

The Book of Joe: My Senior Compendium

Pages 2-41: Completed January 2002

Pages 42-50: Completed June 2002

This document is my senior compendium produced for my AP English class during my senior year of high school. These pages are a window into a shy albeit ambitious eighteen-year-old. I figure it's safe to put on-line since there's nothing in here I wouldn't publicly broadcast, then or now. For anyone who might notice, I have removed pages that were devoted exclusively to my friends at the time. It felt a bit strange to put up glowing write-ups of friends I no longer speak with or girls who dumped me. I remember hoping to add to its pages over time (and succeeded in updating it through graduation of high school), but I like to think the editorial spirit of my senior compendium continues with my website now.

Some background on the project: having fallen in love with Photoshop and already showing a tendency to spew forth words, creating my compendium digitally allowed me to maximize the number of pictures AND amount of text I could include. Like most high school kids, I was a colossal procrastinator and didn't even begin the project until my winter break, a week or so before it was do.

This was back before digital cameras, so every photo had to be scanned manually. I wrote out each page on a giant Word document beforehand and then realized nothing was well-formatted to be dumped into my beloved Photoshop 6.0. Suffice it to say, the compendium turned into a massive project, culminating in my first all-nighter. I was tremendously proud of the end result at the time. It had more photos than those produced by the girls who threw vacation photo after vacation photo into the mix, and there was probably more written words in mine than my teacher could possibly have expected--we were supposed to write something like a minimum of five essays.

These words are unedited from their original state. I can only apologize for my transgressions against both proper English and layout in general.

Enjoy!

-Joseph Jerome

15 June 2009

WELCOME TO THE BOOK OF JOE!

The following is the story of one Joseph William Jerome through the first eighteen years of his life. It is the compilation of almost every single event and person that left some appreciable mark upon my life, or at least those that can still be recollected. These pages are a testament to the importance of the included friends, accomplishments, and events.

The actual laying out of this entire book took more time than could ever have been expected. I hoped to honor myself and my friends as best I possibly could. The events of my life that I share in this collection are all that I consider worth remembering. Hopefully that speaks volumes to the importance I place upon my friends and my various achievements. These people and these things have come to define me.

With that trite statement being said, my life has been one hell of a roller-coaster ride through both the amazingly good and the miserably bad. Many of the including people and events have caused me undue stress, misery, and pain while at the same time often bringing me more joy than I can possibly express. I wish for this book to be the definitive source of information (aside from myself) regarding the initial phase of my life.

My deepest apologies and regrets to the several things I was just frankly unable to include. I will readily admit there is much more to me than is laid out in this book. I have only sought to chronicle some of the more important things to me. Welcome to the Book of Joe!



At 5:15 p.m. on November 25th, 1983, the shining light that is Joseph W. Jerome arrived to the world! As can be expected, my memories of my early life are blurry at best. Mostly I remember everything be happy and fun!

I remember simple things like my whole family playing Chutes And Ladders at like my third birthday party or my dad giving me this really awesome green tractor toy. I think I was a pretty creative kid; I sure liked to draw a lot! I was always building silly things. I used to draw endless cities on taped up tying paper (my mom had a rough time storing my masterpieces! You try folding 8 x 8 sheets of paper square!). If it was not drawing cities, it was making them with blocks or tons of Legos!

I went through so many phases in my first few years of life. First, I was positively obsessed with dinosaurs! My parents tried to get me to try a big boy bed because it had dino sheets on them. It did not work, but that could not stop me from loving dinosaurs. After dinosaurs, I moved to construction vehicles and then to power stations and then to McGruff the Crime Dog and the Back to the Future movies! Somewhere in there I was big on the Ninja Turtles, too.

Looking back, everything was so nice when I was a kid. Christmases and birthdays were extravagant affairs. Summers were constant swimming in the pool we once had. Compared to the homework and soap opera antics of my current life, the carefree fun of being an imaginative kid certainly has its appeal.

As a little kid, I do not think I was nearly so introverted as I am now. I guess living in the middle of a cornfield simply gets to you over time. When I was a tyke, I remember having tons of friends. I was even on the Dad's Club Soccer Team!

Everything changed when I reached kindergarten. I was thrown into a class with kids I really did not like and an hag-like teacher that still haunts my dreams. It almost feels like those first few years of life were irrelevant once I started school. Soon enough, I would become uncomfortable around the people I was stuck with and academic success would become priority number one. Still, I think I can look back on my childhood and maybe smile a little bit.



MY Childhood





My dear mother has always been there for me. I do not think I could ask for a better mother in the world. She puts up with so much crap from me; I am constantly amazed how she continues to be so supportive and loving to me despite how I treat her sometimes.

I hope I can grow up to be the type of person my mother is. My mom is sensible, generous, and willing to go out of her way for people. Even though I do not express it, I always enjoy talking with my mother. She always seems to know what she is talking about. I wish I could be as level-headed and confident as my mother appears to me.

I probably should not say this, but I am reasonably sure that my mom has over the course of my life spoiled me rotten! She has encouraged me through all of my endeavors. She was the one who always wanted me to join activities, go on trips, and make new friends. My mom has given me so much freedom to go into the world and experiment and through it all she still seems to trust me when I go cruising out into the night on weekends.

Perhaps I could survive now, but I used to firmly believe my life would be terrible if mom were to suddenly disappear. Of all the people who have ever meant anything to me, my mom probably means the most. She has always been a fixture in my life. No matter is everyone else in the whole world had forsaken me, I think she would still be there.

My mom also provides much comedic relief for me and this is where I feel like sort of a bad son. Her complete obsession with the Gameboy game Tetris and Computer Solitaire have been the butt of so many of my jokes. As smart as my mom is, she really seems clueless sometimes and I really take her to town when that happens.

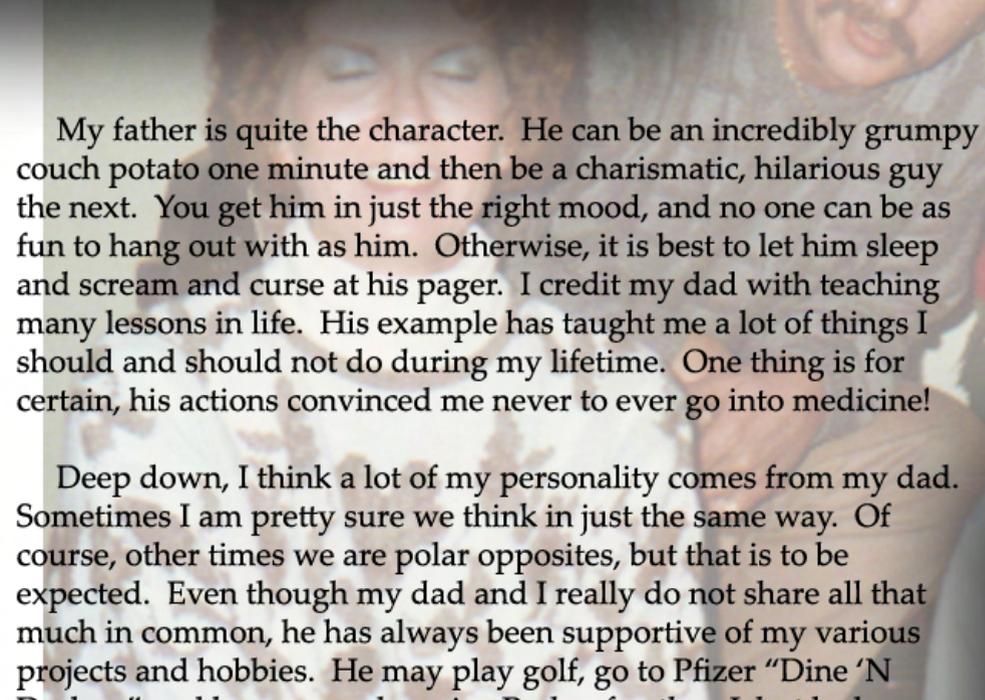
I wish I could put into words just how I feel about my mom (and my grumpy dad, too), but it is hard. I love both of my parents, and whether I say it or not I am thankful every-day for having them for my parents.





As much as I may hate to admit it, I have been immensely influenced by both of my parents. I love them both from the bottom of my heart even though I know that I do not show that to them nearly enough. In all honesty, it is harder to discuss my parents than anyone (or anything else) in this entire collection. I guess that is because they are responsible for my very existence! It sort of puts me at a loss of words, but I will give it a try.

I do have to apologize for the complete lack of current pictures of the both of them. Current pictures of the two just do not exist, but looking at pictures of them through time they hardly seem to ever change to me. I think I have this image in my mind of what they should look like and they never seem to deviate whether I see pictures of them in high school or have to glare at them in the morning.



My father is quite the character. He can be an incredibly grumpy couch potato one minute and then be a charismatic, hilarious guy the next. You get him in just the right mood, and no one can be as fun to hang out with as him. Otherwise, it is best to let him sleep and scream and curse at his pager. I credit my dad with teaching many lessons in life. His example has taught me a lot of things I should and should not do during my lifetime. One thing is for certain, his actions convinced me never to ever go into medicine!

Deep down, I think a lot of my personality comes from my dad. Sometimes I am pretty sure we think in just the same way. Of course, other times we are polar opposites, but that is to be expected. Even though my dad and I really do not share all that much in common, he has always been supportive of my various projects and hobbies. He may play golf, go to Pfizer "Dine 'N Dashes," and be a more obsessive Packer fan than I, but he has always been supportive of what I am interested in.

The best example is my dad's utter refusal to accept new technologies. The man does not even know how to turn a computer on, yet he constantly dumps new technology on me all the time. He has supplied me with tons of art supplies and even foot the bill to print this very book!

I love my dad, there I said it. While I am not close to my dad, I do respect him. Despite his faults and chronic grouchiness, he has been a great influence on my life, and, if nothing else, I figure half of me has to come from him.





Nanny is funny; she loves to gamble down on the riverboats. Gramps is a fascinating guy who claims to be "old as dirt;" he always tells horror stories about working for the power company. His biggest thing is an obsession with dating absolutely everything! There is not a picture, piece of furniture, book, or fishing toolbox that is not dated with specific dates and times.

Of course, if we are talking about my family, I have to include my pets. There is the Angie dog who is a beyond stupid (but manipulative) bichon frise. Besides that, I have two garage cats. Yoshi is a mangy old thing who never seems to die no matter what injury he suffers. Patches, or Kitty as I call her, is probably the sweetest cat ever found from the pound! You can hear her purr with loud music on!

My family is an odd group. Each one of them is probably eerily similar to me, but I maintain they are all a good deal different from me. I still wish I was closer to my family, but I just could never really gel with the whole lot of them. If I was not the quiet outsider, I was the obnoxious brat no one wanted around, sad but true, but I get along with them all fairly well now and that's something.

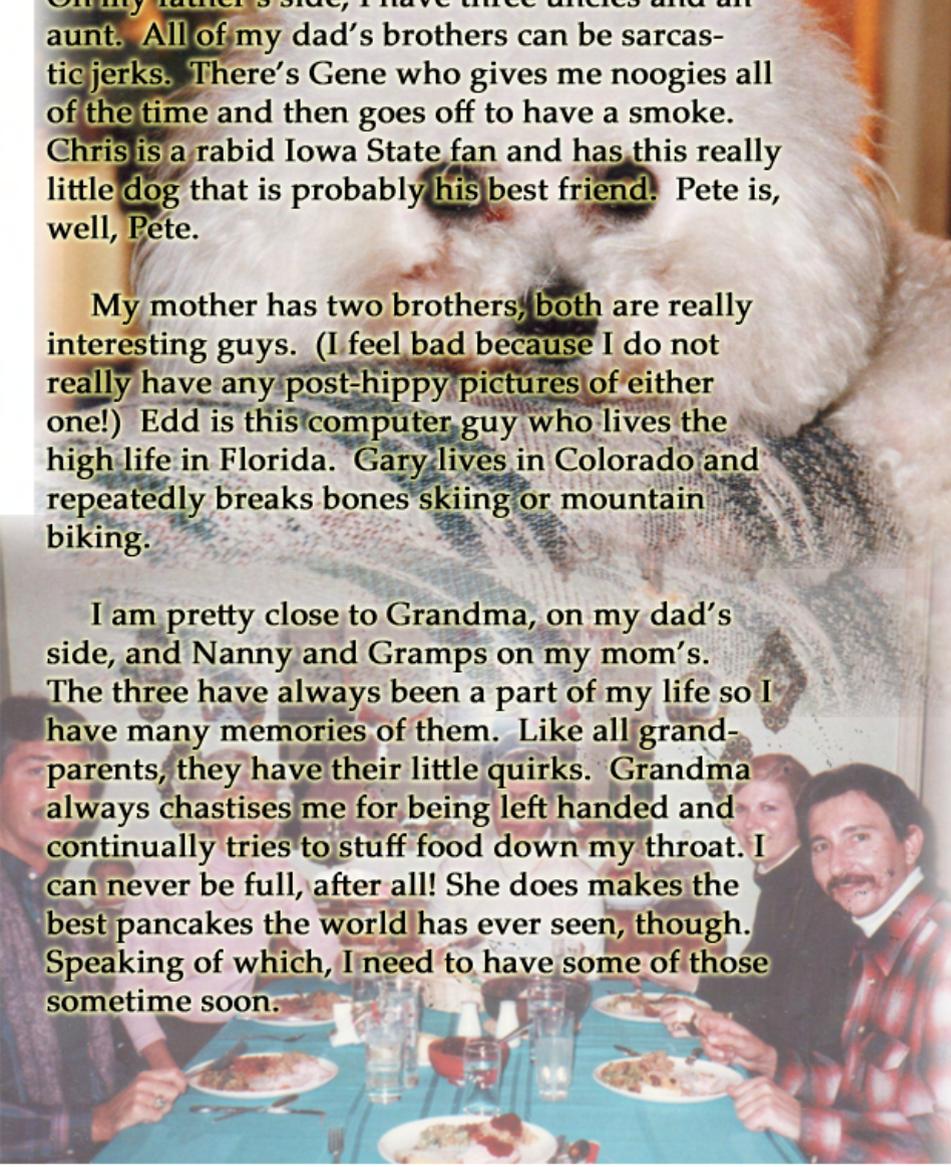
The Family

I found it sort of odd that when I looked back on my life thus far that my family played such a seemingly small role in shaping who I have become. I love my family and many of my relatives are humorous and extremely intelligent people, but I still realize that my contact with most of my aunts and uncles has been limited at best. It is rather sad because every year that goes makes me feel as if soon enough they will all really start slipping away.

