

Portland State University

PDXScholar

Portland Spectator

University Archives: Campus Publications &
Productions

2-15-2009

The Portland Spectator, February 2009

Portland State University. Student Publications Board

Follow this and additional works at: <https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/spectator>

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation

Portland State University. Student Publications Board, "The Portland Spectator, February 2009" (2009).
Portland Spectator. 17.

<https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/spectator/17>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access. It has been accepted for inclusion in Portland Spectator by an authorized administrator of PDXScholar. Please contact us if we can make this document more accessible:
pdxscholar@pdx.edu.

The Portland
Spectator

Volume 7, Issue 5, February 2009

**Eyes
on
Media**



Index

On the Cover

Illustration by Joe Wirtheim

Employee Freedom of Choice Act

By Kelly Welch

Unions, not as friendly as they used to be.

Fitness Corner: The Paradox

By Jolene Johnson

The battle between working out and looking good while doing it.

From The Mind of Kelly

By Kelly Welch

What exactly do we get from University Studies?

Better Media

By Rebecca Rudawitz

A discussion on our dependence to our beloved media.

Salesman of the Year

By Michael DeVietro

Firearm enthusiasts rush to get their guns before the new administration changes gun laws.

Milestones in Conservative Thought

By Mikel McDaniel

We welcome you to *Reflections on the Revolution in France* by Edmund Burke.

Vincent's Page

By Vincent Berretta

Two aspiring screen-writers hit Park City, Utah for the Sundance Film Festival.

Mission Statement

The Portland Spectator believes that the academic environment should be an open forum, where there is a chance for rational and prudent conservative arguments to be heard. We encourage the expression of diverse ideology to promote thought-provoking discussions.

The Portland Spectator

Editor - In - Chief

Sarah J. Christensen

Senior Editor

Position Available

Marketing Manager

Vincent Berretta

Copy Editor

Mikel McDaniel

Staff Writer

Kelly Welch

Contributors

Samantha Berrier

Michael F. DeVietro

Sarah Finn

Jolene Johnson

Matthew Keenen

Claudiu Lodromanean

Tessie Lopez

Phil Meakins

Jen Newberry

Rebecca Rudawitz

Lane Thompson

Joe Wirtheim

The Portland Spectator is published by the Student Publications Board of Portland State University. It is funded through incidental student fees, advertisement revenue, and private donations.

All essays and commentaries herein represent the opinions of the writer and not necessarily the opinions of the staff.

The Portland Spectator accepts letters to the editor and commentaries from students, faculty and staff at Portland State University.

Please limit your letters to 300 words when possible.

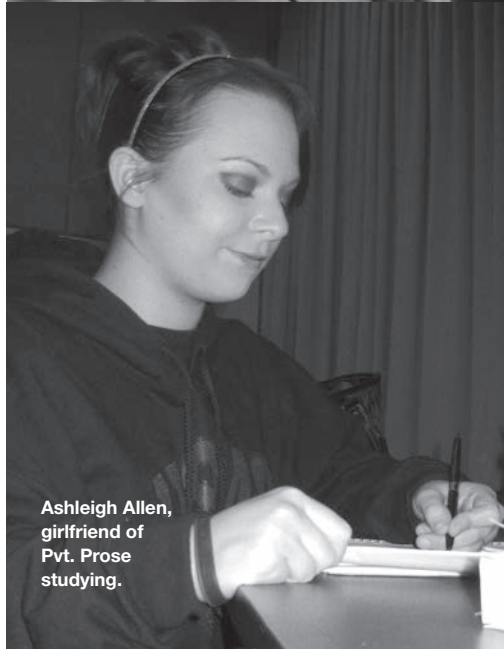
We reserve the right to edit material we find obscene, libelous, inappropriate or lengthy. We are not obliged to print anything to which we do not consent. Unsolicited material will not be returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self addressed envelope. Submission constitutes testimony as to the accuracy.

Copyright 2009 The Portland Spectator.
All rights reserved.

The Portland Spectator: P.O. Box 347,
Portland, OR 97207. Located in SMSU S29.
503.725.9795
spectate@pdx.edu
www.portlandspectator.pdx.edu



Portland Mayor Sam Adams; under recent scandal regarding his lies to voters.



Ashleigh Allen, girlfriend of Pvt. Prose studying.



SFC Member surfing Facebook during budget hearings.

Letter From the Editor

Dear Readers,

I've been told by many of my friends that I'm a throw-back to the days of Betty Crocker and Mr. Smith Goes to Washington. I suppose that's true. I like hand-written letters, writing thank you notes, and I can make cranberry sauce from scratch. What really separates me the most though is that I still strive to be civic-minded.

In my opinion, being civic-minded goes beyond serving in the armed forces or casting your ballot. It's taking pride in your home, school, community, and more importantly the people in them.

It doesn't mean serving PSU students as a member of the SFC by surfing Facebook during budget hearings where dedicated students are working hard for their student groups. It doesn't mean running for mayor of a city and disrespecting your voters by lying to them throughout your campaign.

It does however mean being polite to your waiter at the Cheerful Tortoise or being a supportive military girlfriend. It does mean showing respect for those who came before us, making the life we live possible.

Our new president, Barack Obama, said it well at the Commander In Chief Ball the night of his inauguration;

"While the tests we face are new, the ways in which we meet them may be new, the values on which our success depends are old. Those values like hard-work and honesty, courage and tolerance, loyalty and patriotism. Those are values that are embodied in our armed forces. What's required is for all of us to return to those values, what's required for all of us is to embrace a new era of responsibility where we expect and demand not only more of our leaders, but more of ourselves."

