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Two out of seven ain’t bad!

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Mind of Your Own
Dirge for a Restroom

the search for a progressive potty rages on

I'll avoid the usual introductions. Tom and I are new, but the issue here is an old and very depressing one. The subject I mean, not the magazine, MoYO is packed to the hilt with delightful social commentary, quirky stories, and the same charming controversy that has sustained us thus far. But the subject, my topic, is indeed depressing.

Perhaps no one else has noticed, but the finest resource on Denison's gorgeous campus has been stolen from our helpless student populace. I am, of course, referring to the unisex bathroom in the Bandersnatch. Long a campus hangout, the Bandersnatch unisex bathroom became a shrine to sorts of the ideals of respect and community for which this college stands. Patrons often refreshed themselves within the walls of that warm and inviting space after consuming the various combinations of boiling water and “magic dust” that the ‘Snatch proudly offers. After a long day forced to cower within the confines of oppressive single-sex bathrooms, students and faculty alike rejoiced in the liberation the Bandersnatch restroom offered. Men could be men, women could be women, pets could be pets! Everyone had a home in the Bandersnatch bathroom of old.

But not so today. While the remodeling does have a pleasant odor, and the sink (in the men's room anyway) is quite tidy and efficient, something beautiful has been lost. That something, in the case of the men's room, is women, and vice versa. Today people cross their legs tightly on the comfy couches of yesteryear while listening to open mic performances or the student-worker's favorite Indie rock band. Couches! Something is lost when you try to expel the Tibetans from here.

Considering your surroundings can keep you in check as well. The Himalayas reach this far, but there's lots of green and it's not nearly as cold. But still, when you're seeing peace, you're reminded that this is, in fact, truly a part of India.

The Dalai Lama was the first to escape there after the Chinese Communist Party forcibly invaded Tibet and violently reclaimed it as a part of China. Since 1959, when the Chinese Communist Party forcibly invaded Tibet and violently reclaimed it as a part of China, the village of Dharamsala and the abandoned military outpost of McLeod-Ganj (which are unofficially known as Dharamsala) in Himachal-Pradesh, India have served as the receiving center for the thousands of exiled Tibetans. And it's not nearly as cold. But still, when you're seeing peace, you're reminded that this is, in fact, truly a part of India.

There are, of course, a number of options. We as a student body could follow the lead of late-night party-goers and do our dirty little business outside the ‘Snatch, on the wall near the parking lot. We could boycott the Bandersnatch altogether. We could even hide pick-axes and shovels in our backpacks and send that dividing wall tumbling down in Berlin-esque triumph. All of these ideas are that other campus organizations may implement, but the one that MoYO advocates is so simple, it's beautiful. Just ignore the signs on the door. Maybe it's “Men,” maybe it says, “Women.” It doesn’t matter. It could say “Pets” on those bathroom doors for all I care. Just walk right in, fellow Denisonians! Or, if you're daring, deliberately use the bathroom reserved for the opposite sex. How does it feel to experience an ‘Snatch dance-off, as the saying goes? You don't want part of it. Eventually, individual action like this will spread to enlighten all Bandersnatch patrons and employees, and someday, those signs will come down. Maybe then the walls will follow.

Now, I know what you're thinking: How is going to the bathroom with members of the opposite sex going to affect my educational experience? A good question, my friend. I have the answer right here. While the administration is proud of the way a residential college promotes community and friendship, this community is split down the middle when it comes to restrooms. Residential Life staffers brag about the way the learning environment extends beyond the classroom and into the residence halls; but that learning community is segregated as soon as somebody feels nature calling. It's all right to be scared, faithful readers. Tell them your pets don't worry about what gender is near when they perform their excretory processes. And keep in mind the beautiful courage of Rosa Parks when she said, “No, I'm not moving to the back of the bus. I'm sitting right here.”

In short, I call for a revolution. Join me as we liberate the Bandersnatch restrooms for universal use. I've got a vision, a beautiful vision, of the day when all bathrooms are nongendered, when men and women can gossip in the stalls, when we can all trade dirty jokes under the cool glow of fluorescents. We must reclaim our restroom rights before the administration cracks down further. Who knows what they might try next? Prohibiting women and men from living in the same suites? Let's stop this madness before it spreads.

Chris Million
Co-Editor In Chief

Moyo

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The White Crow

Compassionate Activism in a Tibetan Community-in-exile

I happened to be in India last year on Antioch Education Abroad's Buddhist Studies in Bodh Gaya (Bihar) program. For the independent research component of the program, I chose to spend a month in Dharamsala researching vegetarianism in exiled-Tibetan culture. As Tibet's religious heritage is part of the Mahayana (or, “Universal”) Vehicle of Buddhism, believers follow the texts known as sutras. In these texts, the case is made that eating meat is a violation of the first Buddhist precept of “no killing.” The eighth chapter of the Lankavatara Sutra even outlines all of the Buddha's reasons for vegetarianism, which include avoiding meat eating because there is no way of knowing if a being that you might eat was your mother in a previous life. But for Tibetans, following the Buddha's prescription of vegetarianism has been difficult because of how bleak and difficult the land itself is. Tibet is frigid and mountainous, allowing few things to grow here. For its people—particularly the nomadic pastoralists—to survive, meat and animal products must be eaten. But since Tibetan Buddhism philosophically has always favored a meatless diet and the Dalai Lama has been a staunch advocate (though not a practitioner) of vegetarianism since fleeing Tibet, I was interested to see if the community in exile—in a very different environment, with all of the food resources available in India which had not been in Tibet—would change its ways towards a vegetarian diet.