Still, I do have fond memories of my family. On my father's side, I have three uncles and an aunt. All of my dad's brothers can be sarcastic jerks. There's Gene who gives me noogies all of the time and then goes off to have a smoke. Chris is a rabid Iowa State fan and has this really little dog that is probably his best friend. Pete is, well, Pete.

My mother has two brothers, both are really interesting guys. (I feel bad because I do not really have any post-hippy pictures of either one!) Edd is this computer guy who lives the high life in Florida. Gary lives in Colorado and repeatedly breaks bones skiing or mountain biking.

I am pretty close to Grandma, on my dad's side, and Nanny and Gramps on my mom's. The three have always been a part of my life so I have many memories of them. Like all grandparents, they have their little quirks. Grandma always chastises me for being left handed and continually tries to stuff food down my throat. I can never be full, after all! She does make the best pancakes the world has ever seen, though. Speaking of which, I need to have some of those sometime soon.

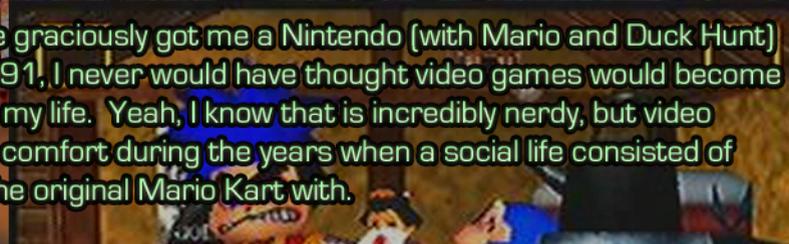


The Video Game Obsession

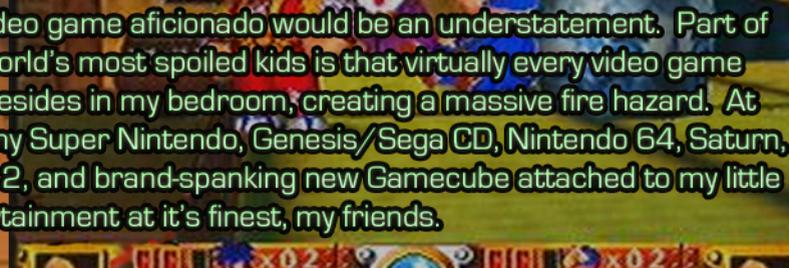
1992-Present



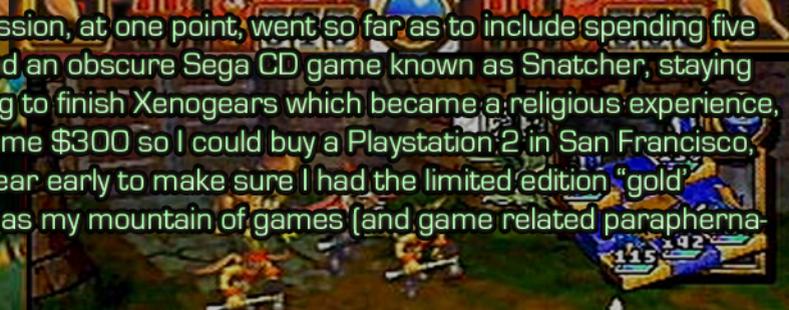
When my Uncle Pete graciously got me a Nintendo (with Mario and Duck Hunt) for the Christmas of 1991, I never would have thought video games would become such an integral part of my life. Yeah, I know that is incredibly nerdy, but video games gave me a lot of comfort during the years when a social life consisted of finding a friend to play the original Mario Kart with.



To say I am a true video game aficionado would be an understatement. Part of my claim to being the world's most spoiled kid is that virtually every video game system known to man resides in my bedroom, creating a massive fire hazard. At least count, I still have my Super Nintendo, Genesis/Sega CD, Nintendo 64, Saturn, Dreamcast, Playstation 2, and brand-spanking new Gamecube attached to my little 13' television. 'Tis entertainment at it's finest, my friends.



My video game obsession, at one point, went so far as to include spending five years and \$78.12 to find an obscure Sega CD game known as Snatcher, staying up till four in-the-morning to finish Xenogears which became a religious experience, having Jason Held spot me \$300 so I could buy a Playstation 2 in San Francisco, and reserving Zelda a year early to make sure I had the limited edition "gold" version. Yes, I was sick as my mountain of games (and game related paraphernalia) attests to.

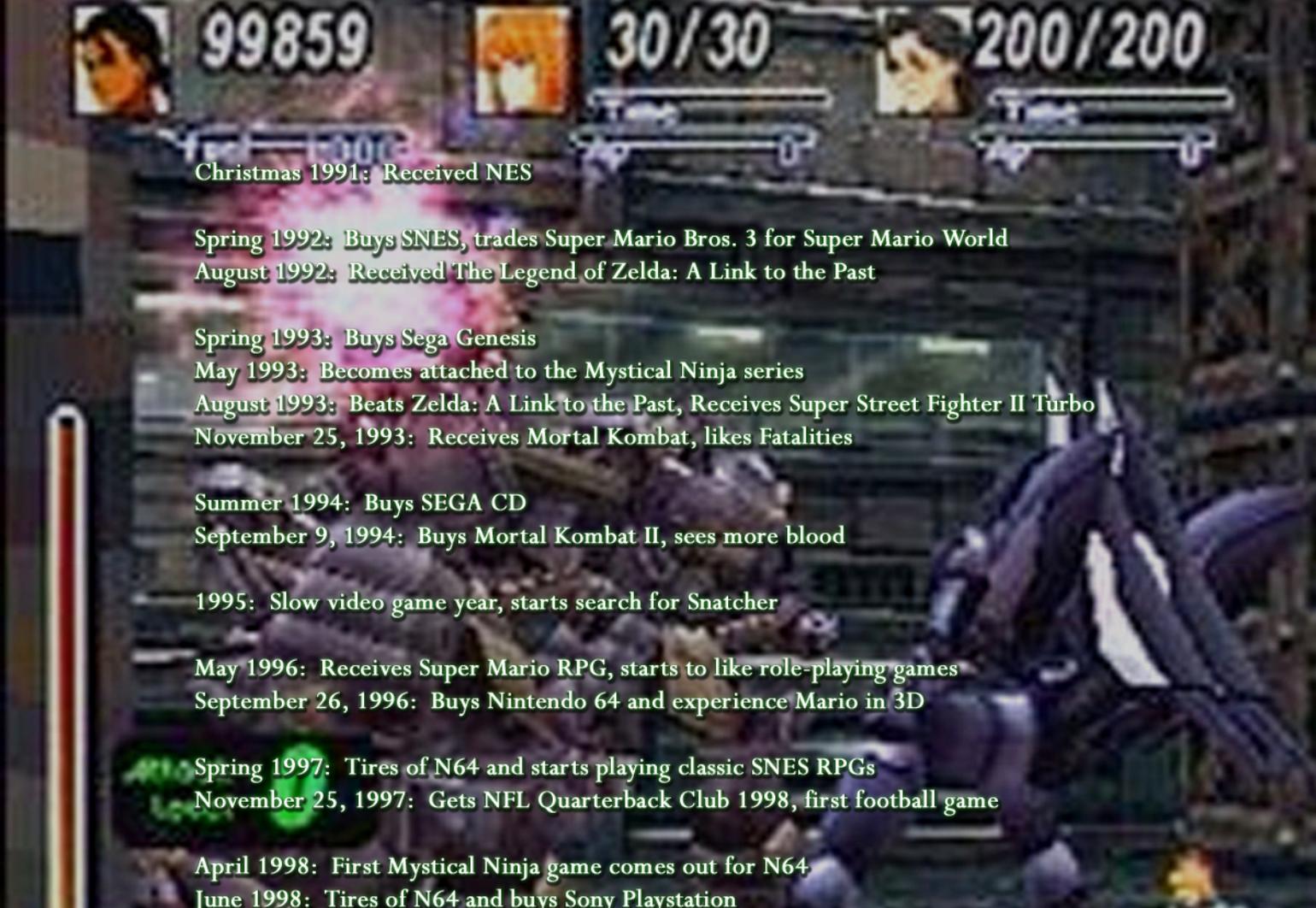


Still, I have even had some fun with people along with the games. Nothing beats girls giggling as Harry Mason stumbles about in Silent Hill, or getting killed by innumerable people in Mario Kart 64, or playing Mortal Kombat for hours with my ol' buddy Mark looking for the elusive Reptile, or a bunch of us trying to scare the neighbors by going on a rampage in Turok in Surround Sound, or beating my friends 25 times straight in Goldeneye deathmatch, or, finally, shooting up some Frenchies in Conker with my Physics Lab Buddies. Once I get some more Gamecube controllers, who knows what fun could await?



CREDITS 4

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Christmas 1991: Received NES

Spring 1992: Buys SNES, trades Super Mario Bros. 3 for Super Mario World

August 1992: Received The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past

Spring 1993: Buys Sega Genesis

May 1993: Becomes attached to the Mystical Ninja series

August 1993: Beats Zelda: A Link to the Past, Receives Super Street Fighter II Turbo

November 25, 1993: Receives Mortal Kombat, likes Fatalities

Summer 1994: Buys SEGA CD

September 9, 1994: Buys Mortal Kombat II, sees more blood

1995: Slow video game year, starts search for Snatcher

May 1996: Receives Super Mario RPG, starts to like role-playing games

September 26, 1996: Buys Nintendo 64 and experience Mario in 3D

Spring 1997: Tires of N64 and starts playing classic SNES RPGs

November 25, 1997: Gets NFL Quarterback Club 1998, first football game

April 1998: First Mystical Ninja game comes out for N64

June 1998: Tires of N64 and buys Sony Playstation

August 1998: Becomes obsessed with Resident Evil 2

Fall 1998: The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time and Metal Gear Solid blow me away

January 1999: Castlevania "64" comes out to no fanfair

April 1999: Starts Xenogears, feels nothing

May 1999: Finally acquires Snatcher for SEGA CD

June 1999: Beats Xenogears, changes entire outlook on life

July 1999: Buys Sega Saturn for \$60, originally retailed for \$400 in 1995

September 9, 1999: Buys Sega Dreamcast and Final Fantasy VIII

October 2000: Ogre Battle 64 comes out, last good N64 game

March 2001: Conker's Bad Fur Day comes out for N64, really last good N64 game

April 7, 2001: Buys Playstation 2, dumps off Playstation at Jason Helds'

Summer 2001: Finally buys first PS2 game, Gran Turismo 3, also buys Dance Dance Revolution

November 18, 2001: Gets Gamecube, likes video games again



Between the years of 1990 and 1997 my life seemed to relatively stay the same. Pictures and documents from that era are sparse, so I decided it would be best to simply provide a summation for the period. 1990 through 1997 corresponded to my kindergarten year of school through seventh grade.

In this time, grade and academic performance somehow became very important to me and would carry over to high school one day. Other than that, these years were pretty boring for me. I remember working endlessly on my "Team Joe" comics and playing tons of video games for my almighty Super Nintendo. Besides that, I became, predictably, interested in Star Trek during this time. I could not get enough of the adventures of Picard and Data, although the original series never appealed to me.

Looking back, life was never as bad as I then thought. Aside from occurrences at my notorious babysitter, Jeanne's, and some run-ins with nasty teachers like Miss Toth, I never really did anything at all. I did my homework and watched TV. My Friday nights usually involved me watching 20/20 at 9 p.m. and usually falling asleep before it was done.

Additionally due to an incredibly...uh...interesting gym teacher (who repeatedly gave my B's regardless of whatever effort I showed), I gained an intense hatred of sports. Incidents with music teachers and a mean ol'band instructor kept me from ever exploring music. All of this combined to turn me into Mr. Anti-Social, a label that would follow me for a long, long time.

By 1997, I even had started to question the religious beliefs that had been drilled into since the day I started Holy Family school. A string of ridiculous and irrational religion teachers had me doubting everything. The thought had not really come to mind yet, but I was already in the mindset that Assumption High School would never work for me. But a public school? All I thought public schools consisted of were idiots and gang members...that's pretty much the in-between years.



