that the mold could eat our eyes. (Almost as cheery as the Baptists, huh?)

Somewhat less amusing was a long drive I took with a couple of fellow volunteers through St. Bernard Parish and the Upper Ninth Ward. It's hard to put the scale of the damage into words that actually mean something. Imagine a whole neighborhood with white trailers parked on the front lawns because the homes are unsafe to be inside without a mask. Imagine a front

porch standing by itself because the house behind it collapsed. Imagine a car shoved through the front wall of a house. It was alarming and depressing to see so much damage seven months after the storm.

But I don't want to give the impression that New Orleans is a ghost town. It's not. Those white trailers prove that residents are returning, and everywhere we went we found businesses reopening and posters saying "DO NOT BULLDOZE" or "WE WILL BE BACK." My favorite was a sign outside a movie theatre in St. Bernard Parish: "WE WILL REOPEN! Call with ideas how."

MAGNETIC POETRY: (CONT.)

"Sad Symphony"

languid love
bitter blood
void moan
sordid cry

"Girl Power: A Love Poem"

Peaches of beauty need no juice
Tell me you can lick from lakes light lust
And I want to blow repulsive eggs as you worship
Enormous shakiness over the shiny mother sausage
Let's incubate together and leave pounds of drool
Eat when manipulating sweet bareheaded men
After pink pant legs

A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE Q. OF THE W.

By Megan Kennedy

In addition to my duties as the Leftmost Chancellor of the High Council of the Perspective and my occasional moonlighting as a criminal mastermind, I have for the past two or three semesters been the driving agent behind the question of the week, or "Q. o. t. W." as I affectionately call it. My semi-legible scrawl has adorned the big green chalkboard every Monday morning for weeks on end as I post such mind-

bending puzzlers as "Who is your favorite superhero?" or "What is your favorite tree?" It is a small, nay, insignificant thing that I do to unite our community and perhaps, should I be so fortunate, bring a momentary ray of sunny mirth into the cold, dismal lives of all who wander through our hallowed doors.

However, in recent weeks I have noted a disturbing trend: someone else—some stranger, some foul interloper—has taken

to writing a Question without my knowledge. I admit that I am not always "on the ball," as the kids say, with getting my questions up; sometimes I have a conference on Monday, or the center is closed, or I just have trouble thinking of something to write. It's hard coming up with an incisive new question every week. It takes time, effort, creativity! Sometime it takes all afternoon to think of one! I'M DOING THE BEST I CAN! WHAT DO YOU PEOPLE WANT FROM ME!?!?!?

"The major difference between a thing that might go wrong and a thing that cannot possibly go wrong is that when a thing that cannot possibly go wrong goes wrong it usually turns out to be impossible to get at or repair."

—Douglas Adams

MELVIN: THE LIFE STORY

Continued from the last issue

By Dinusha Warusavitharana

"Hmm..." the captain thoughtfully rubbed his chin, weighing the pros and cons of this proposition. On one hand this bug could completely blow the operation and jeopardize all the hostages as well as soldiers but on the other hand he could prove to be an excellent distraction. The captain made his decision.

"You! What's your name?"

"Melvin, sir."

"Ok, Kelvin, we've decided you could prove useful after all." The other troops looked at their captain in surprise.

"Here's the plan. You will have to cross the open ditch. Mind you this is a favorite hovering area for crow

bombers. You have to avoid the dropping crow shit. If hit, you'll probably be burned alive. So respond as fast as you can or be hit. Got that?"

Melvin nodded.

"Okay, next comes the Venus-fly trap mine area. Simply-crawling with Venus fly-traps. Avoid them at all costs. They will try their best to tempt you. If you succumb to temptation, and they trap you, you're as good as dead. They will eat you up and we have no way of reaching you or rescuing you. Got that?"

Melvin swallowed painfully but nodded again. "Once you're free of that, you will have no perils other than the confrontation and distraction of six centipede guards. You must speak, talk, sing or whatever other distraction you

can come up with as loudly as possible. You must be able to distract all the guards away from the approach of my Teams. Also you must do all this as quickly as possible. Three hundred worker ants depend upon it. Is that understood?"