President Obama may have been speaking to a room of people already dedicated to civic-mindedness, but I think we could use the reminder as well.

Thank you.

Sarah J. Christensen
Editor-In-Chief

The Employee “Free” Choice Act

How much you need to educate yourself for union decisions

By Kelly Welch

Unionization was a fundamental tool toward the development of improved workers protections and rights during the early 20th Century. When workers banded together and fought mistreatment through solidarity, it helped usher in a new era of respect and enfranchisement for the people upon whose back this country is supported. But, through the years, changes have come in the conditions of labor and the nature of unions themselves. And now there is a discussion being centered on the Employee Free Choice Act.

This piece of legislation (which the AFL-CIO’s website is quick to point out is a bipartisan effort) aims to improve the ease of forming and joining unions, as well as mandating that an employer begin negotiations with such a union within ten days of its certification. During the previous Congress, the House passed the legislation, but it was stopped in the Senate. Now the current composition of the House and Senate, weighed heavier with union-friendly Democrats seems poised to pass this legislation. But is that necessarily a good idea?

One of the primary reasons that

Democrats and unions love each other so much is the mutual benefits they give each other. Democrats provide legislation that aids union operations in the United States. In return, unions speak to their membership highly of the Democratic Party. It stands to reason that the primary rationale behind Democrat support of the Employee Free Choice Act is that it improves their standing with American workers – specifically laborers in manufacturing – when they pass legislation that “looks out for the little guy.” It would be unfair to accuse the Democrats of being the only party concerned with incumbency, but some of the things they do to insure that they stay in office are rather unnecessary, and perhaps counterintuitive.

In being able to facilitate union forming and joining, the AFL-CIO states that this legislation will help the 60% of workers who have expressed a desire to join unions (utilizing a study that says they would join tomorrow if given the chance). These same workers, the research states, face intimidation, threats, and retaliation when they work toward a union. This is already illegal, so if that is the rationale for the passing of legislation, it is redundant and unnecessary. If an employee is fired for

attempting union activity, they already can file an unfair labor practice lawsuit. The stipulations of this are already outlined in law in the National Labor Relations Act, which is administered under the Congress-created National Labor Relations Bureau.

If the Act isn’t even necessary, then the potential dangers that come with it could be avoided easily by the rejection of the legislation. The AFL-CIO puts forward another justification for the Act, stating it facilitates workers’ rights by “[a]llowing them to form unions by signing cards authorizing union representation.” An anonymous source who works in labor law believes this is the most manipulative part of the legislation. “They can just come in and ask you to sign something about liking the idea of a union,” she says, “or supporting the move towards discussing unionization, and then that’s it, you’re in the union, and hooked.” The lack of transparency is understandably worrisome.

This source also fears the competition between unions for membership within a workplace. Unions, she believes, are far more predatory and self-interested than they purport



to be. Working in a location with a union that is mandatory to join means employees will have to pay union dues. Expanding the ability to unionize work that may be getting along just fine without it could carry risk. Workers in various industries often issue the same complaint – their union representative is ineffective. And should an employee begin to feel exasperated by the process and wish to change employers, their union dues don't come with them. Unions have fewer battles to fight in an era where workers are protected by the government. If a union has no cause to champion on behalf of their members, and their members have paid them significant dues over their period of employment, one wonders what good it may have done, if any.

Some unions do fantastic work to ensure their members are taken care of in their workplaces. But more workers ought to be aware that they have rights in the workplace that are guaranteed to them even in the absence of a union. Laws must be upheld by employers and employees alike without an intermediary there to enforce them. If workers are receiving harassment for any reason from their employers, even if it is not a union-related issue, they have recourse through the internal

power structure of their employer's chain of command, and then the legal recourse of filing a lawsuit. According to a 2007 publication by the multinational law firm Jones Day, over 40,000 employment lawsuits are filed each year in the United States. Many of these are class action lawsuits, so it stands to reason that groups of workers can band together for a common cause without necessarily being in a union to do so.

Employees ought to be able to unionize, and they can. What should cause worry is the increased likelihood that unions will capitalize on unscrupulous tactics and absence of transparency to extend their grip to areas of employment where perhaps they do not belong. If employees are already paying hundreds of dollars in dues to a union that has no work to do, or which refuses to do the work that exists, there is absolutely no reason they should be able to increase that activity.