For Tibetans, the new locale of Dharamsala, India, would seem ripe for putting into practice an act of compassion that has historically been impossible for them to perform. Strolling through McLeod-Ganj, one notices signs of a turning tide, such as the large number of vegetarian restaurants. There's the Gakyi Vegetarian Food Restaurant, which offers traditional Tibetan cuisine that is entirely vegetarian (including their famous muesli). A few doors down the street from there is the Shangri-La Restaurant, another diner offering purely vegetarian Tibetan dishes. The Shangri-La also enjoys the distinction of being maintained by the
The Cleveland Cinematheque is run by Ewing and Tim Harry, who serves as its assistant director. Harry, who attended Kent State University and majored in Film Studies, is also an independent filmmaker (mostly experimental and documentary) and has lived and worked in New York and San Francisco. Harry assists in promoting the films and managing the theatre where they are shown. He also supplies and catalogues stills, posters, and films in the Cinematheque’s archives. Ewing is responsible for choosing, booking, and shipping the films that are eventually shown at the Cinematheque. Other responsibilities that tend to fall on the shoulders of these two cineastes include publicizing, lobbying for coverage, supervising ticket sales and projectionists and paying the bills. “Whatever needs to be done to make the program work, we both will do,” Harry said.

From my internship at the Cleveland Cinematheque this summer, I saw first-hand how the Cinematheque was run and all that it entailed. I realized how distribution of the monthly member mailings and calendars were so important in maintaining the support from the Cinematheque audience. I saw the eclectic press releases, movie stills and posters in the archives, from The Dreamlife of Angels to The Apple. I overheard how Ewing would negotiate bringing a film to the Cinematheque, or how Tim Harry would decide to write a public announcement for a film series. All of this for the sake of cinema.

I have seen many programs come and go this past summer, including “British Cinema: The Changing of the Guard”, “Brazil! Cinema Novo and Beyond”, “The Magic of Miyazaki” and recently, Alfred Hitchcock: Centennial 1899-1999.” It is not hard to see that the Cleveland Cinematheque is dedicated to bringing a wonderful array of films every month. It is no wonder why so many are flocking to Cleveland to see a newly restored version of a film, for example, or the Ohio premiere of another. “Cleveland is the best film city in the state in terms of what gets shown here,” Ewing said.

Just how does the Cleveland Cinematheque manage to bring such films to Cleveland? 85% of the Cinematheque’s budget comes from the Ohio Arts Council and 5% from memberships. Despite the lack of a publicity budget, the Cinematheque manages to draw a crowd of approximately 600 people on the weekend. The calendar of films to be shown is what draws locals. “We rely on the power of our calendar, which is distributed to 9,000 people, mostly locally. Another 9,000 are placed in coffee shops, bookstores, resale shops, record stores, art and live theatre joints, and just about anywhere else that folks who like movies will take notice,” Harry said. Harry and Ewing work together on the bi-monthly calendar which features the dates, times and descriptions of the films to be shown for those two months.

The Cinematheque brings films from France, England, Brazil, India, China, Saudi Arabia, Mexico, Italy, Japan, etc. and also showcases the talents of U.S. and more specifically, local filmmakers’ works. Harry offers that it is all about the want, not necessarily the need, to develop an audience. “You have to take chances and start the trend, to show people what is cool by putting it out there. For example, the Cinematheque was the first place in Cleveland (or for that matter in the U.S.) to show Jackie Chan 12 years ago,” Harry said.

The Cinematheque has had further success in showing films from India. “Bollywood is a bigger industry than Hollywood and some of their filmmakers are real masters,” Harry said. Animation has also done well, including Spike & Mike’s Stick and Twisted Festival of Animation. “The college crowd has a taste for it because of the obvious, due to the raunchiness and looseness of the films,” Harry said. October 28-31, 1999 drew over 1,500 people to the Russell B. Atken Auditorium to see the films of the Japanese Animation series at the Cleveland Cinematheque. Some of these included Kiki’s Delivery Service and the acclaimed epic, Princess Mononoke, both from Japanese director Hayao Miyazaki.

The Avant-Garage Film and Music Festival features rare films from various countries and directors. This program tends to do well because people want to escape from the movies dominating the multi-plexes and experience the films of independent filmmakers who have something to say in an unconventional way. Harry, an independent filmmaker himself, explains that having live music accompany an experimental film produces a “hypnotic” effect. Documentaries on bands (like director Grant Lee’s People in the Trees) tend to draw a good crowd of fans as well. Other programs that have done quite well in the past include: The Robert Bresson Retrospective in February of 1998; Leni Riefenstahl Series in September of 1994; Krystof Kieslowski’s “The Decalogue.”

Ewing and Harry are already working together on planning the upcoming film programs for these next few months. Future endeavors may include: Hou Hsiao-Hsin Metro, Trafful Series, and documentary films. A Michael Antonioni Retrospective is something both Ewing and Harry are extremely motivated to bring to the Cinematheque in the near future. Furthermore, there may be a series showcasing the works of up-and-coming French filmmakers. “There seems to be a second wave going on and much of the work I have seen lately is quite exciting,” Harry said.