1990-1997: The In-between Years



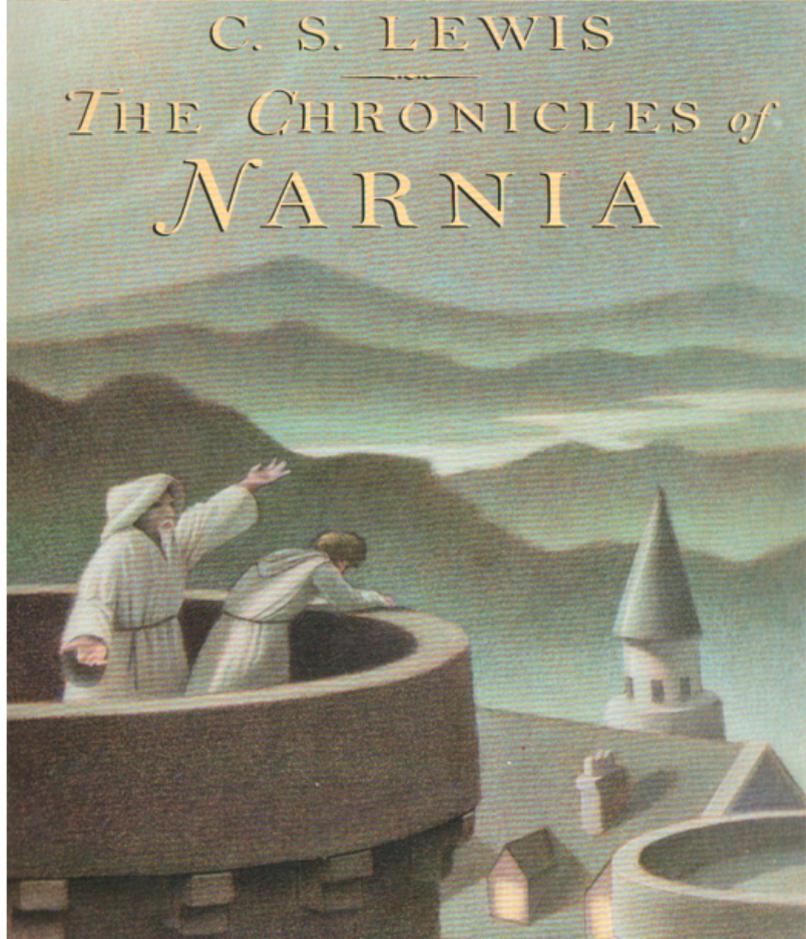
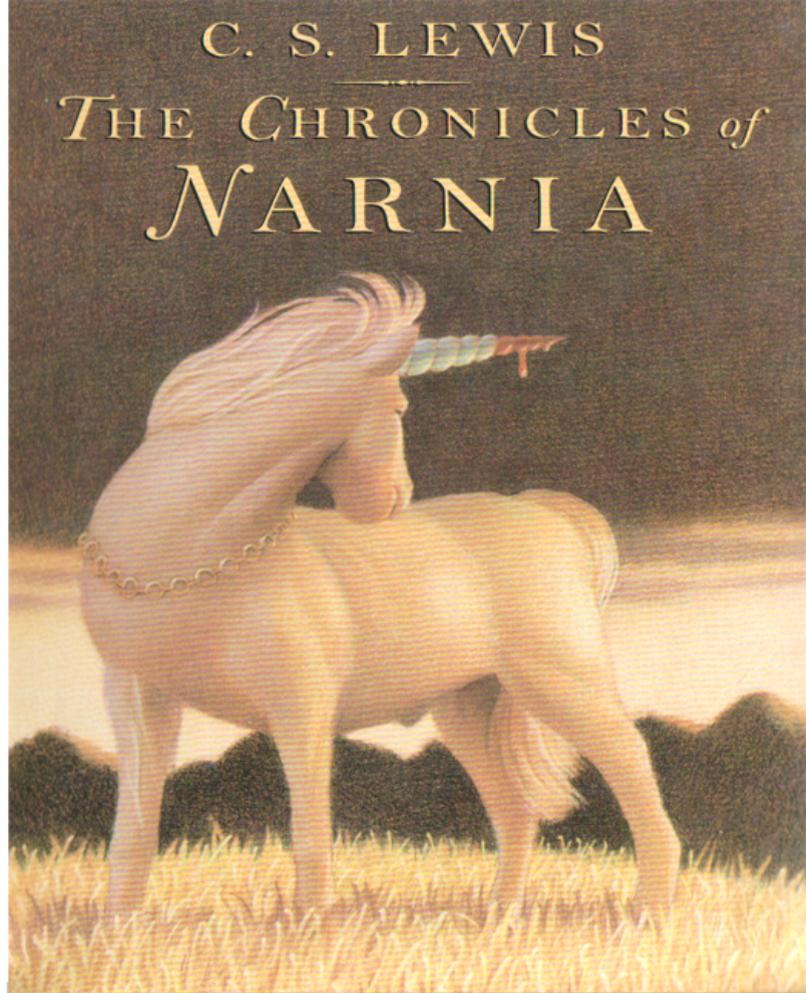
C.S. Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia*

I began reading C.S. Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia* towards the beginning of fifth grade. The first book, *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe* managed to capture my imagination as the young Lucy journeyed into an ice world to be known as Narnia.

I read the entire seven book series throughout the year. The final book, *The Final Battle*, was probably the first novel I ever shed a tear over. The epic adventures of Aslan the Lion, and the giant metaphor that he represented God, actually meant something to me in fifth grade.

The series combined everything I loved about classical mythology and updated it. It also included kids, although British, that helped me fit right into the story. The trials of human nature which were so prevalent throughout the series really opened my eyes. That was quite the impressive accomplishment for any book I would have read in fifth grade. After all, a year before I was having R.L. Stine books shoved down my throat.

Narnia opened up a new world for me. It got me so interested in fantasy that I would finally take the plunge a year later and open up a book by Tolkien.



The Lord of the Rings

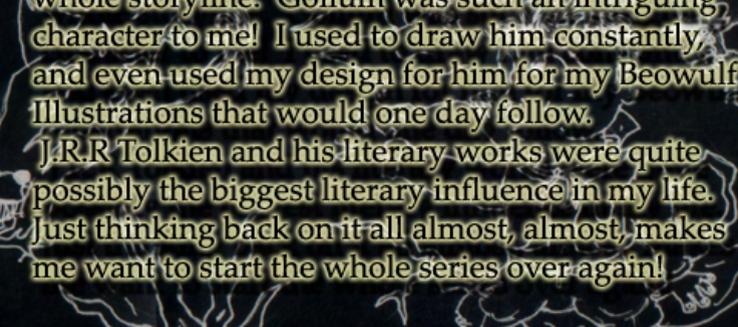
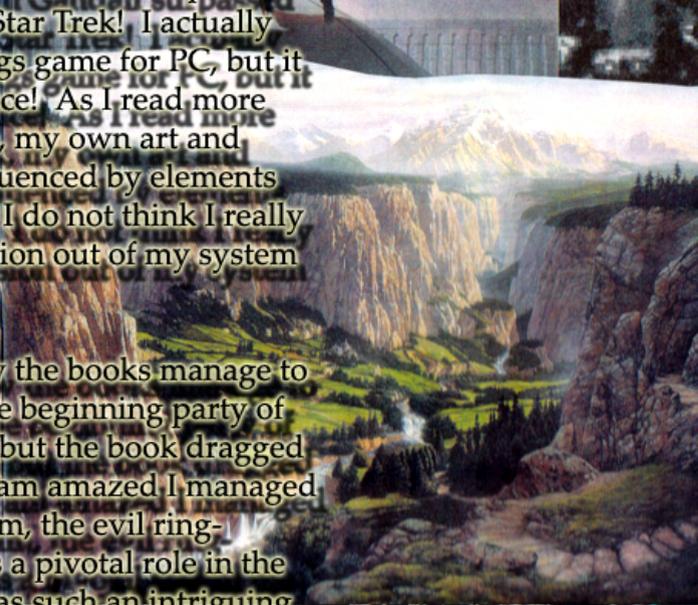
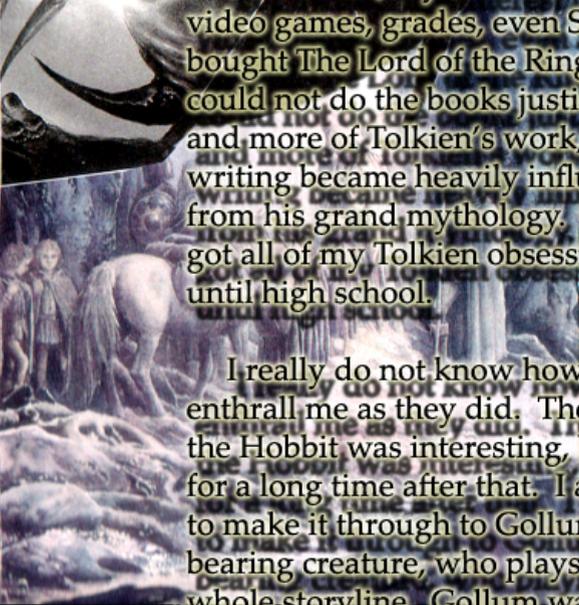
After reading *The Hobbit*, I became an utter fanatic of J.R.R. Tolkien. I read absolutely every book by him including his *Lost Tales* and various other shorter works that fleshed out Middle Earth. I became so excited about hobbits, elves, and Gollum that I even got half of sixth grade class into the action. We even held a contest to see who could finish the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy first; I won.

Tolkien's books were just like huge modern tales ripped straight out of mythology. The characters were real. I wanted to be Gandalf! If only every other chapter had not been another long drawn-out description of Middle Earth, the books would be absolutely perfect! Still, I gathered together every piece of Tolkien material I could find. Once I discovered the encyclopedias of artwork dedicated to the series, I was like a kid at Christmas!

For awhile, my interest in Gandalf surpassed video games, grades, even *Star Trek*! I actually bought *The Lord of the Rings* game for PC, but it could not do the books justice! As I read more and more of Tolkien's work, my own art and writing became heavily influenced by elements from his grand mythology. I do not think I really got all of my Tolkien obsession out of my system until high school.

I really do not know how the books manage to enthrall me as they did. The beginning party of *The Hobbit* was interesting, but the book dragged for a long time after that. I am amazed I managed to make it through to Gollum, the evil ring-bearing creature, who plays a pivotal role in the whole storyline. Gollum was such an intriguing character to me! I used to draw him constantly, and even used my design for him for my *Beowulf* illustrations that would one day follow.

J.R.R. Tolkien and his literary works were quite possibly the biggest literary influence in my life. Just thinking back on it all almost, almost, makes me want to start the whole series over again!



The Comic Book Influence

I first got interested in comic books after a seemingly random trip to a comic book shop with my friend Austin right before seventh grade started in 1996. I thought comics just had boring art like I had seen years before when my dad bought a comic for "The Death of Superman" in the hopes it could make him some money. What I saw was some absolutely amazing artwork that I desperately wished I could emulate. I was hooked.

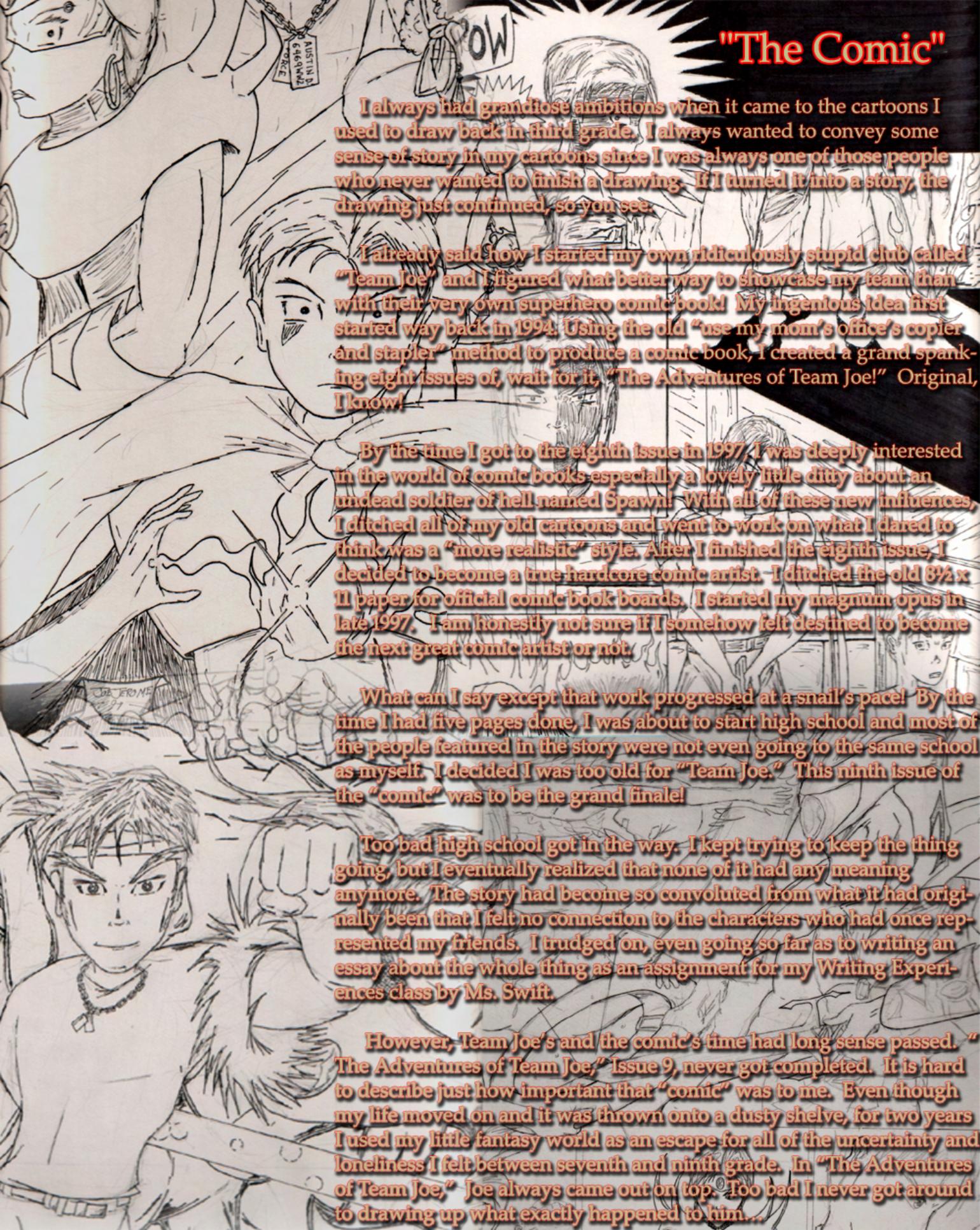
My first real comic was a Spider-Man comic from Image Comics. It was a cross-over, and the whole concept of characters "switching" companies was intriguing to me. I latched on to the whole line of Image Comics especially the infamous Todd McFarlane comic, Spawn! (I eventually got to meet Toddy Mac. I have a blurry picture to prove it!)