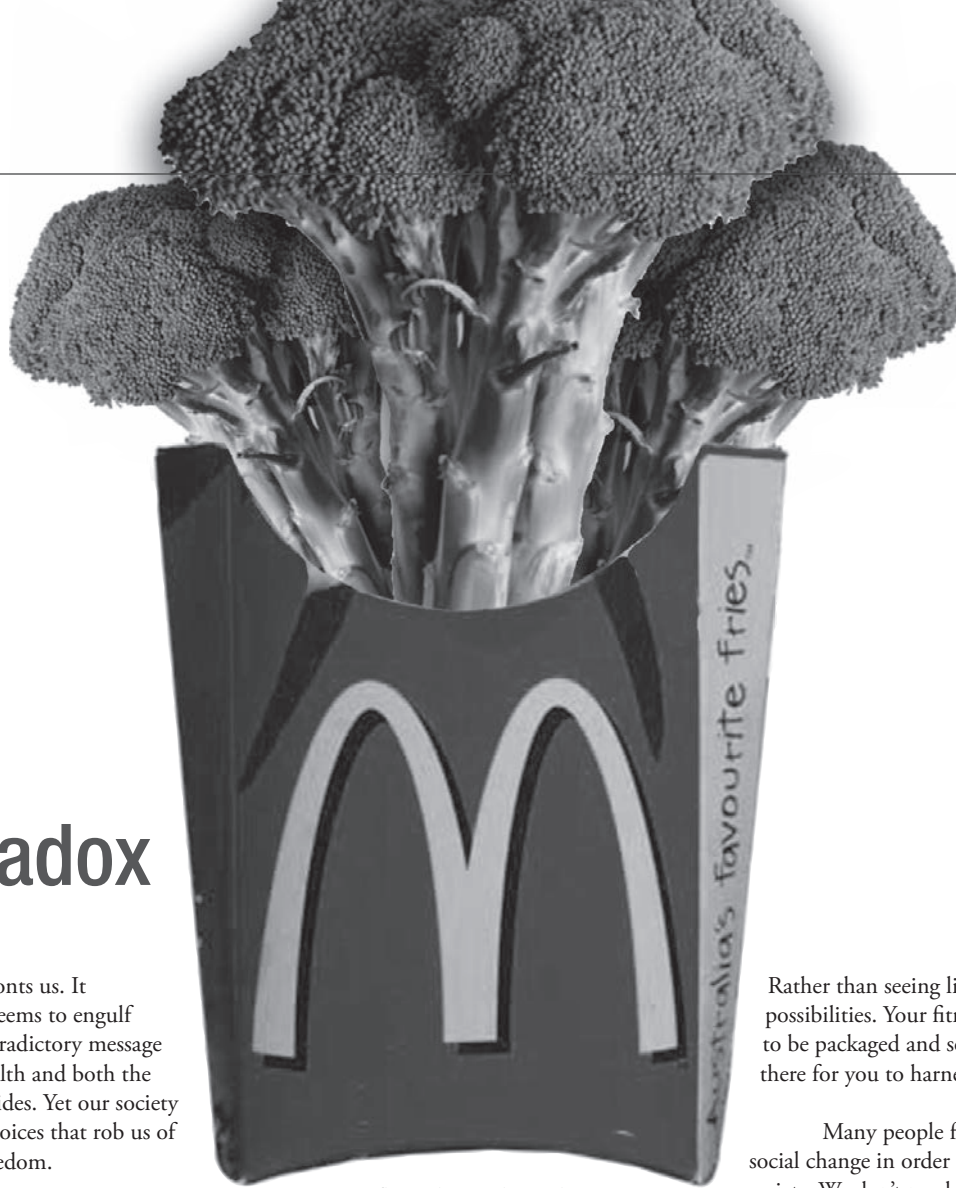
Employees in any industry should not sign anything a union official or representative gives them without reading in full any accompanying literature. Lacking any information on what their signature means, signing a union card would be a very bad

idea. Unions may have good motives and lack malicious intentions, but one can never be too safe. All workers should also read up on what their rights are on the National Labor Relations Bureau website, <http://nlrb.gov>. This organization exists to serve the people in this

Unions, she believes, are far more predatory and self-interested than they purport to be.

country, first and foremost, and is a resource that is sadly not utilized enough.

It is often said that we should arm ourselves with information. Be aware of the promises unions make, and if they actually deliver on them. If you are paying them to serve you, it would be stellar to get a return on your investment. Hopefully this Congress will think a bit more critically about the Employee Free Choice Act before they vote on it. ■



The Paradox

By Jolene Johnson

Daily a paradox confronts us. It surrounds us and at times seems to engulf us. This paradox is the contradictory message of the media. We desire health and both the energy and freedom it provides. Yet our society also promotes unhealthy choices that rob us of our health and thus our freedom.

Messages such as eat more junk food, drink alcohol, don't relax, smoke cigarettes, and drink soda saturate our culture. The products that surround us are full of useless calories that do not create the health or the energy we desire. We make choices that break us down and contribute to the stress that deprives us of our peace of mind.

At one time communicable diseases like the

flu, polio, and measles were the biggest threat to our lives. Today the biggest threat is subtle. It is our lifestyle choices that contribute to disease. The things we do today that affect us 10+ years down the road. Essentially our lifestyle is the disease.

Okay, this sounds like a bummer. We don't have to overcomplicate things. We don't have to be subject to unhealthy choices that make us fat and ugly. We can be in control of our choices.

Rather than seeing limitations we can see possibilities. Your fitness is not a commodity to be packaged and sold at a unit price. It is there for you to harness and utilize.

Many people feel they need a grand social change in order to create a healthy society. We don't need more money. No gym membership is required. No policy change is necessary. We need not buy expensive workout clothes or equipment. These things are nice but we must begin where we are. If we step back and simplify then all we need is 15-30 minutes, 3-5 times a week. We can walk, jump, run, or hike – anything to challenge the arms, core, and legs. All this without spending extra money. ■

Some resources

Figure out the mileage of your walk or run
<http://www.mapmyrun.com>

Hiking in the city at Forrest Park
<http://www.forestparkconservancy.org/trails>

PSU Campus Recreation Website
<http://www.pdx.edu/recreation/>

Campus Rec

The cardio circuit room and the weight room are open to students to use free of charge. Check the Campus Rec web-site for open hours.

Personal Training

GroupX are group fitness classes that are fun, challenging and appropriate for all fitness levels.