While Ewing and Harry both agree that the establishment of the Cleveland Film Society and the Cleveland Cinematheque, as well as the annual Cleveland International Film Festival are helping to further the support and energy behind the film scene, productivity is a different story. “Here, everyone wants to be a star,” Harry said. In recalling his days spent in San Francisco, Harry said it was possible for anyone to take a cinema production course and rent equipment for a fraction of the cost it is today.

What needs to be done so that the “seventh art” not only be viewed and critiqued but continue to flourish in its creation? “Universities and industry should make available the means to further one’s education, make film stock and processing readily available, have access to equipment,” Harry offered. Furthermore, a fund for visual artists should be established - much like the Ohio Arts Council, yet only pertaining to the art of cinema. The city of Cleveland should also promote itself as a location for film production and give more media coverage to the programs offered by the Cinematheque. All of these will undoubtedly lead to a stronger and more united community of filmmakers and film enthusiasts in northeast Ohio.

Ewing offers some words of wisdom to young filmmakers out there, “Don’t let anybody stop you from realizing your ambitions. But part of the preparation for doing what you want to do (i.e. making a film) is to know what has been done before, and what is happening now.” The Cleveland Cinematheque is just the place to immerse oneself in these films.

Admission to each film is $6 or two for $10
Members see each film for $4
Want to become a member? Contact the Cleveland Cinematheque:
The Cleveland Institute of Art
11141 East Blvd.
Cleveland, OH 44106
Or check out their website at www.cia.edu (click on campus).

by Laura Barrett

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American Interview

Making a film about making a film: a cozy chat with two independent filmmakers

by Robert Levine

American Movie is the story of Mark Borchardt, a live-wire resident of suburban Milwaukee who puts all his time, energy and funds into making movies. The film is also the story of Chris Smith and Sarah Price, two fellow midwesterners and kindred spirits, who spent four difficult years bringing Borchardt’s quest for the American Dream to the big screen. The result is one of the most incisive, touching and hilarious documentaries ever produced about American life. American Movie went on to win the Grand Jury Prize for Best Documentary at the 1999 Sundance Film Festival. Smith and Price recently spoke with a Coven of Denison cinema students about the making of their movie, the ins and outs of independent film distribution, and the shortcomings of films about Gilbert & Sullivan.

Question: How did you get into filmmaking?

Chris: I started doing films and videos in high school, and then started making super 8 movies. I went through film school in Iowa, which is where I met Sarah. We took our first 16mm classes together. After I graduated, I made 3 or 4 short films, and then I started getting them into film festivals. After I didn’t get into 3 or 4, I just felt like it was a waste of time and a waste of money. I felt like the kind of films I was making weren’t ever going to get into festivals. So then I decided to just make a longer film. I enrolled in the University of Iowa for a 2-credit class and then used their equipment to make [Smith’s first film] American Job. We weren’t supposed to make a feature. The head of the department there, who was much more easy-going, really loved the film. He invited me to come up, and pretty much gave me the keys to the department. I started living in their editing room for four months, and Sarah came up to help me edit. We got the print done at the eleventh hour, sent it in to Sundance, and never heard from them again...there’s basically three festivals in North America that you want to premiere a feature at: Sundance, New Directors, New Films, and Toronto. I didn’t get into Sundance or New Directors, New Films, so I had the same theory that I had with my shorts, where I felt like I should just go make another movie instead of wasting time trying to get this film out there. So next summer I started working on American Movie.

Question: When did you start filming Mark?

Chris: This first time I filmed Mark, he was going to the Toronto Film Festival with his Mom and Dad to try and raise money for this film he wanted to make called Northwestern, so I went up there with him and the same sound guy from American Job. I didn’t know if it was going to be a short film or a long film, I just felt like I wanted to get out there and start filming something again. When I got back to Milwaukee from Sundance, I shot Mark on this radio show in October ’95, and that’s when this project really got more interesting and I thought it was turning into something bigger, so I asked Sarah to collaborate on it. At the time we thought it not only be a six-month project, because Mark was bound and determined to make Northwestern in six months. When you see American Movie, you see it ends up taking him two years and he doesn’t even end up making the film he started off trying to make, but it all makes sense in Mark’s world.

Q: How long did it take for you to get comfortable filming him constantly?

Chris: When you look at the early footage, then compare it to the footage at the end, there’s this incredible evolution. We shot for two years, and there’s this relationship that develops between Mark, myself, Sarah and his family and friends...you notice, for the first ten minutes of the film, Mark is putting on this show for the people he’s trying to get to work on his film, but he’s also trying doing it for us. He’s a great salesman, and he’s just playing up to the camera. But as time went on, you really start to see this other side of him. It took a couple months, but after fifteen minutes into the movie, you see this transition where you start to see Mark and all these people as humans, as opposed to these caricatures or stereotypes.

By the second year, we were spending six to seven days a week at their house, twelve to sixteen hours a day. We were just there all the time, and they got to know us. His mother would put out plates for us at dinner. It wasn’t that weird for them, because Mark was always making films. He’d been making films for fifteen years before we came along, shooting in his kitchen, his backyard, using their house as a set. So when we came along it was just an extension of what was already going on.

Q: What was your shooting ratio? How much film did you use?