I started collecting tons upon tons of comics. The awesome artwork and cutting-edge stories really interested me. I guess once comics got away from mutants and superheroes that had no weaknesses, I could identify more with the stories. I became a huge fan! I started going to the Chicago ComicCon each year so I could meet all of the artists I idolized and get tons of nifty freebies. I even conned my way into a showing for the "GEN 13 Movie" which never came out.

There were so many comics I became interested in that it would be tough to list them all, but by early 2000 my interest started to fade. As my interest in comics started to wane, I became interested in Kevin Smith. Besides creating the loveable druggies Jay and Silent Bob, he managed to bring his deranged artistic vision to the big screen with his critically acclaimed string of movies that started with Clerks.

I eventually just sort of stopped buying comics because they took up too much space and cost too much. The final straw came after Wizard bought the Chicago ComicCon and moved it to late August, right before school. To make matters worse, they positioned the thing across from "Beatle Fest" which invites drunk Beatle fans to make life in a hotel difficult. I still occasionally stop and buy comics if I see a shop (especially when I take trips to Iowa City to get Pancheros!), but the impact comics made on my creative mind will never be forgotten.





"The Comic"

I always had grandiose ambitions when it came to the cartoons I used to draw back in third grade. I always wanted to convey some sense of story in my cartoons since I was always one of those people who never wanted to finish a drawing. If I turned it into a story, the drawing just continued, so you see.

I already said how I started my own ridiculously stupid club called "Team Joe" and I figured what better way to showcase my team than with their very own superhero comic book! My ingenious idea first started way back in 1994. Using the old "use my mom's office's copier and stapler" method to produce a comic book, I created a grand spanking eight issues of, wait for it, "The Adventures of Team Joe!" Original, I know!

By the time I got to the eighth issue in 1997, I was deeply interested in the world of comic books especially a lovely little ditty about an undead soldier of hell named Spawn! With all of these new influences, I ditched all of my old cartoons and went to work on what I dared to think was a "more realistic" style. After I finished the eighth issue, I decided to become a true hardcore comic artist. I ditched the old 8½ x 11 paper for official comic book boards. I started my magnum opus in late 1997. I am honestly not sure if I somehow felt destined to become the next great comic artist or not.

What can I say except that work progressed at a snail's pace! By the time I had five pages done, I was about to start high school and most of the people featured in the story were not even going to the same school as myself. I decided I was too old for "Team Joe." This ninth issue of the "comic" was to be the grand finale!

Too bad high school got in the way. I kept trying to keep the thing going, but I eventually realized that none of it had any meaning anymore. The story had become so convoluted from what it had originally been that I felt no connection to the characters who had once represented my friends. I trudged on, even going so far as to writing an essay about the whole thing as an assignment for my Writing Experiences class by Ms. Swift.

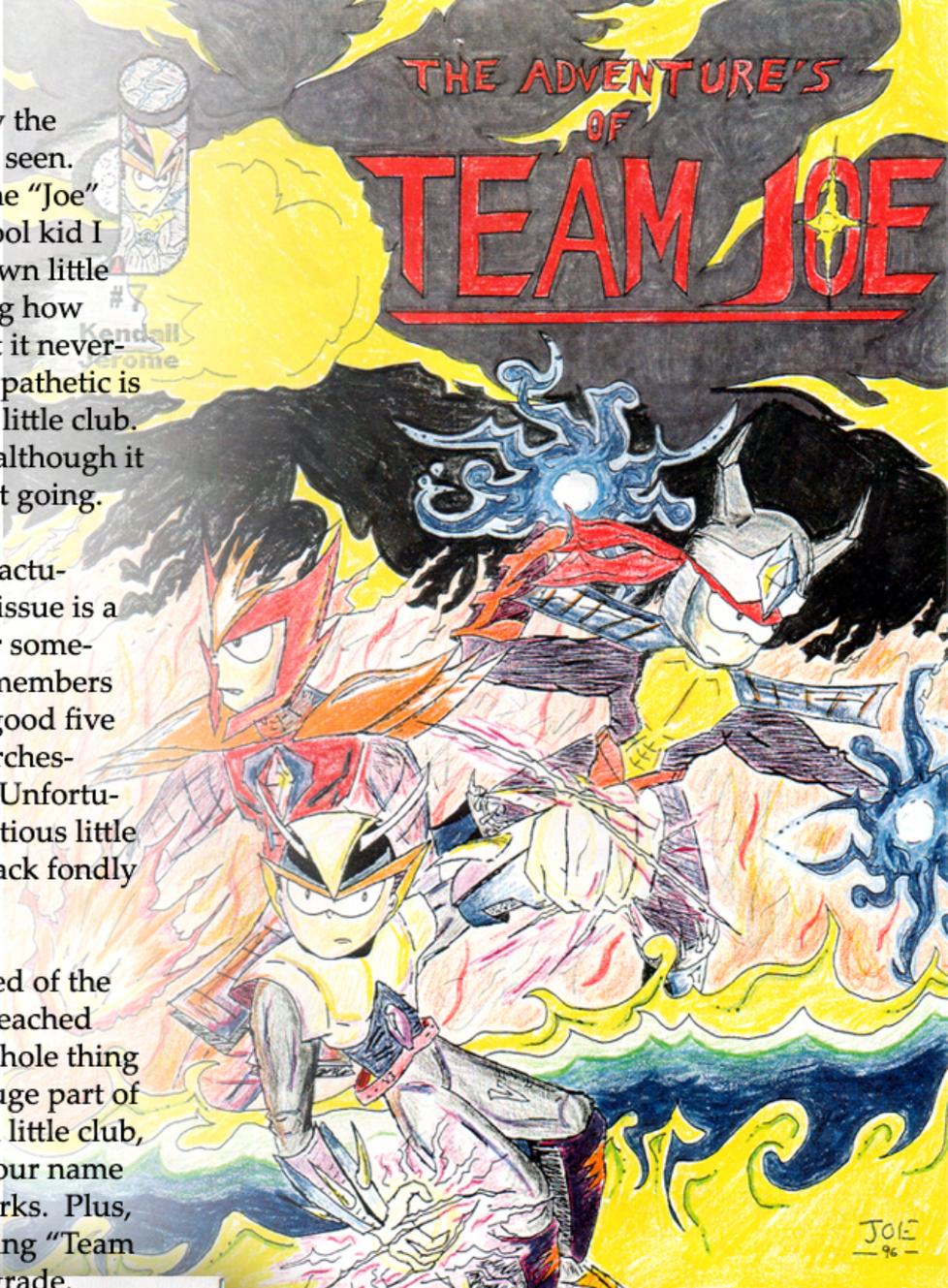
However, Team Joe's and the comic's time had long sense passed. "The Adventures of Team Joe," Issue 9, never got completed. It is hard to describe just how important that "comic" was to me. Even though my life moved on and it was thrown onto a dusty shelf, for two years I used my little fantasy world as an escape for all of the uncertainty and loneliness I felt between seventh and ninth grade. In "The Adventures of Team Joe," Joe always came out on top. Too bad I never got around to drawing up what exactly happened to him...

Team Joe

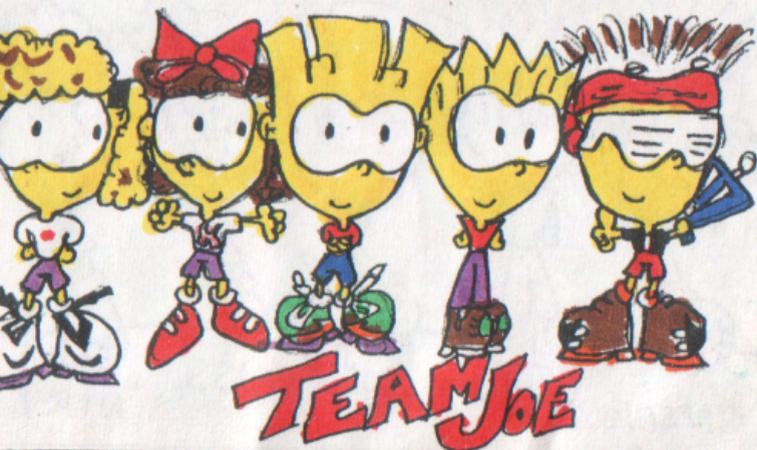
Back in fourth grade, I was probably the biggest ego maniac the world had ever seen. Everything had to be branded under the "Joe" name. Additionally, being the super cool kid I was, I even went so far as to start my own little club, Team Joe. It is absolutely amazing how stupid this all sounds in retrospect, but it nevertheless happened. What is even more pathetic is that people actually wanted to join my little club. It certainly was elaborate for the time, although it relied upon my artistic ability to keep it going.

I started my own little comic which actually lasted for eight issues. (The ninth issue is a story of its own; it sits in a dusty folder somewhere in my basement) My club had members come and go and actually lasted for a good five years. We all played video games or orchestrated water fights with rival factions. Unfortunately, being the overly cruel and ambitious little bully that I was, I do not really think back fondly upon the era of "Team Joe."

I guess as time went by I just got tired of the whole stupid thing, and by the time I reached high school I was ready to forget the whole thing ever existed. Still, "Team Joe" was a huge part of my life for so long. Running your own little club, even if it has no point except to have your name attached to a team, definitely has its perks. Plus, I actually made something like \$10 selling "Team Joe" trading cards when I was in fifth grade.



JOE CARDS



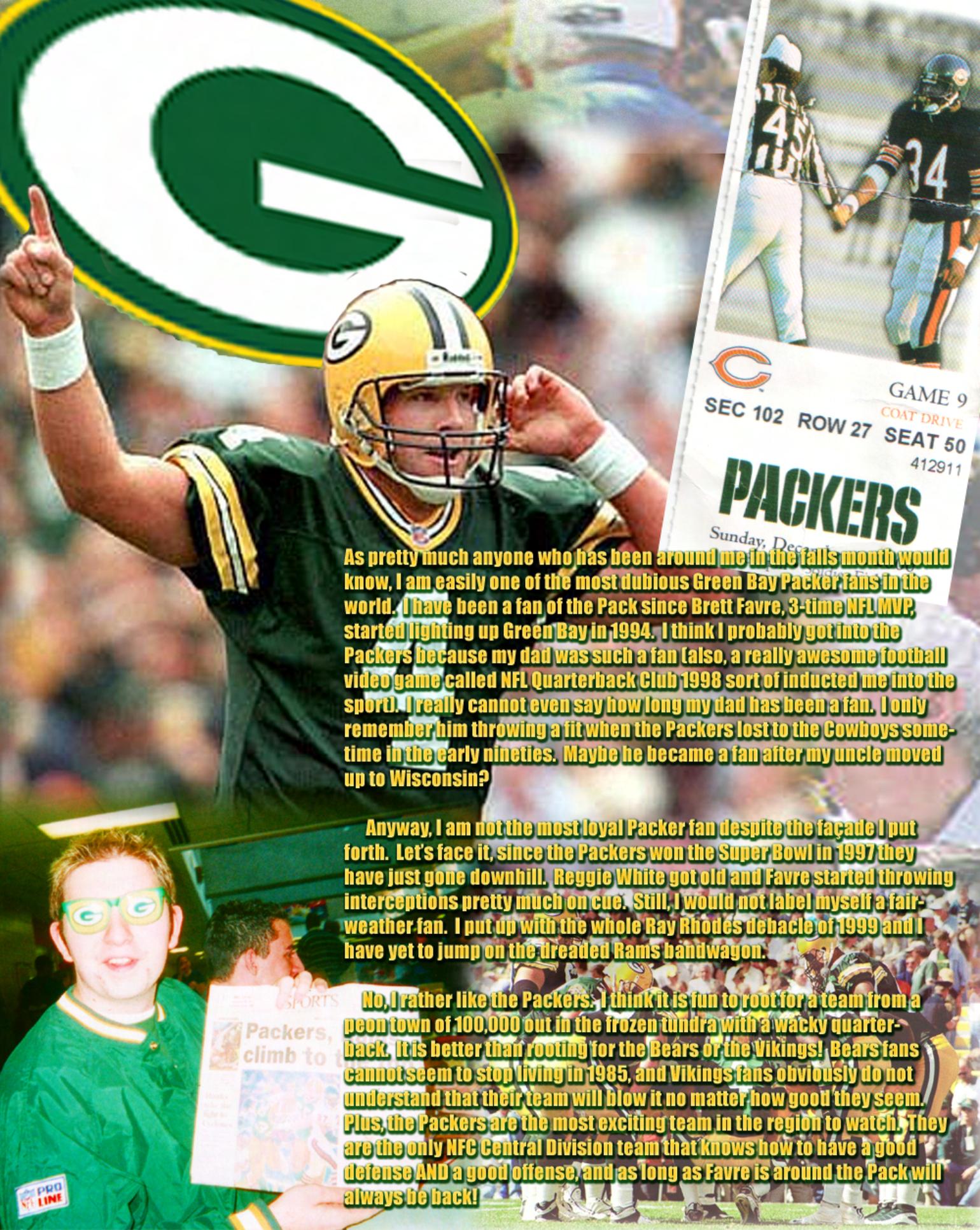
My Journey to Washington, D.C.: Seventh Grade

In seventh grade, our wacky teacher, Mrs. Lenig, decided an educational trip to our nation's capital would be in our best interests. She somehow convinced a huge part of our seventh and eighth grade classes that a long bus ride during spring break would be worth it to see the Washington Monument. I, of course, wanted to go just to see all of the history! I convinced my then friend Austin Davenport to join me and off we went.