Group X Schedule

Yoga

Sunday's 11:30am – 12:30pm, and
Monday's 6:00-6:50pm – PSC Rm. 207

Core Strength & Toning

Tuesday's 4:00 - 5:00pm PSC Rm. 207

Step Training

Wednesday's 6:00 - 6:50pm PSC Rm. 207

Bellydance

Sunday's 2:00-3:00pm PSC Rm. 207

From the Mind of Kelly

Dear PSU, What's Up With University Studies?

By Kelly Welch

Dear Portland State,

It's me again. As I get closer to graduation, I cannot help but reflect back on the hoops you've made me jump through to get to this point. Some of it I understand – the whole having a major thing and passing my classes part I totally get. But there's one thing that has confused me since day one: the University Studies program. I thought I had major requirements and electives and... that was it. Oh, how wrong I was.

I transferred to PSU from PCC a few years ago. Sadly, I came with 89 transfer credits. This meant that I had to take a 4-credit Sophomore Inquiry class. I immediately went to PCC and had them re-send my transcripts, hoping a hidden credit would emerge to give me the mythical 90 required to evade that torturous class. No such luck for me, and delay it as I tried, I still found myself at 22 in a class full of 19-year-olds.

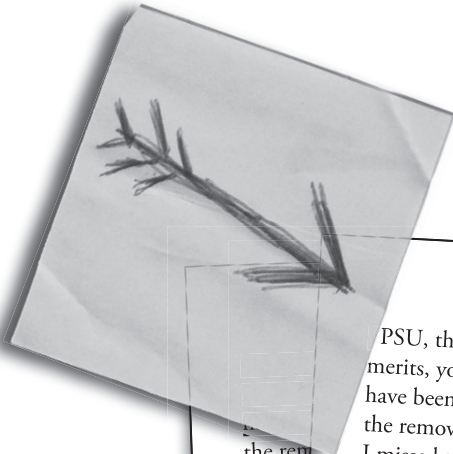
The website for University Studies claims that it is the "secret behind our students' success." It also claims to teach us how to learn. What University Studies taught me was that any class that had a "U" after its course number was going to be total cake, so I loaded up on them for electives. Since being a University Studies class meant that it needed to be approachable for non-majors, I – a Political Science major – had to endure plenty of the classes offered by my department that were flooded by non-major plebeians. No doubt that people in other programs felt the same when I graced them with my presence in whatever "U" class they had to take to graduate.

Don't get me wrong – I liked some of the classes I took for my Junior Cluster, and my Senior Capstone was kind of nice. However, had I been given a choice, I might not have bothered taking them at all. Taking enriching courses for yourself is more fulfilling than taking enriching courses because someone else is making you. If these courses have been designed to make us more complete as students, it is a message from the University that we are incapable of doing so ourselves. The electives I have chosen for myself gave me much more than the ones I was expected to take because I was in control of the decision to take them.

The website further explains that "[a]lmost every institution of higher learning requires students to complete some kind of general education program in addition to their major field of study." It further explains that the "thematic approach" they take with Clusters and Inquiries are there to enhance learning and retention. These classes are in no way applicable to our majors. Furthermore, they don't go toward degree requirements or really supplement basic education in any way that makes sense to me. I understand why a B.A. requires fine arts or a foreign language. I get why a B.S. requires math and science. I do not get why I needed to take so much Russian literature to get my Bachelor's. I liked reading Anna Karenina. I did not like spending so much on the tuition to do so.

Over -->

- Preparation H
- Water
- Cookies
- Gerbils



PSU, this program kind of sucks. At least, it appears to. I think if you really believe it has academic merits, you need to do more work educating us on the "why" and the "how" this will benefit us. There have been changes to University Studies that give me the impression it is a lower priority now, such as the removal of mentors from the Sophomore Inquiry program, leaving them just in Freshman Inquiry. I missed the Freshman Inquiry (thank GOD!) but many Freshman I knew through my tour at PSU have told me that it involved strange requirements, bad reading selections, and seemed to be in no way beneficial for their education. Many of them I knew, due to financial restrictions, could not enroll as full-time students and thus had to delay working on their majors since the all-important Freshman Inquiry took up all their time and money.

We don't have to go through this program if we are in Liberal Studies (which a colleague of mine remarked was "majoring in not making up your mind"), or in the University Honors program. If we are transfer students, we cannot enter Honors since the curriculum is intended for a full four years. This means that had we the financial foresight to spend less money at PCC, or tried out a different university before PSU, we have essentially no way to avoid University Studies. I won't call Honors elitist, because I know people in the program and they are pretty cool. But, since I had to default to University Studies, I guess I'm a little bitter that my ability to choose was stolen because I had completed some of my education elsewhere.

College is a time when we start to employ freedom of choice. Most of us are out of our parents' basements, working jobs of our own, deciding on our own whether to eat vegetables or junk food, and choosing our own majors and careers. If the University Studies program is yet another decision out of the hands of students, this makes the program feel overbearing and paternalistic. We can choose Liberal Studies, but if we have any ambition towards jobs, we are better served with a major. We can choose the Honors program, but a significant number of us either came too late to do that, or were unable to make that decision the summer before our Freshman year.