Chris: We shot 70 hours of film.

Sarah: And there was 105 hours of audio.

Q: So, you shot 70 hours of film, but obviously you were there for a lot longer. The two hours we see in the film, are those just the high points?

Chris: We wanted to make a film so that when you left the theater, you feel like you went through the same experience we thought we witnessed in those two years. It definitely wasn’t all the high points. We had to delete some good scenes that just didn’t fit the narrative flow of the film. We did take the highlights, in the sense that we took stuff that was interesting or funny...Sarah: ...or meaningful.

Q: How did you know when to stop shooting?

Chris: At first, we didn’t know where the end would be, but there was this really natural ending to the film that came about. We didn’t know if we were going to be in for another two years, but after this climactic event happened, it was so obvious. The energy and excitement that was there before just went through the floor. So we just did final interviews and stepped back.

Sarah: There was just a natural feeling that things had come to a close. And we knew that if we kept filming, we would start on a new chapter in Mark’s life, and having already filmed him for two years...

Chris: The movie is more about Mark’s family and his relationships rather than what happens, plot-wise, and we felt like we had the movie we wanted. We had covered the relationships, the friendship, the loyalty, so whether we followed Mark for another year or not, I don’t think it would have made the film a richer experience.

Q: What did you do for funding?

Chris: It was a very difficult movie to raise money for. I just started with nothing.

Sarah: You had like ten cans of film left over from American Job.

Chris: When I was at Sundance, I met a filmmaker named Jim McKay, who did a movie called Girls Town. He saw American Job and really liked it and was interested in doing what I was doing next. So I sent him the footage of Mark from Toronto, which he really liked. He is a partner in a company with Michael Stipe of REM, and they gave us $25,000...
to buy film. We used that to continue through the first year.

Sarah: We also spent a lot of money with credit cards. The end of shooting we had 9 credit cards with close to $28,000 on them.

Chris: We also did production jobs all the while. We shot the Michael Moore film The Big One; Sarah did sound and I did camera. So we used that money from the BBC, and I shot something for Nintendo, and I did a lottery commercial in Wisconsin. Just odds and ends production jobs that were really small time commitments that paid really well. Any money we could scrape together went into the film. We were spending very cheap.

Sarah: We didn’t even have enough money to process the film. We actually didn’t see our footage until a couple of months after we were done shooting. Chris had an apartment with Mark and Roger and Me, and it is pretty cold in Milwaukee, so we had almost all of our shots sitting out on his porch with a tarp over them.

Q: Was it hard to leave Mark to do these side projects?
Chris: Well, the Michael Moore thing was good because it was two weeks, a consolidated length of time, that happened to line up when Mark was editing full time. Of anything to miss, that was definitely it, because it was just him sitting at a Steenbeck. But Mark would work with us. He was willing to wait on certain things. It wasn’t that we were controlling what was happening, but we didn’t have problems asking him to wait, because we had to take those jobs to make money. But it was also frustrating—we would have liked to have had the money to pay ourselves to film the whole time, but we just didn’t have that luxury. But I think this was something really great in the sense that we were struggling to make our film while Mark was struggling to make his. I think if we had had a lot of money, it could have created an awkward situation. I think it worked to our advantage, to be in that same situation, because it seemed more fair.

Q: How did you meet Michael Moore?
Chris: He had seen American Job and really liked it. When he was thinking about doing this film about his book tour, a friend of ours who worked for him suggested he use us.

Sarah: We were definitely hired guys. I get that questions sometimes, how he influenced our filmmaking style. But there just wasn’t much influence. Our styles are totally different—he likes to swoop in and create confrontation. But we both loved Roger and Me, and it was fun to meet him. He sleeps like two hours a night, works very hard.

Q: The Big One was shot on video. With film being so expensive, why didn’t you shoot American Movie on video?
Chris: I get this question often. The reason was, when we started, DV (digital video) wasn’t out yet. Hi-8 was there, but I just didn’t like it. It was too unstable. Plus, for me, there’s something about shooting film. Personally, I feel like it adds a level of authenticity to what you’re shooting. It gives it this authority.

There were two really positive things that came out of shooting on film. We didn’t think we realized at the time. With Mark, when you see him in the movie, you realize we could have shot 500 hours of video of this guy. But because we were shooting on film, and couldn’t afford it and were constantly running out of it, we were forced to make editing decisions as we went along. Plus, this electricity that I think comes from shooting film. It’s not like shooting video; it’s like...

Q: Like you’re shooting something valuable.
Chris: Right. There’s a lot of things you have to set up, it’s so delicate, and I think the people you interview, they kind of pick up on that, and perk up.

Sarah: Well, with this, it also made sense because of Mark’s passion for film. He sort of has this romantic sense for the cinema, so it seemed appropriate.

Q: So, with all this money you were spending, were you confident your film would be picked up? How did you take that leap of faith?
Chris: Well, after a while, you don’t have a choice. We were going to go bankrupt whether we spent all that money or we didn’t. There’s no way we could get out of the debt we were in, so we felt like we should just go for it, in that sense. But we thought we had a pretty amazing story. If the edit didn’t come together, I don’t think we would have spent all the money we did get to Sundance. We spent $350,000 to get to Sundance. And then, after Sony bought it, we spent another $450,000 dollars.