The two of us got stuck in the front of the charter bus across from some sick (and nasty) girls and then got thrown into a room with some moronic ingrates known as Colin and Robbie. Austin became their nightly punching bag as I struggled to get some sleep.

The trip was still awesome. We arrived in Washington during the Cherry Blossom festival so the entirety of downtown Washington was full of beautiful cherry blossoms. The trip was so utterly long ago that I forgot a lot of what happened. I distinctly remember a trip to the Smithsonian along with these girls Ann, Mary, and my heartthrob Niki with Colin and Robbie tagging along. We were forced to be chaperoned by the obnoxious (and bird-like) Miss Toth. She got angry at our attempts to take a picture of her and forced us to sit outside. Austin spent the time trying to ask all of the "Genuine Oakley" dealers about the quality of their product to hilarious results. After going by some psychos on the grounds of the White House, we called it a trip.





GAME 9
COAT DRIVE
SEC 102 ROW 27 SEAT 50
412911

PACKERS
Sunday, Dec 12

As pretty much anyone who has been around me in the falls month would know, I am easily one of the most dubious Green Bay Packer fans in the world. I have been a fan of the Pack since Brett Favre, 3-time NFL MVP, started lighting up Green Bay in 1994. I think I probably got into the Packers because my dad was such a fan (also, a really awesome football video game called NFL Quarterback Club 1998 sort of inducted me into the sport). I really cannot even say how long my dad has been a fan. I only remember him throwing a fit when the Packers lost to the Cowboys sometime in the early nineties. Maybe he became a fan after my uncle moved up to Wisconsin?

Anyway, I am not the most loyal Packer fan despite the façade I put forth. Let's face it, since the Packers won the Super Bowl in 1997 they have just gone downhill. Reggie White got old and Favre started throwing interceptions pretty much on cue. Still, I would not label myself a fair-weather fan. I put up with the whole Ray Rhodes debacle of 1999 and I have yet to jump on the dreaded Rams bandwagon.

No, I rather like the Packers. I think it is fun to root for a team from a peon town of 100,000 out in the frozen tundra with a wacky quarterback. It is better than rooting for the Bears or the Vikings! Bears fans cannot seem to stop living in 1985, and Vikings fans obviously do not understand that their team will blow it no matter how good they seem. Plus, the Packers are the most exciting team in the region to watch. They are the only NFC Central Division team that knows how to have a good defense AND a good offense, and as long as Favre is around the Pack will always be back!



HIGH SCHOOL

YEAR ONE

FRESHMAN YEAR

1998-1999

I entered high school ready to start anew. After nine years of a wholesome Catholic education, I had had more private schooling than I could possibly stomach. I saw Central High School, a foreboding ancient brick building, as a chance to start over and maybe have a life for once. Central had to be a diverse place! After festering in a class of only a paltry forty-seven or so, I simply could not believe I would be joining a class of three hundred. I rightfully assumed that it would be impossible for me to not find some friends in a group that large.

While my preconceptions about public school life would turn out to be more than a little naïve, the change of pace would eventually, over time, prove to be a godsend for me. I walked into Central on August 20, 1998, in some jean shorts and a t-shirt with hardly a friend in the world. By the time the first year, my freshman year, would conclude I would have created a foundation that would eventually bring me friends, success, and, amazingly, fun.

My ambitions throughout my first year would eventually prove to be slightly misguided. At the time I was thoroughly obsessed with my grades and I let that be known to the world. I spent most of the year bouncing around trying to find my place at Central. My focus was on the future.



Religion and Morals: I Am God

I was brought up as a typical Catholic: Jesus is good and He loves you. Eventually, the inability for my faith to bring me any sort of satisfaction in life or any sort of spiritual fulfillment led me to begin questioning my Catholic upbringing. This questioning led me to seek a secondary school education at a public school where I would be exposed to new ways of thinking. My thoughts were best surmised in an essay I wrote for Devil's Diary magazine my freshman year. Amazingly, I had people come up to me and say they completely agreed with my radical essay. It follows:

I think I am God. Now before everyone thinks I am some sort of antichrist who is tempting the Creator's vengeful wrath, let me tell you my view. There are many types of people on this planet of ours. There are those who fear their god and blindly follow their religious belief on the grounds of faith. There are those that believe in little green men from Mars. Those that trust in our government. Those who do not partake in religion and those that simply do not care. I do not wish to offend anyone, and I respect all of your religious beliefs and moral convictions. However, inside of my head I am God.

There are many people who feel that we have no real free choice in life. Maybe they feel it is because time is already written in stone and cannot be changed. Others have been stripped of free will from government or environment. Then there are those who find comfort in God watching and knowing their every step.

I, on the other hand, believe I am in control. I am my God. I make the calls, the decisions, the mistakes. And I reap the benefits. I had the "traditional" Catholic upbringing. I went to a Catholic school and had priests tell me that Jesus surely loves me. For years, I was told what was the "truth" because that is what my "faith" dictated. I never chose to question because I stubbornly believed. Eventually, the repetition and coldness of it all made me question my "faith." When that happened, I realized I had become God.

I believe there may well be something out there whether it be in the stars or simply beyond human's conscience. However, I do not feel like living by what this being says whether real or entirely conceived by man's wish to understand the unexplained. If I am to be condemned to hell for not going to a Mass on every Easter so be it. I never saw much of a point in all the people flocking to church once or twice a year for a false salvation. If one day a Martian zaps me with a ray gun so be it. I would rather be in control of me than follow the bellows of an advanced race.

I am in control of my life so I am God. I can do whatever I want! I take orders from no one. Of course, I will pay the consequences for disobeying those that are in this world my superiors. If I commit a crime, I will be punished under the United States government. If I do not do my homework, I will be lectured upon under my instructor. However, I am still God. They will have punished me in what way they can, but I am still in control of myself the individual.

For these things, I have concluded I am God. We are all God. People are superior to us in many things be it sports, academics, arts, or popularity. However, we are in control of ourselves the individual. We dictate our own actions. We live under a set of rules and ordinances, but we can break these. We suffer the consequences of doing so, but we are still God.

By now, I have either shown you how I contemplate my simple existence or enraged you to no end. Realize this then, if time is set in stone, I have suffered the consequences of believing I am God. If a divine power exists, I will one day feel its wrath. If nothing exists except cells and genetic structures, I am a fool. Nevertheless, I still believe I am God. I am God.

In the Name
of the Father

HIGH SCHOOL

YEAR TWO

SOPHOMORE YEAR

1999-2000

After playing bridge all summer, I was interested to get back to school for another year. I honestly had no idea what to expect. The only thing I knew for certain was that I was getting a Sega Dreamcast on September 9th. I had finished one full year in decent shape: I had met a few new people and maintained a 4.0 GPA. Not much to build upon, but I had no idea what sort of odd happenings would occur before my sophomore year would come to a close.

My sophomore year became a sort of transitional year for me. It began as I started to grow apart from my old buddies which forced me to reach out and find people to hang out with fast or risk utter boredom. Fortunately, before the year was out, I came into contact with many of the people who would eventually become my best friends.

Looking back, my second year of high school still remains as probably the most eventful. Many of my most memorable classes such as Physics, Pre-Calculus, AP Calculus, Historical Viewpoints, and a dreaded Gym class all occurred during my sophomore year. I met then President of the United States, Bill Clinton, that year, and my eclectic mock trial team somehow stumbled its way to the state tournament. I got my first real debate trophy that year, took a wild and distressing bus ride to the state basketball tournament, and finally escaped the pain of going to the library after school everyday when I forced my parents to get me a vehicle.



**Central High
School**

Blue Devils

1999-2000

#1 NATIONAL BESTSELLER

ANNE RICE

Author of *VIOLIN*



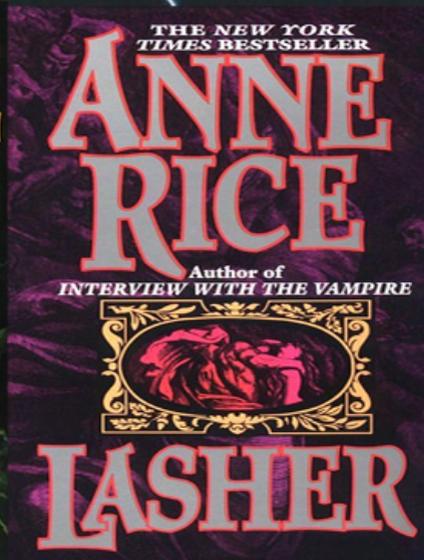
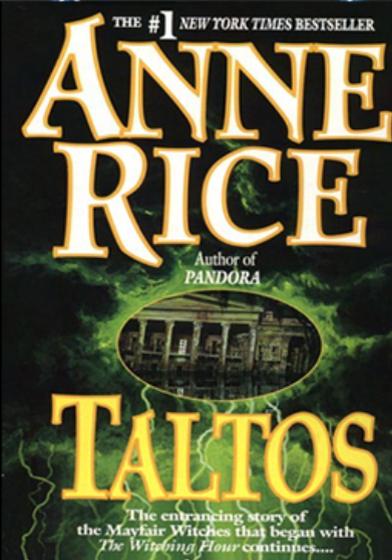
THE WITCHING HOUR

The Mayfair Witch Trilogy

I stumbled onto Anne Rice's novel, *The Witching Hour*, by accident in the fall of 1999. The book was about a mysterious Mayfair witch family from New Orleans. Several characters, including a peculiar paranormal researcher known as Aaron Lightner, found themselves wrapped in a tale about a supernatural beast known only as Lasher. What made the book so incredibly was the inclusion of a compendium of facts and information about witches throughout history. Anne Rice took her own characters and weaved them into an elaborate tale that involved everything from Voodoo to Stonehenge. Once the book started going, it held my interest like no other book had. The book almost became an addiction for awhile. To this day, I consider *The Witching Hour* to be one of the best books I have ever read.

I was thrilled when I discovered that the tale of Rowan and Michael, the central witches, actually turned out to be a trilogy. The other two books in the trilogy, *Lasher* and *Taltos*, continued the same basic story but took it on twists and turns I never would have expected. Ultimately, the storyline was disappointing to me. Anne Rice was never able to capture the magic and sheer depth of the first in the series.

Part of the whole impact these books left upon me was the reaction that they brought about in others. At the time, I had the displeasure of having Mr. Jacobson as my Pre-calculus teacher. He made a giant case for the books being nothing but smut! (Evidently there was a rather steamy scene on page 92 of *Taltos*.) His tirade got other people into the act including the irreproachable Matt Geerts. It took me a long time to shake off the reputation these steamy, seductive, and altogether haunting novels left me.



The Speech and Debate Team

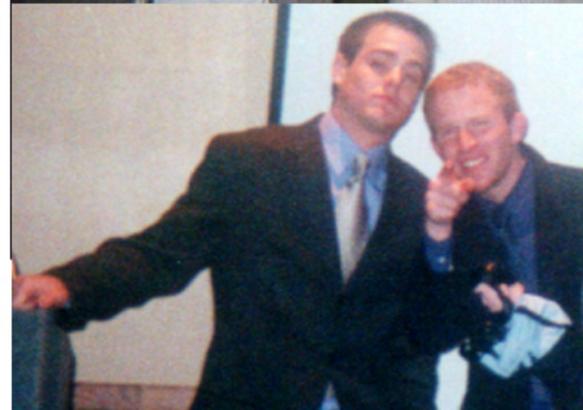
I walked onto the Speech & Debate Team during my freshman year because for some odd reason I aspired to be a great debater. My initial experiences with the team were poor at best. I had to deal with a bunch of people I really could care less about: the crazed Nate Yapp, the chain-smoking Coach Hartje, and a bunch of jerks whose only purpose in life was the team. I dragged my feet into getting involved in the Student Congress event.

Things really did not go anywhere for me until the last tournament of my sophomore year where I won a second place trophy behind one of Central's greatest debaters, Dan O'Brien. After seeing Dan give Mike Howard the sentimental gavel at the end of the year banquet, I recommitted myself to the team.

The next year I went on a tear. I went to nine tournaments and won trophies at all but two. At one, I made it deep into the Congress Super Sessions. At the other, districts, I ended up getting truly shafted by a judge from Central who admitted to lowering my scores in order to not appear biased. It was a disappointing end to the season, but I bounced back at the banquet.

Mike Howard honored me by giving me our Congressional Gavel. This ancient gavel goes way back through Dan O'Brien to Quentin Smith. It signified my coming of age as a respectable debater and was one of my proudest accomplishments. Finally, I had made it! I was a debating force to be reckoned with!

Unfortunately, things unraveled rapidly after that. After Mike Howard and Jon Greenless graduated, the team de-evolved into a mindless group of speech team zombies. My only decent friends on the team, Charles Karr and Matt Geerts, stopped being involved. I ended up in a war of words with our still chain-smoking Coach Hartje and, more of less, just became apathetic to the team. Despite my general inability to get along with most of the team, I have managed to dominate (even with lack of sleep or interest) at every tournament I have attended this year. I guess I could say I debate for the love of it. I cannot stand the team, the people, or most denizens of the tournaments, but the thrill of arguing a point and shutting people up will always give me a rush.