We get shoehorned into University Studies, even though there is some liberty in deciding what courses we want to take in each cluster, but these courses do not provide much practical or holistic educational benefit for us. They are not academically demanding since they need to be passable for students who have never studied those subjects before. Mostly, students at Portland State view them as yet another requirement to get that glorious degree. And unlike Spanish or Algebra, which some may think they'll have little application for our future lives, most of these classes exist, it seems, to make our conversations more interesting during dinner parties. I would love to be proved wrong on this, and I invite a challenge to my interpretation of University Studies. It would be comforting to know that several thousand dollars I owe to Uncle Sam once I'm outta' this joint actually served a purpose toward making me a better student and adult.

PSU, I still love you, despite your confusing academic programs.

Sincerely,

Kelly Welch



Better Media Better Media

With new and old media encroaching on our lives, are we sure we can go without?

By Rebecca Rudawitz

Eventually, we get tired of slur commercials and political commentary, of snap shots of politicians in awkward positions and in-depth analysis of their clothing budgets. Songs get reworded and people's heads get pasted over other people's bodies and by the end of the day you just want to toss your hands into the air and swear off the entire media charade. Yet, I think there was a valuable lesson to be learned about the media in the last election, something that's been muttering, disgruntled, along the edges of the stage since the beginning of politics.

Victory goes to he, or she, who best uses the media. The better website, the flashier commercial, the catchier theme-song, the prettier pamphlet, the larger network, the quicker downloads, the easier-to-use interactive media, the shinier buttons, the most annoying ringtone, the most extensive music list, the highest number of Facebook friends, or the most comprehensive collection of data. It has always been this way. The difference is that now we have brightly colored moving pictures and tantalizing hyperlinks instead of loudmouths on the tops of soapboxes or print-pressed paper bulletins. Would we have loved Superman less if his theme song had been timid and boring and his costume an eyesore? Would we be a less religious society if the first book widely printed and published hadn't been the Bible?

We use the media in a million different ways each week. But we live in an era of options. If I don't like something, I don't have to read it, listen to it, or watch it. With the assistance of the internet, I don't even have to worry about those pesky commercials in order to watch ten minute segments of my favorite TV shows. You and I have the freedom to

decide which mediums and which messages we want to receive. Yet this freedom comes with a price.

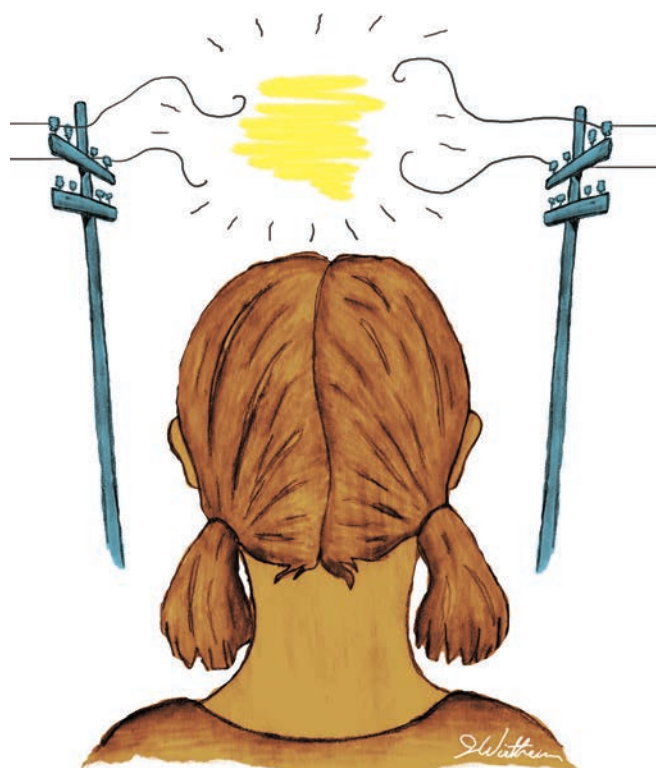
As we pick and choose, we are compartmentalizing ourselves into ever smaller definitions of who we are and what we do, and with whom we do it. With virtually unlimited access to television on the internet, there is no

longer a need to gather with our friends in front of the tube at a specific time each week for a shared cultural experience. Who needs to bother with the radio station, and all their tiny interjections of community news, when you can get exactly the songs you want on your iPod? And what's the big deal about sports and the outdoors, when you can scale mountains

and battle the forces of darkness in a virtual reality that is both brighter and more exciting than in real life? You don't even need to "stop" working on your homework to chat with your acquaintances, nor say a word in class to send a message to your best friend sitting at the opposite end of the room.

We are losing our sense of community, and – in some cases – our sense of reality. During finals last quarter, I spent twenty four hours without electricity, and after the intense feelings of cold (I had pitched a tent in the back yard only a few days before that big snow storm) and boredom (oh World of Warcraft, I missed you so....) came loneliness. Without my cell phone or my computer, I was isolated from the people I talk to. Anyone who I couldn't walk to was out of my world, and the sad part is how many people are that far away. I could not chat, or instant message, check email, text, post long rants on forums, or send private messages. And there was no radio or television or iPod to fill in the quiet space with music and noise and meaningless chatter that I can pretend is actually directed at me. What would you do without electricity? Worse, what would you do without media? With no books, or newspapers, or magazines – nothing to read at all?

Well, you wouldn't need me around to ask questions like this. That's for certain. You can not escape, and honestly, I don't think you really want to. ■



We use the media a million different ways each week. To think that it won't affect us is sheer stupidity.