Q: You spent that much after you sold the film? Is that true?
Chris: When you sell a film, it’s something that you just unload and say goodbye. It becomes something you deal with almost on a daily basis. Basically when you sell your film, the distributor gives you a-25-page type written document of things that you have to give to them to "deliver" the film. You don’t get paid till you deliver the film, so it’s a weird Catch-22 situation where you don’t get paid till you deliver, but it takes six months to deliver, and you need the money that they’re gonna pay you to give all the elements they need.

Sarah: They pay you incrementally, but it’s not enough to cover the costs.

Chris: So after it was picked up, we edited for another three months while we worked out some legal issues, then we began the whole process of blowing the film up to 35, developing the theatrical campaign, and doing the new sound mix.

Q: How much did you sell the movie for?
Chris: $825,000. The cost of blowing up the film and delivering it to Sony brought us up to $600,000. So there was about $200,000 left over. The "American Job" went to Sundance. The way the deal was setup, and this is a pretty standard deal for films, the investors get 50% of the profits, and the creative side gets 50%, and the investors get paid back first. The investors get their investment back plus half the profits divided by their percentage. From there, we divided it between ourselves, Mark, his family and their kids. Everyone in the film we gave a percentage.

Q: So once you sold it to Sony, they own it? For twenty years.
Chris: They license it to you for twenty years, then you get it back after the twenty. But Sony is notorious for working with filmmakers. I mean, we took our own photos for the poster. When we didn’t like theirs, they pick the one that we went with. They talk to us about the ads—if there is a quote in the ad we don’t like, they take it out. We approved the trailer. They’re very filmmaker friendly, and they’re known for that. Of course, they’re also known for being cheap, but a lot of people will go to Sony for less money. Our friends did Hoop Dreams for Fine Line, and the movie did $20 million, and they never saw a profit, because Fine Line just buried all the money.

We usually don’t talk about numbers and what we sold the movie for, but in a situation like this... I know that when I was in school, I would have loved to have known the facts about what people make, because I was under the impression that with any movie that went to the local theatre, the people who made it were millionaires. When I was in school, I would have said, "American Job" went to Sundance, I was like, "If this movie sells, would it sell for like a million dollars?" (laughs) I just didn’t know. I met the guy who won Sundance the year before, and he said he made $2,000 off of that movie, and it won Sundance, got picked up by a big distributor, and was coming out on video. That’s when I realized there isn’t a lot of money to be made in independent film. We got really lucky that we made any profit.

Q: The film had kind of a sporadic national release. It just now came out in Columbus. Why did Sony choose to release it this way?
Chris: When it opened in November in New York and LA, it was really poor timing. It came out at the same time as American Beauty, Boys Don’t Cry, Being John Malkovich, Dogma, The Straight Story, The Insider,—all these movies that appeal to a similar audience, but with much bigger stars and budgets. These films buried us in the fall. So they pulled back the release and moved half the dates to January and February. We really kind of regret that we opened in November.

Sarah: It helped, though. They have to open films in New York in order to get reviews. We’ve been told the performance of your film in distribution depends on a good review in The New York Times. We happened to get a good review in the Times, so that was good.

Chris: We also made their ten best list. We were after The Insider and before Eyes Wide Shut. I think things may have made a big difference with the distributor.

Q: Eyes Wide Shut was their number 3 pick?
Chris: Number 9, actually. The Insider was 7, ours was 8. And Topps-Tory was 10. I don’t know why. It was definitely acclaimed, of the top rated films of the year.

Q: And great makeup and costumes too.
Chris: Yeah, but you can only go so far with just three good scenes.

Q: It wasn’t about anything!
Chris: No, it wasn’t excruciating. I think the critics felt it was one of those movies that put them at a level above everyone else. You know—"I like this movie because it’s hard to take,"—like they’re intellectually superior to everyone else. I don’t know. It was not an enjoyable film, I don’t think. But some people obviously liked it. Just not us mid-westemers.

"There’s no way we could get out of the debt we were in, so we felt like we should just go for it, in that sense."
Appreciating Modernity
Technology as Human Progress

by Jason J. Shuba

Upon arriving back in my hometown after finals last spring, an old friend (“Ted” for this article) visited me. After some pointless small talk, he told me he was engaged to his high school sweetheart (alias “Susie”).

My jaw dropped. I looked at him, and then at Susie. My response was half astonished, half bewildered. Ignoring my shock, Ted continued, explaining that after the wedding he and Susie were going to pool their money and purchase, of all things, an old school bus.

According to my friend, he and Susie wanted to completely gut the bus they intended to be the best garbage collector ensconced in the halls of history. In the same manner, if nature endows a person with the abilities to be a garbage collector, then this person ought to try to be the best garbage collector enunciated in the halls of history. In the same manner, if nature endows a person with the abilities to be a doctor, then said person should try to be a very competent one. Consequently, anything assisting a person in the pursuit of the highest potential (short of direct physical harm to other humans) should be utilized. Technology, in any form, can be considered one of these aids and must be implemented to the fullest degree to actualize personal potential.

Technology allows human-kind to create machines and devices empowered with the ability to do jobs and solve problems society normally see as “inconvenient” or “overly time consuming”. These machines and devices allow humans to spend more hours per day and, aggregately, more days per year, creating, inventing, and producing things to help actualize personal potential.