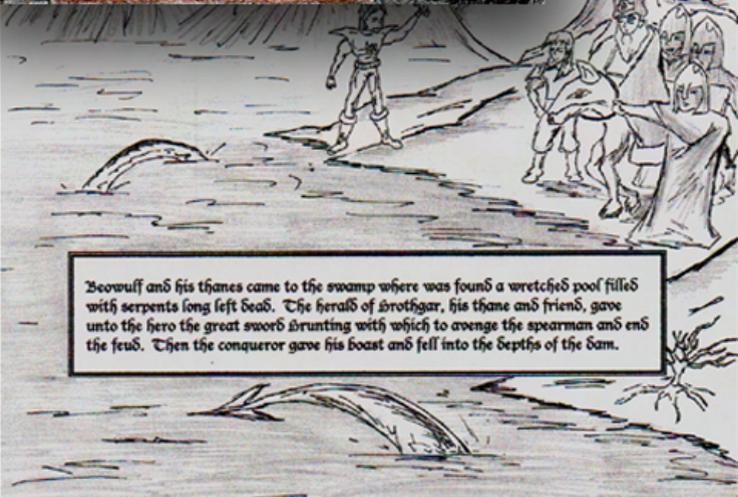
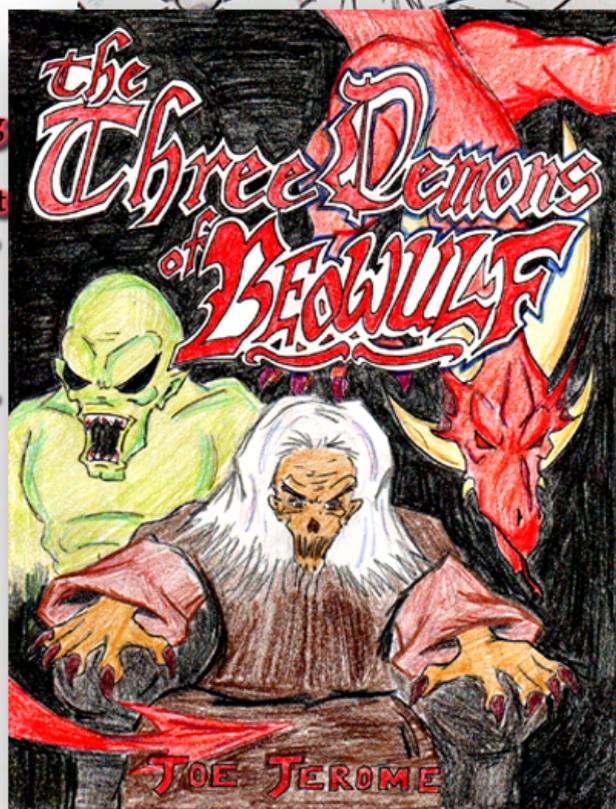
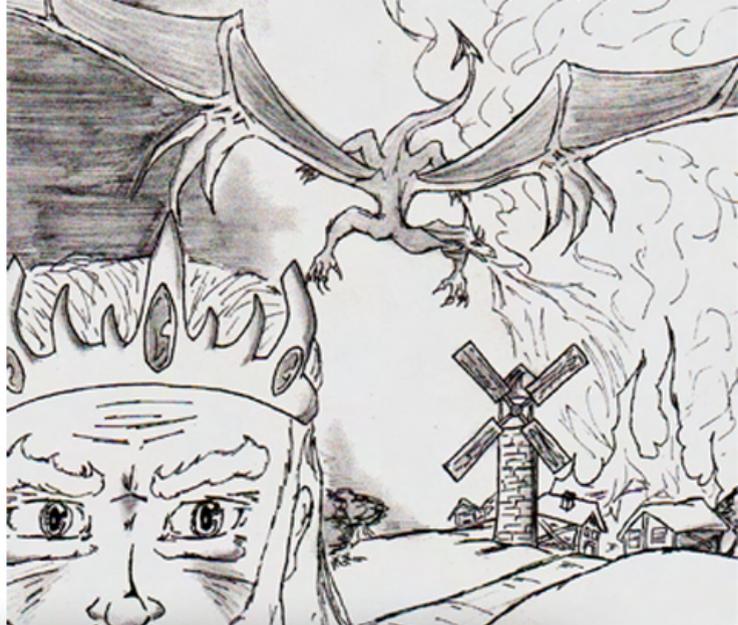


Beowulf

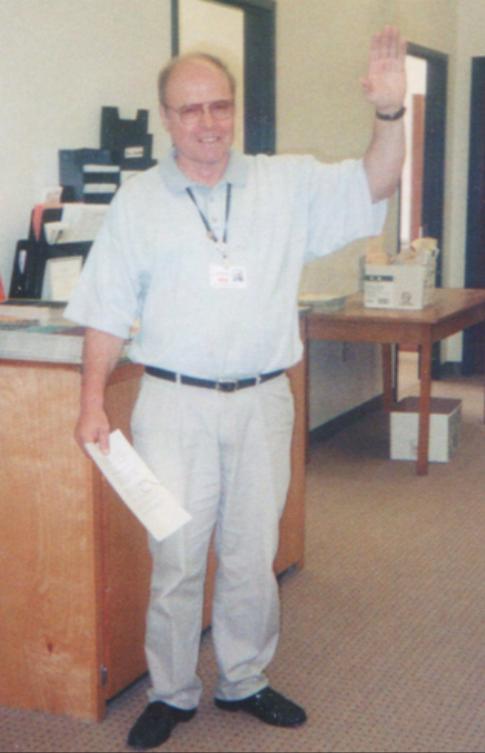
In the early part of my junior year, I had the opportunity to read the tales of Beowulf. I had always been a sucker for fantasy and mythology, and Beowulf immediately captured my interest. Beowulf was a typical one-dimensional character that is common in all legends, but the vividness of the characters he fights (Grendel, Grendel's mother, and the dragon) was real to me.

Eventually a class presented me with the opportunity to do a book report, and I leapt at the chance to do Beowulf. This was during my artistic peak, so I decided to do my own illustrated take on Beowulf. I always thought Beowulf was awesome material for any illustrator (and I was eventually proven correct when I stumbled upon a graphic novel of Beowulf in a Boston comic book shop.). I immediately set to the daunting task of illustrating Beowulf. I read as many versions of the story as possible for I decided to rewrite the story in a poetic format.

The results would prove to be stunning. Beowulf ended up having such an influence on me that I actually went back and looked into my old Tolkien books which were obviously inspired by Beowulf's great adventures. Beowulf simply proved to be yet another adventure in the similar style of all the many Norse and Greek legends I had read years before. It was a link between those stories and the adventures of Arthur that would follow. Even better, Beowulf inspired me. It was nestled right in that period of history where the world was in utter chaos; that being a period that has always interested me. Now, I just wonder if they ever did a motion picture that did the tale justice...

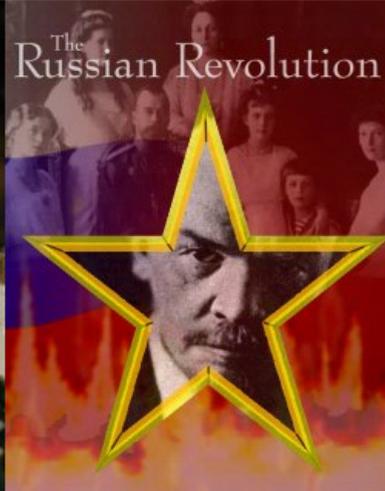


Beowulf and his thames came to the swamp where was found a wretched pool filled with serpents long left dead. The herald of Brothgar, his thame and friends, gave unto the hero the great sword Brunting with which to avenge the spearman and end the feud. Then the conqueror gave his boast and fell into the depths of the dam.



Bart Becker was my guidance counselor and, truly, my mentor for the first three years of high school until he decided to take a financial package and retire early much to my dismay. Mr. Becker made me feel comfortable in the crazy world of Central from the first time I saw him when I came to freshman registration. Although he was certain I should become a medical doctor, he gave me so much advice and even snuck me into more than one class. Whenever Butterman had a problem with me, he would write me a pass and excuse me from her loony bin.

He was one of the most respectable men I knew. If more high school faculty showed me the kindness he did, our public school system would not be in the shambles it is. Mr. Becker was, frankly, irreplaceable. When I found out he was retiring, I was utterly distraught and threw a giant fit in front of him to no avail. I still miss Mr. Becker and the way I could always talk to him whenever the world got me down. When he left, part of what made Central my school vanished into thin air. Such was the influence of the Guidance Counselor, Bart



Miss Hess is easily the best teacher I have had during my tenure at Central High School. The dictator of the history department, Miss Hess has ruled Central for twice my lifetime. In that time, she amassed more historical knowledge (especially about Russia) than I could ever hope to acquire. It took until my sophomore year to have her as a teacher in her Historical Viewpoints class. From there, I promised I would return a year later for Russian History and I did.

Miss Hess is memorable by herself. She is a storehouse of knowledge and a superb giver of advice. But I have been fortunate to be a part of classes featured so many interesting people, Miss Hess only complimented the memories. In Historical Viewpoints it was the pig-headed Adam Page, Geerts, and the notorious (and nowhere else mentioned) John Day who waged war against Miss Hess. A year later, I had to deal with Adam stealing my gloves along with a whole group of new people.

Although we have given Miss Hess hell ("Let's kill all the ignorant Russians!"), I think she enjoys the challenge that I and my fellow compatriots bring to her day. I always want her to spill all the amazing knowledge she has stored so I pick at her until she blasts me for being arrogant. I will never forget Miss Hess. Her classes were always enjoyable and she proved to be a valuable role model in times of insanity. I figure the woman will die teaching, but until then she is sure to enrich many children's lives.

HIGH SCHOOL

YEAR THREE

JUNIOR YEAR
2000-2001

I never had a school year go so well as my junior year. Pretty much everything good I could imagine happened. I was on a roll, to be sure, and it was about time as far as I was concerned. As my junior year began, I started to realize that, for better or worse, high school was starting to wind down. Somehow, somehow, I was going to turn what time was left into one wild roller coaster ride.

I immediately got thrown into the world of BlackhawkK publications which would send me to Kansas City and San Francisco (and eventually Boston) and help me forge new friendships. I started utilizing my artist abilities for personal gain and produced a few notable pieces of artwork that year including the "Zeus" and a buttload of awesome character artwork.

Things went well throughout the year. I started consistently winning awards for the debate team and I took a trip alone to Washington, D.C. However, after a miserably difficult third term and an utterly pathetic spring break, I went on the biggest streak of my life. By the time the year came to a sputtering end, I was for the first time pretty much satisfied with my life.





Getting Back to My Artistic Roots



Throughout my life, I have always had some degree of artistic ability. Whereas I used to draw endless cities and then endless "Team Joe" cartoons, I never really had the time or motive to work at drawing during my high school years. Aside from random doodles for Devil's Diary and for random school projects, I rarely made any use of my artistic talent until my junior year of high school.

Pretty much from day one, my junior year became defined by the many artistic projects I was working on throughout the year. It started when I became the editorial cartoonist, and later all-purpose graphics master, of the newspaper. At the same time, I started getting involved with the art department and took art classes the entire year. All of it led to an unprecedented outflow of artistic works. After working with it in the spring, I even started further experimenting with Adobe Photoshop to produce really interesting images.

The crowning achievement was easily the "Zeus," as I called it. I finished the "Zeus" in early February. It was massive undertaking. It was my first (and only) oil painting and I worked on it endlessly for a good three months. When I was finally done, I complimented the painting with a specialized frame that took another month to complete. The "Zeus" was easily the highlight of my artistic career.

Beyond the Zeus, I used my junior year to work on tons of drawings. Everything from my website to the casual class report was peppered in a variety of artwork. The amazing level of polish and creativity that was characteristic of my work gave me an extreme sense of pride. Unfortunately, over time, I would eventually become completely burned out as an "artiste," and even my once stunningly polished reports would degrade into what I would call the Matt Geerts approach of being sloppy and hastily done.

SENIORS

Getting Burned by My Artistic Ability

After working on my art ability throughout my junior year, I had no idea that by the end of the year I would be called upon to draw virtually everything under the sun. I was asked to draw dance tickets, t-shirts, banners, posters, and buttons along with the whole compliment of crazy yearbook and newspaper drawings. It sure did not take long to get utterly burned out. Soon enough the mere sight of a pencil would make me quake!

It started in the spring when I foolishly decided to doodle a sketch in someone's yearbook. Before I knew it, everyone who knew me in some insignificant way wanted a drawing in their yearbook. I had to haul home four or five yearbooks a night. It was nice people liked my measly artistic ability, but it served to give me a brain drain faster than I could ever have imagined.

The recognition all of the art gave me was definitely a highlight. If nothing else, people knew because of incredibly amount of artwork I had plastered about the school. I will probably become immortalized in some small way because of it, just wait until everyone see the 2002 yearbook. It got so bad that certain people declared I had an "art monopoly" around the school. Not that I could care; I was just exhausted from drawing so much stuff!