Salesman of the Year

How Barack Obama is spurring gun sales

By Michael F. DeVietro

As soon as Barack Obama was declared the winner of the 2008 Presidential election, both the radical left and the radical right started screaming about guns. One example was Tom Diaz of the Violence Policy Center, a Washington DC based gun control group, being quoted saying that if he were an Obama advisor he “would tell him to shut down this valve that allows military-style assault weapons to be imported into the country. He can change that easily with an executive decision. Third, I would tell him to renew the debate about assault weapons. The 1994 law was a joke. The gun industry easily got around it because there were so many loopholes.” In fact Obama even stated on both his change.gov website and later on the Whitehouse.gov website that “Obama and Biden also favor commonsense measures that respect the Second Amendment rights of gun owners, while keeping guns away from children and from criminals. They support closing the gun show loophole and making guns in this country childproof. They also support making the expired federal Assault Weapons Ban permanent.”

“Gun Show loophole” is a term that gets tossed around a lot without much explanation. In short, the gun show loophole is private sales. Currently most states allow the private transfer of firearms from one person to another without the need of a firearms dealer or background check as long as both people involved are residents of the same state. All transfers across state lines must go through a federally licensed firearms dealer. To the pro-gun lobby, it maintains that private sales are important for a number of reasons ranging from allowing for gifts and inheritance from family to being able to purchase a gun “off the books” for privacy reasons. It is already illegal to sell a firearm to a person who you know is legally prohibited from owning a firearm. However many sellers make a point to ask few questions of their buyers. This has become a large issue at gatherings such as gun shows where several hundred private firearms transfers may happen in the same location on the same day. For this reason several states including Oregon have placed a threshold law saying that if more than “X” number of guns are for sale at a gun show then all transactions must go through the NICS background check system.

This sort of reaction was pretty much what the gun industry and the 85-90 million gun owners in the US expected. However, when gun owners started screaming about the election of Barack Obama, they did it with their wallets. One clear example of this is that during the middle of October, just prior to the election, Cope Reynolds, owner of

Southwest Shooting Authority in Farmington New Mexico, held a “Pre Osama Bin Biden sale” the sale covered most firearms in his store but discounts were most heavily focused on weapons and ammunition that would be the target of a future assault weapons ban. He made it clear that this was not about moving out merchandise – it was to put more guns into the hands of lawful gun owners.

The data that we have indicate that Americans are buying guns as fast as they can. In fact, their purchasing is so rapid that the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives has had to modify the rules placed on gun dealers just to keep up with the paperwork. All firearms sales that go through licensed firearms dealers are recorded on a standard form which is named the ATF Form 4473. On January 6th, 2009 the Department of Justice issued a letter to all federal firearms dealers stating: “As a result of an unprecedented increase in demand for ATF Forms 4473 (5300.9) Part I Revised August 2008, inventory of the form at the ATF Distribution Center is running low. As a temporary measure, ATF is allowing FFLs to photocopy the form 4473 in it's [sic] entirety until they receive their orders from the ATF Distribution Center. A notice will be posted at the expiration of this temporary authorized change.” Prior to this memo, if a gun dealer ran out of 4473 forms they would have to either borrow from another dealer or stop sales of firearms, in fact recording a gun sale or transfer on a photocopied 4473 would be grounds for financial sanction or loss of one's dealer license.

Additionally we can look at the number of requests sent through the National Instant Crime background check System (NICS), which seems to suggest a general rise in gun sales nationwide. Specifically, NICS checks for people who wanted to purchase a gun have jumped twenty-four percent -- 1,523,426 in November 2008 compared to 1,230,525 in November 2007.

For Americans to be spending so much money on firearms, which are often classified as luxury items by many economists during such an economic recession, shows a clear sense of fear among gun owners for the future availability of certain weapons. Ironically enough, the rush of gun sales has actually made many firearms unavailable for the simple fact that manufactures and distributors can't meet demand. Almost ever major distributor has notes on their websites stating that - due to unprecedented sales - orders are back-ordered for as long as 3-6 months, even on those items that were regularly kept in stock. ■



ATF Form 4473

ATF Form 4473, Firearm Transaction Record Part 1, is a document used by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) to record the sale or transfer of a firearm. The form is divided into several sections, including:

- Section 1: General Information (Name, Address, Date of Birth, etc.)
- Section 2: Firearm Information (Make, Model, Serial Number, etc.)
- Section 3: Transaction Information (Type of Transaction, Date of Transaction, etc.)
- Section 4: Signature and Certification (Signature of Buyer, Signature of Seller, etc.)

The form is used to track the movement of firearms and to ensure that they are sold or transferred to the appropriate person. It is a required document for all firearm transactions in the United States.

12d. Are you a fugitive from justice?

12j. Have you ever renounced your United States citizenship?

12k. Are an alien illegally in the United States?



Milestones in Conservative Thought

Reflections on the Revolution in France, by Edmund Burke

Essay by Mikel McDaniel

From now until June, the Milestones series of the Portland Spectator will undertake a short survey of some of the most prominent pieces of literature informing the modern American conservative ethos. Each month's issue will feature a brief essay introducing one major work from several prominent American, French, and English writers.

If any man could be considered the Father of American conservatism it would be an 18th century British parliamentarian named Edmund Burke. Though not an American himself, and though abhorrent of the idea of any armed rebellion against the British Crown, Burke was nevertheless a proponent of American independence. He believed – like a few of our Founding Fathers, in fact – that America should be mostly exempt from the authority of Parliament, since she had no representation in the British legislature, but that she should still owe allegiance to the Church and Crown of England. It was not, however, his involvement with the American Revolution that earned Burke his place in history and a seat among the great thinkers of Western Civilization, rather it was his enlightened and controversial response to the infamous revolution in France.