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The modern day furnace replaces the burden of starting a fire during winter; modern day medicines allow people to get well sooner, reclaiming lost potential production time from sickness; and modern day washing and drying machines allow people to do other activities while washing their socks, Continued on page 20

The Role of Choice
Can “Progress” be the Only Option?

by Jim Dunson

“Progress” is a curious word. I suppose it calls to mind economic prosperity (although the question “for whom?”, rarely seems a major concern) and possibly even some vague notion of the “inevitable march of human history.” However, its perplexing meaning becomes even more problematic when discussed in the context of technological evolution. If only we could label every new technology as necessary for “progress,” then we would never have to publicly debate the merits of new discovery or ask the (necessary) questions about the purpose of such technological evolution. After those crafty research-and-development experts churn out products to make all of our lives simpler and easier to manage (free time is certainly not a problem nowadays, right?), a few second-order questions need some attention. Namely: Who is the technology benefiting? Do the benefits outweigh the drawbacks or even risks? Why did this particular type of technology ‘win out’ over competitive types (i.e. was the decision a popular one, a political one, or one made purely out of the desire to disseminate the best product possible)?

Here are others: What is the relationship between technology and culture? For instance, when the Internet is introduced to indigenous communities in Latin America, is there something irrevocably lost in terms of culture? Conversely, is the Internet the very best way to promote free speech and inter-cultural communication and education? Is there anything creepily about the homogenizing effect that Western technology has on non-Western nations via globalization? What are human rights and environmentalism fit into this entire technological scheme?

In addition to the above questions (and inevitably others as well), the technologically-framed debate over the definition of “progress” must include a discussion of technological decision-making. I find it at least strange and maybe even misinformed to criticize those who choose to not choose between particular brands, in favor of a simpler (more natural?) lifestyle. Technology is (or at least it ought to be) a decision-making process; this includes not only the creation of a particular type of technology but also how to incorporate that type of technology into one’s everyday life (or to reject it out-of-hand). However, the mere existence of free choice when it comes to technology seems somewhat suspect; for instance, a term paper penned in calligraphy rather than Times New Roman size 12 would either greatly impress or terribly annoy a professor. Therefore, who decides not to partake in this as one can in the unabashed glory of technological “progress” is making a doubly-difficult decision by choosing not to choose. Moreover, this decision is just as valid and important as the scientist who chooses to concoct more efficient ways of minimizing the explosion and maximizing the radiation contained in weapons of war. Actually, it might be slightly nobler and less dangerous to society. Fortunately, one need not consider the technology of war in constructing a defense of those who bother to question the purpose and effect of technological “progress.”

Perhaps we are entering a new era of colonization: this would entail a moral obligation to spread the holy message of technology throughout the world, especially to modernization pagans, so as to help everyone enter an efficient and productive 21st century. While technology can conceivably be used to promote human rights, solve world hunger, and effect a more peaceful and prosperous human race, there is at least some skepticism in order. Simply adopting a more holistic view of “progress” and asking the important questions involved can improve technological decision-making... for whatever it is that actually decides.  

Continued on page 20
Coffee up, or what an opal flag is used for, but my story, though it's not the story I'd produced, marketed and hopefully sold through the studio system. They talk and compensate the owners of the locations for their time. Find someone else to do it, or give an estimation (exaggerated in its expanse) of how soon you can get to it. Or just lie, say it has already been done, and then do it after anyone notices. I did that a lot.

We're not a union crew, but are running it according to union rules, so the crew is guaranteed three meals a day: a pick-up breakfast, a sit-down lunch, and a sit-down second meal, from a nearby parlor. We like it that way. The crew gets to eat fast or take home. My fellow PA, gopher, and driver, I was on the front lines for all of it.
walkie: "Locations! Can I get someone the AD's voice comes screaming out my mouth. Everybody turns to me. No one is using the locations outside to clean up the water on the ramp of the truck, how-ever, because he doesn't want any of his guys to slip and get hurt.

I start to spray down the blood. The pressure of the hose is so weak, I have to hold my thumb across the opening and squat down, my feet prac-tically touching the dip in the street. The stench is over-whelming, and as I spray, blood splashes up onto my hands and clothes.

After ten minutes of spraying, I have made a visible dent in the blood. We try to situate everyone to spray down the rest of the blood. We work through a line of people, each having just as much difficulty as the one before them. At the end of the line, I stop spraying and turn off the hose to talk to the rookie who was spraying down the blood. He is trying to figure out how to properly use the hose. We are all in this together.

The blood is now approaching eleven o'clock, and I still have not made a dent in the clean-up. The sun comes out, heating the blood and worsening the stench. I realize I've reached a cross-roads. I need to buy more absorbent, but I have no petty cash. Compiling my receipts and submitting for more cash will take me at least an hour. That means one hour will pass when no one will appear to be working on the blood. I decide to risk it.

It takes more than an hour. By the time I return, the best boy electric has taken it upon himself to spray down the rest of the blood. He works with a fury. I say to myself, "F*ck it, let him do it. Get your own work done." Ironically, I have to prepare lunch, which seems like the last thing people would want me to do in my condition. First, I go 10-10 and scrub my hands for fifteen minutes.

At lunch, I sit alone, feeling low. I hear some grunts and art department people from the next table talking about the blood. One of the girls finishes with, "And poor Dave (the best boy) had to leave the set. You don't want to see it."