DEVIL'S IRY

2000 - 2001

Prom

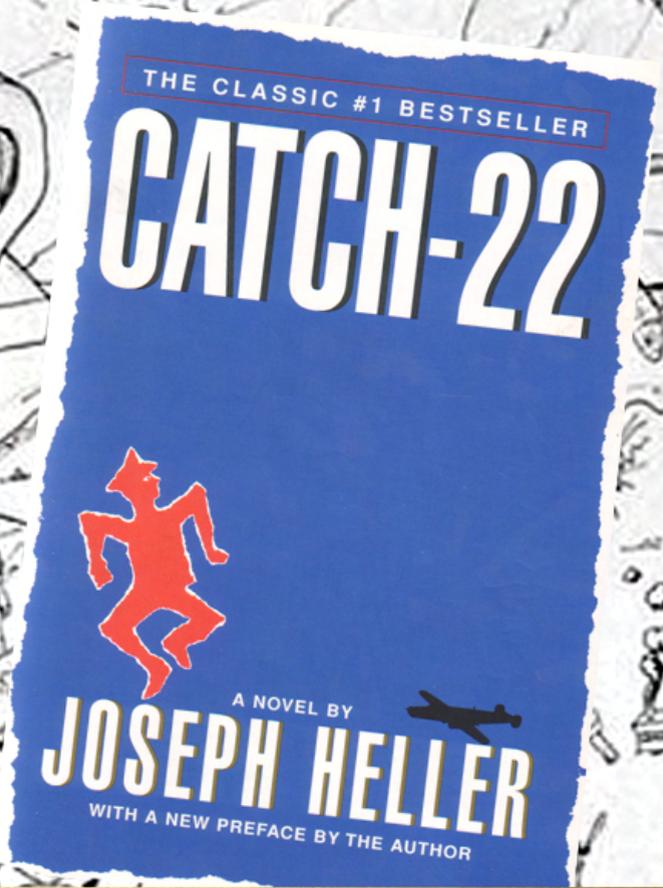
\$12
in advance

\$15
at the door

May 19th, 2001
Mississippi Room
in the Rivercenter
8-11 PM

"River of Dreams"

THE WORLD OF
CATCH-22



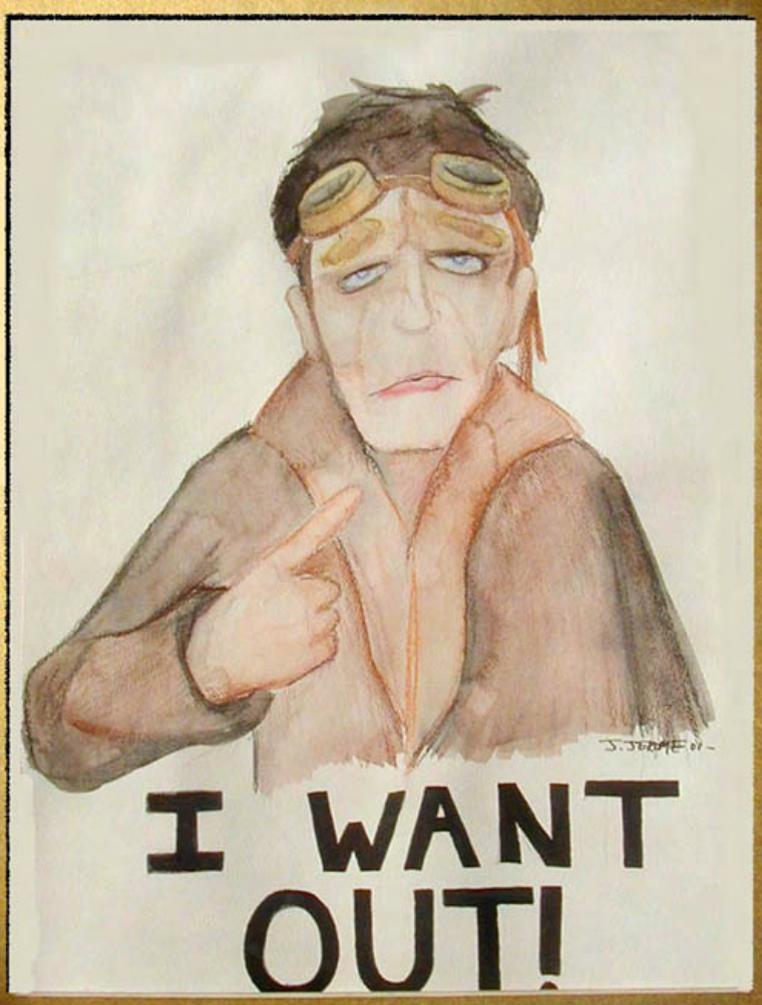
LET'S KILL... YOSSARIAN!

DIE

One of the weirdest books I have ever had the opportunity to read was the World War II classic, *Catch-22*, by Joseph Heller. The book tells the story of Yossarian who is an Allied Pilot who takes the entire experience of war entirely too personally. Throughout the story, Yossarian comes upon different definitions of the paradox known as the catch-22. These catch-22's are illogical devices that seek to ensnare various people in the novel by manipulating reason and basic common sense. The best example being anyone claiming insanity can be discharged from military service, but to claim insanity is obviously to be sane enough to do so. Makes sense, right?

Frankly, the book just confused me to no end. The whole story bounces around changing from being serious to ridiculously stupid. It weaves around in circles. Characters relive events over and over. The whole book requires significant thought just to understand where you are in the whole timeframe of the storyline.

Nevertheless, the book really captivated my imagination. The vividness of the world Yossarian lives in was really appealing to me. I actually produced some nifty artwork based on the book. I have always been interested in World War II, and *Catch-22* proved to be a bizarre journey into just how ridiculous and insane war can be.



National Youth Leadership Forum: Washington D.C.

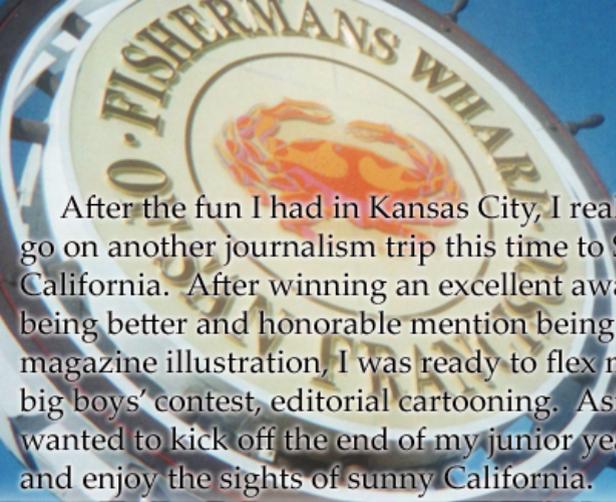
After participating in my sophomore mock trial team, I was invited to Washington as part of the National Youth Leadership Forum where we would be studying law. I went to Washington virtually all by myself and it was a thrill. I was thrust into an environment with people I hardly knew.

I was put into the Darrow Group (after Clarence Darrow) and some very unique people were in there. We had a crazy geek, idiotic but passionate liberal, several southern conservatives, a Rhode Island chick, a hotty from California, a slick guy from New York, and some assorted nuts. Nevertheless, I managed to have an absolute blast. I met so many new people who I actually kept in touch with for awhile.

Being alone in Washington to explore at my whim was an amazing experience. The whole studying of law was just an added bonus although visiting several Federal Courts and Law Enforcement buildings was fun! Plus, I got to meet Ken Starr's success, Special Prosecutor Rober Ray. I even managed to see a whole bunch of new "Genuine Oakley" dealers and almost bought such a genuine souvenir!

The whole trip put me into an awesome mood and I headed back to school in upbeat spirits. I actually started the Joe Happiness Meter on the website the day I got back! Unfortunately, the hectic pace of my C-Term weighed down all of the fun from my second trip to Washington, D.C.





After the fun I had in Kansas City, I really was excited to go on another journalism trip this time to San Francisco, California. After winning an excellent award (superior being better and honorable mention being worse) in literary magazine illustration, I was ready to flex my muscle in a big boys' contest, editorial cartooning. Aside from that, I wanted to kick off the end of my junior year with a bang and enjoy the sights of sunny California.

Along for the ride this time were Jason, Mariah, Zelsdorf, Katies K and R, Hannah, and the foreigners Jorge and Fabio. Aside from Jason (and perhaps A-Rod and Mariah), I really was not the best of friends with any of the other fine journalists on the trip. Imagine my dismay when I learned I would be sharing a room with five other guys including our esteemed chaperone, Mr. Held!?! For a while, I was not the slightest bit excited about the whole trip which was obviously noticeable as I snapped at Jason and company while we toured San Francisco the first afternoon.

After getting some one-on-one time with the Golden Gate bridge, I somehow began to cheer up. That was when, our small group of travelers stumbled into what would become Blackhawk Publications legend: House of Nanking. Hungry and confused, our entire group (which included the adults and the ever-sane Buttleman) was wondering about Chinatown at dusk looking for food. A ostensibly kind Chinese gentleman who went by only the name "Nanking" ushered us into his restaurant. After handing us menus, they were quickly ripped away and platters of food were placed before us. Drenched in a peanut sauce, we enjoyed "Chinese tacos" and cans of Sprite as Nanking told us about Chinese tradition. Fifteen minutes later the platters stopped and bill came which was at least an outrageous \$154. Had we ordered from menus, we could have gotten out of there for only \$72. After posing for pictures, Nanking snuck away into his restaurant as we all came to realize we had been had. The dastardly Nanking was to be labeled a "shyster" by the ever astute Adam Zelsdorf and he would become the butt of at least ten dozen jokes by the end of the trip. Surely, the whole scenario is something only those present would truly understand, but the hilarity that would be derived from the name of Nanking would be massive.





After that uncertain first day, the trip continued to be utterly memorable. On the second day, the incredibly Buttlemann signed the trio of Mariah, Jason, and I up for a "Maestro Contest" where we would put together a story about the Giants Pac-Bell Park. I would layout the page, Mariah would take pictures, and Jason would write. Jason did not write, Mariah did not take pictures, and I doodled with crayons as we all looked over Mariah's Cosmos whilst the contest went on. Buttlemann would not be pleased. During our extended lunch break, we would stumble into the Sony Playstation store which would become a story in itself.

Beyond that, I participated in my second "JEA National Write-Off Competition" for editorial cartooning. The topic dealt with striking Marriott workers, and I was completely displeased with my drawing especially compared to the wonderful piece drawn by some random girl from Oklahoma who sat next to me. Nevertheless, although my flight home impaired from attending the ceremony, I received a grand-spanking superior award for the drawing and got a cheesy little medal!



My journeys on the streets of San Francisco allowed me to see an endless stream of bums whom the Katie named Resel actually befriended (and bummed smokes off of, teehee!). Also, who could forget the sheer number of cheap electronics stores or all of the adult entertainment venues? Some of the best entertainment came when we took a trolley down to Peer 39 which had an amazing arcade where we witnessed the game "Dance Dance Revolution" for the first time. So entranced was I by this game, that I would eventually buy it over the course of the summer and start a little Dance Dance Craze in the fall.



Then, of course, there was the night when our hotel caught fire and no one was sure what to do as smoke filled the hall. That was nothing compared to the huge argument I would initiate with Buttlemann over the tragic state of Blackhawk Publications. This was the argument where I was told it was "illegal" for me to choose a font for some random newspaper article I wished to write and where the usually silent Jorge blurted, "You want to make a paper to win awards; we want to make one people want to read." The whole insane argument turned into a screaming match and pretty much shattered any dreams I had of working for the greater good of Central's newspaper and yearbook. My inevitable descent towards quitting publications began that night.



Still, that was nothing compared to the events that occurred during our final day. For that, I need to start another whole tale! Anyway, San Fran proved to be an awesome, awesome trip and was probably the starting point to one of the best streaks of my life: the last two months of my junior year of high school.

Playstation 2 & The Cheese Stick Saga

My time in San Francisco was easily some of the most fun I have ever had. Part of what made the whole experience memorable were the events that transpired the last day I was there. It would be forever burned into the memories of those who were with me on that trip.

Early on, I had stumbled upon a Sony Playstation store with Jason and Mariah. There I saw a mountain of new Playstation 2's which were unavailable at home at that time. I started drooling at the mouth, and a disinterested Mariah had to pull me away.

"What is so great about that Super Station 3?" she asked. Jason and I exploded into laughter. Somehow the gaming illiterate Mariah transformed the word Playstation 2 into Super Station 3. When we corrected her, she was just happy she had a numeral attached. After a long tirade from yours truly, Mariah knew just what was so good about the Super Station 3!

I realized that if I were to buy the thing that I would be unable to buy anything else or eat for the remainder of the trip. That is when my esteemed friend Jason offered me a loan, a loan for what turned out to be something around \$327. What a sight it was to see me caring about a giant Playstation bag like it was my only child around the streets of San Fran and on the plane ride home!

To celebrate my new acquisition, Jason and I decided to host a mozzarella-stick eating contest. The fool claimed he could eat and eat; he had no appetite. I felt up to the challenge. We went to the nearest Burger King and proceeded to plunk down at least \$30 on the tasty cheese sticks. By the time we reached 28 mozzarella sticks, or 7 boxes each, I began to feel a little iffy. Doubts of victory crept into my mind as Jason sat smiling. Eventually Jason declared that despite not being close to "even getting an appetite" he would concede defeat if I could eat an additional box and half of mozzarella sticks.

Feeling sick and wheezy, I was thrilled to see the end in sight! I accepted Jason's challenge, and slowly began to eat way at the remaining food that was rapidly cooling off and solidifying into a cold, hard mass. We decided to count boxes where we realized we had made an error in counting the mozzarella sticks. Indeed, I was now ahead 37 to 33 with the new count. Slowly, I ate on until ending finally at 39 mozzarella sticks.

Jason admitted he could not go on and so I won the first mozzarella eating stick contest with Jason Held with a score of 39 sticks to 33. A pyramid of boxes was promptly constructed with a crowd amassed including two girls exclaiming how disgusting the whole situation was. We soon left Burger King, feeling sick as hell, but my hand was raised in victory!

PlayStation



It's hard to eat seafood after cheese sticks, eh?

THREE YEARS OF HARDWORK CULMINATES WITH YOUR VOTE!