"Umm...y-yes sir. Umm...a few questions sir?"

The captain sighed with frustration, "What are they, soldier? And make it quick."

"Am I going in there alone?"

"Yes, but my Team Flyers will be keeping watch. They will come to your assistance if necessary," the captain replied, knowing perfectly well that they would do not no such thing, especially not for a cockroach." Continued below

MAGNETIC POETRY (CONT.): UNTITLED WORK

Which professional
Career mission is
Serious to the future

Small monkey competed in
Her best dress maximizes

Delicate-ing vision
By moment

Live
in
a
whisper

I want to
play
pant
moan
shake
blow

Milk & meat are for waxing

"I think animal testing is a terrible idea; they get all nervous and give the wrong answers."

—Hugh Laurie

MELVIN CONTINUED...

"Are the centipedes armed?"

"Yeah, they've got poisonous claws. Keep them at a safe distance."

Melvin gulped again. "And what exactly are they demanding?"

"They want the strawberry patch and the vegetable garden to be added to *their* territory and also a life time supply of small insects to be hoarded in their store room." The captain clicked his tongue in impa-

tience, "Simply unacceptable! If they want food they can simply hunt for themselves. Lazy buggers (another ingenious irony)!" Melvin nodded again. "Okay, I'm ready."

"Okay, troops...Battle stations!" yelled the captain.

The soldiers hurried to their positions, adjusting their various weapons and making sure each had enough ammunition. The leaders of each team had a special H60- Scorpion-Poison Submachine Squirter

with a custom made laser-scope ranger [god knows if this is correct. I'm making this up as I go along...I know, I know, submachine guns don't usually have scopes. At least not as far as I remember. But then this is just stupid fiction...live with it!].

"Okay, Kelvin, get out there and do your thing!" ordered the captain."

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MELVIN CONTINUED...

Melvin saw the futility of trying to correct the Captain's error, took a humongous breath and ran towards the open ditch.

"Team flyers, keep an eye on him. We want him to clear the traps and distract those guards. The lives of all those ants depend on it, as unfortunate as it may be. Clear?"

"Yes, SIR," hummed the wasps and set off after Melvin.

When Melvin reached the ditch, he stared in utter horror as he saw some huge black things circling above him. The suddenly something huge seemed to be blocking the sun and a loud whistling sound. As he looked up he stood star-struck as he watched a huge mound of white hurtling towards him.

"MELVIN! Get out of the way you goddamn idiot...that's CROW SHIT!" yelled

one of the Team Flyers.

The shout conducted a message to Melvin's brain, which passed it on to his legs, to move his ass *immediately!* And this he did. He ducked and weaved in and out of incoming crow shit bombs.

Hey, thought Melvin smugly, I'm getting good at this! This almost cost him his life as he narrowly missed being hit by an incoming crow shit bomb.

At last Melvin made it to the clumps of grass on the other side of the open ditch. Breathing heavily from all the exercises he had never done, Melvin made his way through the cool but dark and gloomy forest. Peering about, he cocked his ears, trying to catch some sound that indicated where the dreaded Venus fly-traps were. He could here nothing but a strong and almost painful silence. He couldn't even hear the flutter of wasp wings and wondered with alarm

whether he had been abandoned. He wondered anew why in the world he taken this job.

He had no clue what a Venus flytrap was, let alone what it looked or sounded like. He couldn't be expected to know this...after all, he was but a mere cockroach, and a purebred townie at that. He scuttled forward and almost bumped into a tall structure. Melvin peered through the darkness to see what it was.

After blinking a few minutes he finally saw a beautiful looking flower, looking like a beautiful mouth with its lips spread wide open and teeth spaced out all round the rim. The smell coming out of it was exotic and he couldn't help but be attracted by it. Suddenly a leaf blew into the flower and it instantly snapped shut with a loud SMACK! Its teeth clamped shut and stood rigid like the bars of a jail cell, holding the leaf as a prisoner.