Burke's most famous book was actually – as its full title indicates – originally intended to be a letter for a colleague in France. Written in 1790, *Reflections on the Revolution in France, and on the Proceedings in Certain Societies in London Relative to That Event: in a Letter Intended to Have Been Sent to a Gentleman in Paris*, is a thorough meditation on the ideas of revolution, protest, patriotism, religion, political duty, tradition, and honor as they were accentuated by the French

Revolution.

Interestingly, Burke begins his book at the end of the story, describing the reactions of certain intellectual circles in England to the French Revolution, notably the praise that was being launched at the revolutionaries for finally throwing off their oppressive government. These intellectuals, according to Burke, endorsed the Revolution out of their misguided support for everything that opposes itself to what is established, rather than as an example of their particular ideals and political ambitions.

It was just these intellectuals who promulgated utopian ideologies and attempted to justify the rule of the British monarch as depending directly from the will of “the people”. The implication being that when the king behaves in a way met with general disapproval from the masses, the king's reign can be declared illegitimate. Not only this, but when any government does not appeal to the immediate whims of its citizens, those same subjects have the authority to disdain their heritage, behead their leaders, and erect a new government to meet their needs. Burke urgently argues that this perspective of a people's relationship to its government is completely backwards, and that even when leadership acts selfishly or with incompetence, “a revolution will be the very last resource of the thinking and the good.”

However, it was not Burke's intention to impress an irrational anxiety towards change, for he positively insisted that a “state without the means of some change is without the means of its conservation.” Rather, however, change should be approached as an agent of tradition. It is the charge of the wise to develop the means for adapting the best and highest

parts of our heritage to the constantly and inevitably changing environment of society. It can thus even be wise to revolt against one's government, but Burke admonishes that this is a final resort and should be treated as a somber and dreadful enterprise, not a passionate or arousing opportunity:

"The speculative line of demarcation, where obedience ought to end and resistance must begin, is faint, obscure, and not easily definable. It is not a single act or a single event which determines it. Governments must be abused and deranged indeed, before it can be thought of; and the prospect of the future must be as bad as the experience of the past."

Burke sets himself apart from the more prominent liberal political thinkers by downplaying the faculty of human reason in constructing any part of society and by endorsing the virtues of prejudice and prescription. Governments — to say nothing of the larger societies to which they belong — are tirelessly complicated, relying on intricate relationships that react to stimuli in often unexpected ways. No good government is built from a set of blueprints, rather they grow out of necessity, gradually adopting policies, powers, and limitations as circumstances demand, and by the direction of prudent men.

A people's political heritage is a store of wisdom concerning how society should be ordered: wisdom that has proved itself at the very least by enduring throughout multiple generations, if not by also providing citizens with many rights and privileges not otherwise at their disposal. Certain elements of a government may appear unnecessary, or their function uncertain and even possibly prohibitive to some newly sought-after good; however Burke warns that tampering with the established order is a threat to a people's civic boons in proportion to their ignorance of how the exact mechanisms of a government secure their livelihood. Thus Burke insists that the "very idea of the fabrication of a new government is enough to fill us with disgust and horror."

Far from being a source of oppression and stagnation, Burke revels in the past as the surest source of wisdom for our conduct in the present. The traditions handed to us by our ancestors are like a head-start on the long road leading to worthy and prosperous lives. But those who rather are intoxicated with the notion of creating something new, with tearing down what has been tested in the furnace of time and esteeming something of their own minds in its place, Burke warns are of a dangerous and unworthy disposition.

"A spirit of innovation is generally the result of a selfish temper and confined views." Vanity and youthful rebellion are more responsible for radical political plans than sobriety and sincerity.

Whatever the initial cry of a rebellious circle, most such groups quickly find a sure source of attacks against the present order (and more than sure support from the demotic citizenry) in criticizing the inequality of wealth and power found in any nation. As disparate as their views may be one from the other, almost all liberal reformations find common support for any enterprise that promises to steal from the rich and give to the poor. Burke barely finds the need to comment on the morality of social inequality, instead merely pointing out its ubiquity and inevitability in any civilization; such a mainstay of society is an essential pillar of culture, and to threaten it is to threaten order itself:

"In all societies consisting of various descriptions of citizens, some descriptions must be uppermost. The levellers, therefore, only change and pervert the natural order of things: they load the edifice of society by setting up in the

air what the solidity of the structure requires to be on the ground."

All of our civilization's most hallowed gifts — including the precious gift of freedom itself — have been secured by adherence to the prescriptions of the past. Where our ancestors have fought, bled, and died to improve our lot, we have not thanklessly tossed aside our undeserved rewards, but rather have bent a knee in gratitude and kept their memory ever tied to the treasures we enjoy. By not forgetting from where our freedom comes, we are best able to hold on to the freedom and to someday give it to our own children. For the unfortunate paradox is that freedom necessarily implies the option of rejecting freedom. Only by wielding our privileges to honor the tradition that gave them to us can we hope to continue their enjoyment. "Always acting as if in the presence of canonized forefathers, the spirit of freedom, leading in itself to misrule and excess, is tempered with an awful gravity." ■





**Egyptian Theater Marquee -
T minus 12 hours to bloody
zombie madness.**
Photo courtesy of Tyler Cling

Vincent's Page

By Vincent Berretta

The day was a hellish one. We were tired, hungry, and irritable. Twenty-four hours of driving and a minimal amount of sleep put us in a dreary mood. However we were hopeful as we stood in line for tickets to *Dead Snow* (or *Dod Sno* in its native Norwegian), a movie we had wanted to see before we even departed for the 2009 Sundance Festival. Standing at the front of the line, Tyler, Phil and I debated the concept of the film.