I decide to get some fresh air and take a half-hour walk. It's a nice day. I breathe a sigh of relief.

After several strikes, I come upon a bar, The Mambo Lounge. It looks closed, but the door is unlocked. I go in. I talk to the manager. For some reason, I think this is the funniest thing I've ever heard. The only thing I know about Woody Allen's new movie is that he's been up all night drinking, and in its place, crammed into the nook, are several coils. I figure the super put them there so the window couldn't be opened from the outside. I pull the coins out of the slot, and the entire window caves.

I walk around the rest of the day with my finger in a dip. It's a nice day. I breathe a sigh of relief.

About 11:00, I get a call on the walkie to go down and hold open the window. One of the actresses is complaining about all the cigarette smoke. I approach the back windows. I knock on the window. I hear the sound of breaking glass. I turn on to 9th avenue and go in to call for help. I turn off the window into oncoming traffic. Int. Antique Store. We're out of the city now, in up-town New York. It's now an hour drive to get to set, which means we get up at 3:00 a.m.

Some local kids watch from outside the set. "They're making a movie in there."

"Who's in it?"

"Ally Sheedy and Sylvester Stallone."

I still say I look more like Pacino. I'm sent scouting for the next day. Walking through Central Park, I pass the set of the TV show "Trinity," shooting by the ice skating pond. I start talk-ing to one of their PA's. We exchange "credentials." She gives me her take on the whole intern lot:

"Never give your best when you're an intern. They're just going to take it and use it and make you resent you. Then they'll screw you."

"Never give 100%. If you do, the people you work for will resent you. Then they'll screw you."

Ext./Int. Log Cabin. The coffee urn strikes a pour. I sit down to pour myself a cup. It is glorious. I breathe a sigh of relief.

Interior, I find a raging, full-scale party. "Black Magic Woman" by Prince is on the jukebox. I sit down to enjoy a drink. At the bar, I ask for a drink. I order a Coke. I get a Coke. I sit down to enjoy a drink. I feel like everyone on crew hates me.

I walk around the rest of the day with my finger in a dip. It's a nice day. I breathe a sigh of relief.

I walk around the rest of the day with my finger in a dip. It's a nice day. I breathe a sigh of relief.
monks of the Gyumed Monastery of Southern India—on the
wall by the cash register, there is a great photo of all the
monks with a placard on the frame that reads, "The Manage-
ment." And every Western visitor becomes quickly ac-
quainted with the vegan restaurant managed by a group of
young Americans called Kahanivam ("Liberation Through
Mastication"). But these restaurants are really there for the
hordes of visiting new age westerners and don’t reflect the
eating habits of the proprietors or the community.

Among Tibetan youths, there’s a group of Buddhist
monks with a placard on the frame that reads, "The Manage-
ment."

"The White Crow

Village, for different reasons, took a pledge to convert to
vegetarianism, for example). During my own
visits, the friendly monks at the temple offered me a
placard that read, "The Management."

The Buddhists, with a placard on the frame that reads, "The Manage-
ment." According to my Western understanding, these
monks are quite a few in Dharamsala adopting a vegetarian
diet for ethical reasons. These ethics may stem from their own Buddhist
traditions or from the secular world (the environmen-
tal concerns of meat-eating, for example). During my own
visits, the friendly monks at the temple offered me a
placard that read, "The Management."

Continued from page 5

But if there is any one group or enterprise that could
cited as at least trying to spear-head any sort of large-
scale animal rights or vegetarian movement among the
Tibetan community in exile, it is the Universal Compassion
Movement. Located next to the Dalai Lama’s temple in
a newly constructed office building called Ahimsa
(no-violence) House, the U.C.M. is led by the vener-
able Geshe Thupten Phelgey. Addressed properly as
Geshe-la, he is a large man with a noble yet blithe spirit.
I spent most of my time in India living in a monastery and
was, at the point of meeting him, somewhat desensi-
tized to the monastic community. But I felt such a charge in
Geshe-la’s presence—the intensity and some-thing so remarkably peaceful and boundless. A monk
for nearly all of his life, he spent most of his existence be-
fore the end of the 1980s in the south of India, where he
became a geshe (a doctor of Tibetan Buddhist philosophy).

In 1996, Geshe-la expounded on this idea in great de-
tail at the first annual Gelugpa Conference. Held in New
Delhi, it was an assembly that invited all the world’s
geshe-la and the Dalai Lama. Temples and nunneries to practice and
advocate vegetarianism. For Geshe-la, awakening people—par-
icularly Buddhists—to the realization that human beings have the ability to stop an enormous amount of suffering by
simply altering their diets is key to solving many other prob-
lems: for him, vegetarianism is the first step towards realiz-
ing universal compassion. For humans to learn to extend
their heart out to animals, he explained, they can develop
compassion for all of their fellow human beings.

Visitors to McLeod-Ganj become quickly aware of the
sign is taking time. “I have many dreams, but am empty-
handed,” Geshe-la told me with a chuckle.

When I spoke with Geshe-la about his beliefs and con-
By Ms. Gandhi. I thought as I listened to her, ‘I can do some-
thing along with Geshe-la and the Dalai Lama.