Continued on page 6

ZEN AND THE ART OF MAGPO

knowledge is success	eat	i want blow repulsive egg
together we will integrate corporate management	tiny	
strategy will lead you to strong power business	summer	swim suit garden
	peach	heave d hot sea
	or	
	sad	
	day	
collaborative professional can have serious global mission		shadowing diamond chain s
cet us give in to her effective career & feel the high while my idea is maximize ing	pursue but never crash	frantic beneath raw sweat elaborate ly ache ing after a red lie
an orient goal if you position future s compete cross-function economy		
	go	
	incubate	
the small monkey compete d in	through	
	sausage	
	power	

"If you're going to be crazy, you have to get paid for it or else you're going to be locked up.

—Hunter S. Thompson

MELVIN CONTINUED...

Melvin jumped back in surprise and it suddenly hit him that *this* was the dreaded Venus flytrap...and he had almost stepped into. He looked at it both in fascination and horror. They should have named it a death trap. Would have been more appropriate. He managed to move on keeping a sharp lookout for more Venus flytraps. When he finally reached the end of the forest, he felt the warmth of the sun on his back and felt like laughing and jumping in joy at being released from the gloomy prison of the forest.

He jumped up high and clicked his many heels. Then he started singing a song about the joys of sunshine. If you've never heard the voice of a cockroach I strongly suggest you don't ever try to. Nature never gave them a set of vocal cords and with good reason. The six centipede guards that were patrolling the front entrance of the ant hill heard the sounds, dropped their weapons and tried to cover their ears.

"What the heck is that horrible sound?" yelled one of them to another close by, "Sounds like a goose screeching."

They all moved forward (including the 3 guards at the back) to try and locate the source of the noise and shoot it or at least cripple it before it caused some permanent auditory damage. Then suddenly Melvin raised his voice a pitch higher. The centipedes rolled on the floor in agony, trying their hardest to block out the noise.

"No wonder," one of them screeched, "it's a goddamn cockroach!"

Continued next issue (Don't worry, I will finish this story before I graduate)

CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE: TERRORS FROM THE MIDDLE EAST

By Dinusha Warusavitharana

Okay, this might not be the most appropriate time to rant on how horrible my school life was when I was in the Middle East but it's an experience I wish to share. Warning: In my opinion, there's child abuse involved.

I went to school for the first 14 years of my life in Dubai, U.A.E. and although my experiences there were mostly incredibly dull and uninspiring, there is one which I will never forget.

I don't remember which grade I was in (probably grade 2 or 3) but we had this horrifying teacher who taught us Arabic. Her disciplining methods paralleled the kind you see in military training. She had extreme methods to make sure her entire class was as meek as a lamb (I'm

sure you guys are dying with suspense to know what they are). If even one child so much as whispered in class *every single student in that class* had their hands slapped with two rulers (one wooden, one steel), whether or not the rest of the students misbehaved or not. Then, she would make us stand on our chairs for the rest of the class with our hands in the air.

In those days I was one of the meekest students in the whole class, and this was a truly terrifying experience, especially to be punished without cause for it. I trembled at the sight of the teacher and all throughout the class would be distracted with praying that nobody would be stupid enough to misbehave. I think I can probably pinpoint my hatred for the Arabic language from this point on.

Don't get me wrong, though. Not all Arabic teachers were that cruel, although all of them loved to yell at their students. Still, I didn't have anything against them, as I did this particular teacher. It isn't fun, especially when you were that young, to live in constant fear of punishment.

For those people who wonder why I'm such a stickler for rules, I can safely say this was probably the cause. Ironically, after reading about psychodynamics in my psychology class, I agree to some extent that people are shaped by their childhood experiences, because it seems quite possibly that this experience has shaped me to the extent that even when I know that breaking a small rule is not breaking the law, I'm afraid to do it for fear of punishment.