"I think they're Zombie Nazis," said Tyler, "that's what it says in the byline." I however wasn't convinced. It seemed more logical that they were Nazi Zombies: that the Zombies just happened to have been Nazis before they were Zombies and hadn't made a conscious decision at the time of their reanimation to sympathize with the Nazi cause. "Well we'll just ask them at the Q and A," said Phil, taking a tug out of his flask.

Was I arguing semantics? Sure, but what could be more important to understanding the depth of a film about six Norwegian medical students in the mountains getting attacked by the anti-Semitic undead then whether or not their

hatred transcended life and death? This is what Sundance is really about, after all. Provocative questioning. The human condition. Real life.

We took a number indicating our place in line, found as Portland-esque a bar as possible downtown, and settled in for a brew. Interest in the film had blown up over night, but we were of the few lucky ones who got to buy tickets. The theater was packed and I sat a stone's throw away from John Cusack. And that is the last time I will mention John Cusack ever again. The lights went down and the film began.

I've never sat with such an enthusiastic audience before. Patrons were literally pleading with the screen as if their cries could change the gruesome events that were unfolding, "No, God, anything but that. Really?" cried a fat man next to me. Yes, I thought, exactly that. The film was conscious of what it was; a B horror film ridiculous to the extreme. And the crowd absolutely loved it. Guts flew, blood was spilled, insane dialogue uttered – cinema at its finest. In fact, unbeknownst

to anybody at the time, the film would later be picked up by IFC with intentions of American distribution; which is needless to say a huge boon for the creators.

The crowd erupted in applause at the onset of the credits and the director – Tommy Wirkola – took the stage, “We used 450 liters of fake blood, I hope that was enough for you.” The Q and A followed next but we changed our question to one that pertained more to a scene featuring the comic relief. For decency purposes I won’t mention it here, but if you can imagine a love scene in the john then you get the idea.

The crowd filtered into the cold streets and we were some of the last out. On the way down the street, Phil saw a man he recognized that worked on the film. “Hey man great job,” Phil said, never shy to offer his hand.

“You guys want to come into the Dead Snow private party?” the man asked. We were in the front door and seated with three free drinks each and Spanakopita before you could say “Ja.”

While we were seated, the stars of the film started to make their way into the bar. They mostly sat in the back, but a few minutes later Stig Frode Henriksen (who played Roy, one of the med students) came up to us to say hi. We persuaded him to stay and have a drink with us and he did. A little bit after that Orjan Gamst (who played the Nazi Commander Herzog) came over and while Phil was talking to Stig, I was talking to Orjan.

After a few shots of Jaegermeister, Orjan and I began talking about the film. Its creation had been a group effort and most of the cast and crew had previously been involved in a film that received a little less attention called Kill Buljo;

a spoof on Kill Bill. He also told me about the filmmaking process in Norway.

“In Norway, the films are usually subsidized by the government, not this type of film,” he laughed. “The usual process is that you work your way up but for this film Tommy [Wirkola] said ‘no’ and he used his own money, we all chipped in.” But he wasn’t as interested in talking about the film as he was in pursuing other endeavors. “I am always looking for girls, how do you get American girls?” he asked me. “Well, you’re a big movie star,” I said, he puffed up his chest, “you just grab them!”

“Like this?” he asked grabbing me by the waist.

“No like this!” I barked grabbing a firm hold of his buttocks. It was at exactly that point Phil looked over and shook his head. Tyler was too busy to notice as he chatted up Evy Kasseth Røsten (the lovely co-star). And that will be forever ingrained as my most intimate celebrity moment.

At around five A.M. we started to get ushered out of the bar. Orjan, neglecting to use my method of getting American women, instead had me ask for the phone numbers of several of the waitresses – which worked just as well – and invited Phil and me (Tyler had disappeared) to the after-after party. I was elated but ultimately denied by Jeppe Laursen (who played Erland, the comic relief) for “insurance reasons.”

We exchanged salutations and Phil and I walked bleary eyed off into the crisp Utah sunrise. The mountains of the little town provided an impressive backdrop to our eventful weekend and as we walked the streets back towards our hotel I couldn’t help notice a faint stirring in the snow. That day, that morning, something in Park City Utah was certainly alive. ■



From Left to Right - Lesse Valdal, Stig Henriksen, Evy Rosten - yeah, she talked to us.

Photo courtesy of Tyler Cling



Can't Make it to Sundance?

FILM

March 7-9

*The Three Burials Of
Melquiades Estrada*
5th Avenue Cinema

March 14-16

Valley Girl
5th Avenue Cinema

LITERATURE

**February 5, Book
v Presentation**

*Dignity & Defiance:
Stories from Bolivia's
Challenge to
Globalization*
SMSU 298, 6-7 pm

**February 3rd,
Book Signing**
Why Animals Matter
By Erin Williams
SMSU 101
7:00 pm – 8:30 pm

ART

Mike Bray in the *Autzen Gallery*

Exhibition Dates:

Feb 2 - Feb 26, 2009

Opening Reception:

Monday Feb 7 | 6-8 pm

Julie Perini at the *MK Gallery*

Exhibition Dates:

Feb 2 - Feb 27, 2009