He and Geshe-la had not seen each other for many years.
As we all sat and talked before dinner, the monk revealed to
his old friend Geshe-la that he had become a vegetarian and
had one of my old friends from the monastery in Australia was also
vegetarians. I could tell that this gave Geshe-la a lot of
hope and joy. Watching him light up then, I remembered one of
the last things Geshe-la and I had spoken about earlier that
day. “I think that vegetarianism or veganism (is a form of
self-denial) will never go away, but as we proceed towards
the different and specific regulations about meat-eating in
other places of worship, the regulations which have often been
misinterpreted to be observed literally, and not understood
as gradual teachings meant to wean followers off of meat-
eating completely. “The Buddha’s teaching was always step-by-
step—the easy way first. When his followers had ripened
their minds, the Buddha would go further with his teaching
(incouraging a progression).”

While convincing people to explore this idea is im-
portant to Geshe-la, the biggest challenge is getting people
to face these issues at all. “So far in our Western world,
it is difficult to be a vegetarian—if one is a monk or not.
Ninety-nine percent eat meat and they don’t even think about
it. This is why we are now trying to bring more awareness.

While he strongly believes that the older generation can al-
most immediately adopt the lifestyle of the younger generation in
Tibetan youths. “I think that there are lots of people try-
ing, but especially the young generation. They are more edu-
cated and sensitive and they also have better understand-
ing and are more open-minded.”

One might speculate that the younger generation would be
the demographic to keep the closest eye on, with the re-
ponsibility that the age bracket holders to preserve the cul-
tural heritage of the homeland that many of them have never
known. In their book Tibetan Cooking, Diki Lobzang and
Sekyung写出 a small fortune in ruppes
in the space cost of running the sign’s lease and
to struggling to raise money to renew the sign’s lease and
$170, it’s a small fortune for a monk operating a
restaurant. Geshe-la is currently collaborating with a professional chef
on a Tibetan cookbook for vegetarians, the sign is the only
major work from the U.C.M. at this point. Geshe-la and his
associates have been desperately working at raising funds—
while the lease and artwork for the sign only costs about
$170, it is a small fortune in rupees considering the current
non-profit organization in a third-world country. In addition
to struggling to raise money to renew the sign’s lease and
produce a short video about ani-
mal issues. Though it sounds superfluous, the video is actu-
ally a top priority, as a large percentage of the Tibetan com-
unity-in-exile is illiterate and need to have the U.C.M.’s
message witnessed to them more than the sign or lit-
terature. But the video will take time, as simply funding the
sign is taking time. “I have many dreams, but am empty-
handed,” Geshe-la told me with a chuckle.

When I spoke with Geshe-la about his beliefs and con-
Geshe-la told me with a chuckle.

When I spoke with Geshe-la about his beliefs and con-
"Every day, think as you wake up, ‘Today I am fortu-
ate to have woken up. I am alive. I have a precious human
life. I am not going to waste it. I am going to use all my
energies to develop myself, to expand my heart out to oth-
ers...to achieve enlightenment for the benefit of all beings.
I am going to have kind thoughts towards others. I am not
going to get angry or think badly about others. I am going to
benefit others as much as I can...”

- His Holiness XIV Dalai Lama of Tibet
but the day would continue very late for
While I was at work, there was a con-
stant clinking at their workbenches and
realts. Therefore, once the movie was
frame of film was traceable between its
during this meticulous cataloguing,
and, above all, more production;
it makes humans smarter,
In his opinion, the hindering of technology is
mation. If allowed to use technology to
eliminate tedious tasks such as clean-
ing, laundering, or cooking, scientists
could conceivably find a way to replen-
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The Lost Crusade: Former Editor Muses on the Myth of True Love

by Paul Durica
Editor Emeritus

Let's be honest, I have hurt everyone I have ever loved and have been hurt by everyone who has ever loved me. I have told lies out of fear and, I am convinced, out of care. I have told the truth to preserve love and to foster hate. In short, I have spent four years toeing the line between saint and sinner, and as a relaxed Catholic and failed Boy Scout, I place myself among the world's fallen angels. My enduring motivation for actions both benevolent and questionable is the pursuit of genuine maturation through a sampling of the weird and wonderful. But as before, let's be honest, I'm after the One.

The One — call it what you will, soul mate, beloved, lover, life partner — makes us sip that extra beer at a party, cry ourselves to sleep at night, and carry ever onward into the realm of the vulnerable and sublime. Even the nymphs and satyrs among us must admit to an occasional pricking of desire for a single individual to satiate their passions. When a relationship expires, buries itself in the elephant graveyard of false intentions, stale desire, and lost hope, we, the lovers of the world, console ourselves with time-tested bromides, "If it was meant to be," "If you plant the seeds, the harvest is guaranteed," "There's always someone else." The beauty of this search: everything an individual learns now, or next month, is, if it is one to recognize the One? What makes one Grill genuine and all the others an assortment of pain and misdirected desire?

I once relied upon a dulle achy in my skull to tell me whether a relationship would work or not, like arthritic, old men whose knee pains predict storms, or my grandmother's intuition, which makes her turn right when left would lead to traffic jams and stalled autos. Even if everything seems perfect on an external level, the ache is accurate; it is a pattern of doubt. The beauty of this search: everything an individual learns now, or next month, is, if it is one to recognize the One? What makes one Grill genuine and all the others an assortment of pain and misdirected desire?

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