VOTE JOE

For SENIOR CLASS OFFICER

Call it a need to feel important or a chance at revenge for a failure in eighth grade, but as my senior year of high school approached, I felt a desire to run for Senior Class Officer. I suppose to some this may seem like no big achievement, but to me it meant that I had finally made a mark on my high school world.

After talking to former class president Matt Mots about the subject, I decided I was going to take a crack at running for one of the eight senior class officer positions. Amazingly, at the time, I was starting to become acquainted with huge portions of my class. I asked around the school and got support from people I had hardly known a month previous. I got the word out that I was running through my then thriving website and by my loyal supporters who crafted a "Smoke for Joe" campaign that never came to fruition.

The day came, and I wore my power colors: red all the way. I gave my little speech and actually got one of the loudest ovations of everyone, go figure. I got in and for a brief while considered myself on top of the world! Hey, I had to take a moment just to realize that maybe a few people around school respected me! Of course, then myself and the rest of the elected officers were thrown into a giant chaotic mess where we soon realized we all were too busy to care about running our class effectively.

Still, and I address this to my fellow esteemed officers, Roxie Speth, Adam Zelsdorf, Becky McDonald, Jon Jarrell, Nora Flarherty, Leigh Engstrom, and the infamous Chuck Karr, we did have fun, didn't we? Nothing beat slapping together a class shirt in fifteen minutes and signing up the freshies for the "newsletter!"

PETITION FOR SENIOR CLASS OFFICER

We, the undersigned, do hereby pledge our approval of Joseph Jerome.

RIGHT?

STUDENTS WHO SIGN MUST BE MEMBERS OF THE JUNIOR CLASS.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1. <u>Mariah Beal</u> <u>Currier</u> | 14. <u>Katie</u> <u>Harvey</u> |
| 2. <u>Matt</u> <u>Beetz</u> | 15. <u>Katie</u> <u>Reed</u> |
| 3. <u>Jessie</u> <u>Newell</u> | 16. <u>Elizabeth T. Strader</u> 47644 |
| 4. <u>Kim</u> <u>Moreno</u> | 17. <u>Danielle</u> <u>Flannenstiel</u> 47821 |
| 5. <u>Nora K.</u> <u>Haherty</u> | 18. <u>Angela J.</u> <u>Young</u> 47928 |
| 6. <u>Jacob</u> <u>Karr</u> | 19. <u>Ben</u> <u>Sullivan</u> |
| 7. <u>Charles</u> <u>Karr</u> | 20. <u>Edgar</u> <u>Engstrom</u> |
| 8. <u>James</u> <u>Hendall</u> | 21. <u>Walter</u> <u>Engstrom</u> 47940 |
| 9. <u>Austyn</u> <u>Dawson</u> 47523 | 22. <u>Wesley</u> <u>Harvey</u> |
| 10. <u>Chris</u> <u>Coward</u> | 23. <u>Roxie</u> <u>Speth</u> |
| 11. <u>Michelle</u> <u>Lewetron</u> | 24. <u>Jon</u> <u>Jarrell</u> |
| 12. <u>Jessie</u> <u>Beal</u> 47548 | 25. <u>Adam</u> <u>Zelsdorf</u> |
| 13. <u>Sawna</u> <u>Drewnick</u> | 26. <u>Adam</u> <u>Zelsdorf</u> |

PETITIONS ARE DUE IN THE GUIDANCE OFFICE NO LATER THAN END OF "D", MONDAY, MAY 7th, 2001. ELECTION OF OFFICERS WILL BE THURSDAY, MAY 10th, 2001.

Candidates may give a two minute speech at the junior class meeting May 10. Each candidate must have a cumulative grade point average of 2.500, be passing all courses this semester, in good standing, and be a June 2002 graduate from Central High. THERE WILL BE A MEETING OF ALL CANDIDATES ON TUESDAY MORNING, MAY 8th AT 7:15 IN ROOM 553.



HIGH SCHOOL

YEAR FOUR

SENIOR YEAR
2001-2002

After the immense success of my junior year, I awaited my fourth and final year with a mixture of eagerness and apprehension. I figured there was no way my senior year could compare, but I had no reason to believe life would be anything other than fun and games.

Of course, things started slowly. After a good summer, it was hard to motivate myself to come back. My great and magnificent senior year almost seemed to start without me while I struggled to find ways to make my grand finale truly grand. I would quickly come to realize that I pretty much had to just go with the flow and things would take care of themselves.

If I thought for one moment the hustle and bustle of the spring I had so enjoyed would not continue, I was in for a wake up call. My senior year quickly became a pretty packed house. My once endless free time vanished as I tried to stem the inevitable: college and the real world.





The great destructive party that is the night before one's senior year of high school is a tradition that will never die. Not wanting to be left out of the fun and games, I was ready and waiting to unleash some terror upon the incoming freshman class, the class of 2005, and paint the town red and blue. After my record breaking thirty-some good days of summer, I was ready to kick off my final year of required education with a bang!

Donning my senior class t-shirt, which I designed, and my newly acquired megaphone from Radioshack, I was ready to rumble. Adam Page, Ben Porter, Chris Coward, Mike Wells, and I acquired surplus supplies of toilet paper, seran wrap, shaving cream, eggs, and other assorted goodies with which to have some harmless fun. August 22nd was a cloudy, humid day of malicious destiny. We met at Adam's house around 6:30 where we tested out Chris Coward's police scanner so as to avoid any run-ins with the law. The whole group of us, playing various megaphone songs along the way, headed for Brady Stadium where the entire Class of 2002 was waiting to kick off the night of fun.

Soon a massive trail of cars sped off into the night on a mission to wage war against insolent freshman. The sight impressed even me, seeing dozens of cars in line speeding about crazily. That night passed like a blur. I tried to take in all that I saw for I knew such an event would never come again. Trails of cars and numerous other friends passed me by that night as we defaced poor little kids!

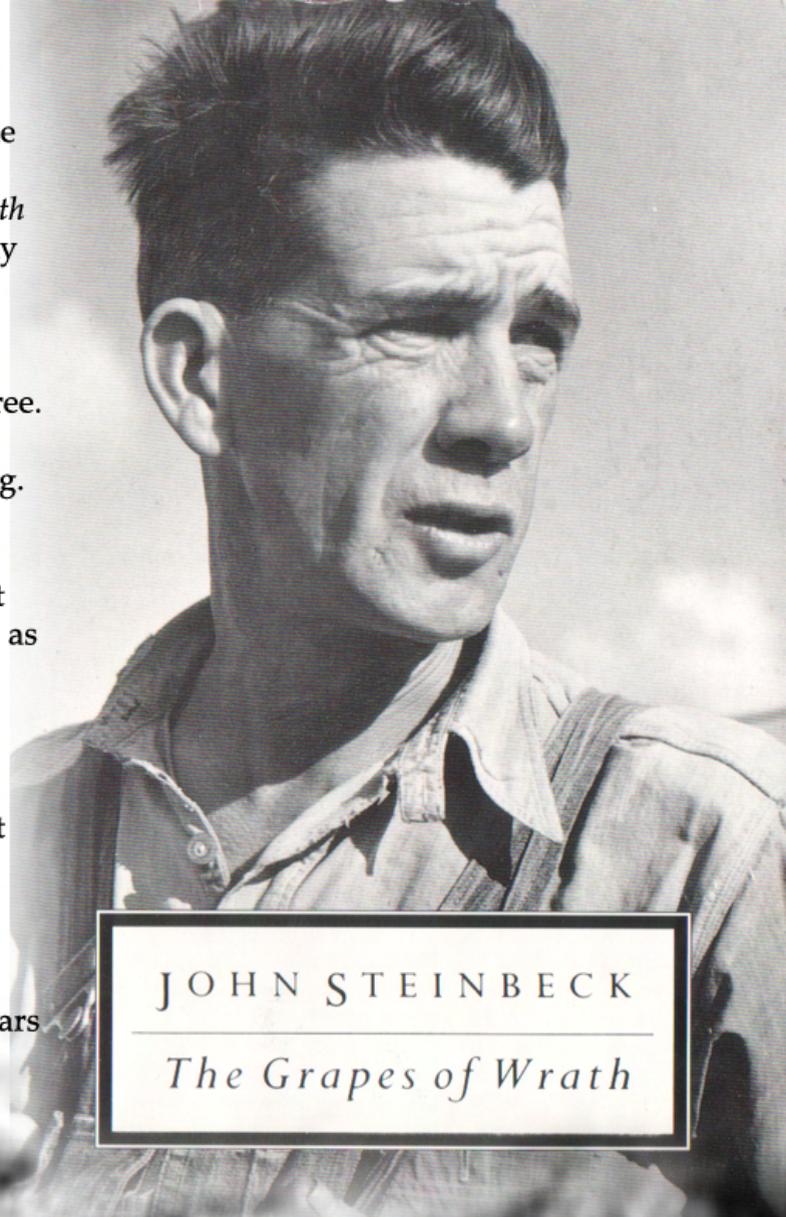
I was never a late-nighter and by 2 a.m. the whole lot of us decided to get some sleep before the first day of the last year. I stayed with my old buddy, Adam Page, and we talked ourselves to a restless sleep. I arose early, reeking and suffering from little sleep, to speed off to school. It was a madhouse. The school was newly decorated in lovely toilet paper despite an administration ban on any festivities on school grounds thanks to a lovely prank courtesy of the idiotic cheerleaders.

I was able to take my megaphone and sit on the school balcony, accomplishing a minor dream I had had since the time Mike Bousselot had thrown a water balloon at me a year previous, while my class below me tortured and maimed countless incoming freshman. Soon, the bells would ring and a new school year would beckon me, but I was content. As our class shirt stupidly said, I had finally broke on through to the other side.

I have been assigned to read a variety of books throughout my years of education, some good and some bad. Although I think it is rather questionable that this compendium requires a passage about a novel covered in the class, I think *The Grapes of Wrath* (which I read for this very AP English class) actually turned out to be one of the more influential books I have read in my life. I suppose I just wanted to become well versed in some modern American classic, but that book affected me to a startling degree.

From the beginning, I found the story compelling. The story started slowly and focused entirely too much on little details, but it somehow managed to keep my attention. I continued to read and read. It was not until the last few hundred pages, however, as the plight of the Joad family became severe that I began to realize just how lucky we as a society are today.

These were people who were fundamentally just like me who had no access to work or education or even food! I remember finishing the book late on a Sunday night and going down to our kitchen and staring at a carton of milk in the refrigerator. To imagine milk as a luxury for people just seventy years ago was absolutely terrifying for me. No novel has ever made me more thankful to be alive in this day and age and more appreciative to have milk in my fridge.



JOHN STEINBECK

The Grapes of Wrath





Egads! I am actually featuring a dance as something memorable in my life! Homecoming 2001 proved to be a huge surprise for a number of reasons, namely that I actually went! The whole Homecoming week turned into a pleasant memory and somehow was the starting point of a two-month good streak (that comprises the remainder of this book, actually).

Dances have never really been my thing, and I was more or less dreading the whole Homecoming experience this year which was distressing as this was my senior year. It did not help to have a couple dozen people pestering me non-stop to find a date. It did not seem like anyone could comprehend my disinterest in going to some silly dance. To make matters worse, Student Council came up with some ingenious theme days like "80's Day" and "Construction Worker Day." I went into Homecoming week not the slightest bit enthused.

As usual, there were some bright spots on the horizon. I had been named a Homecoming Escort which was something I had aspired to be for awhile. Over the course of the week, I somehow got to escort two lovely ladies. At the traditional bonfire (which no one seemed to attend), I escorted Kobi Lazenby. The two of us had no idea what we were doing, but we managed. Later in the week, I was surprised to have to escort Leigh Engstrom for an impromptu aud on Friday. Weeks before, I had been asked by numerous representatives of Student Council (including an overly excited Ben Arp) to draw a Homecoming button. I ended up doing the button at the last minute around 2 a.m. the day it was due, and it turned out to be one of my more impressive artistic achievements. I was quite thrilled to see people around school wearing my wares.



THOUGHT I SAW A KISSY CAT!



Amazingly, as Homecoming week slowly dragged on it managed to get better and better. For "Super Hero Day," I went as the Great 4.0 Man. On Friday, I somehow got signed up to be a judge for the traditional car rally that evening. Thanks to wacky Mr. Wells, that turned out to be quite the joke, but it made for an excellent photo opportunity. (We ended up giving the prize to some silly car by Talya Arbisser and Jessie Newell, go figure!)



The traditional Homecoming game turned out to be reasonably fun despite some major setbacks. I realized early on that I was extremely underdressed for the game. I started my evening sandwiched between the front rows drunks as I like to call them. After our wonderful cheerleaders gave a call for the overly violent and dangerous "Banana Cheer" and I proceeded to get flung a good ten feet, I headed for the hills. Fortunately, my friends among the Homecoming court allowed me to sit with them in their swanky box seats. There I remained as the game went on and on and on until nearly midnight with our team losing 35-34 in overtime to the only team in the conference worse. (After that miserable defeat, I never again went to a Central football game. Whatever the talent, whatever the potential, it is my belief that Central's football team will never gain the ability to win more than two games a year, if that.)

Homecoming

2001



I went home and resigned myself to a quiet Saturday evening when, lo and behold, my friend Laura called to plead that I go with her for it seemed that Jason, her obvious date, had come down with quite the nasty flu. Being the incredibly nice guy that I am, I reluctantly decided to say yes, and thus began one of the more surprising evenings of the year. My theory has always been that no one really cares about the actual dance, just what comes before and after. Although Laura continues to swear otherwise, I ended up having fun at the actual dance, and it all turned out to be "not the worst night of my life."

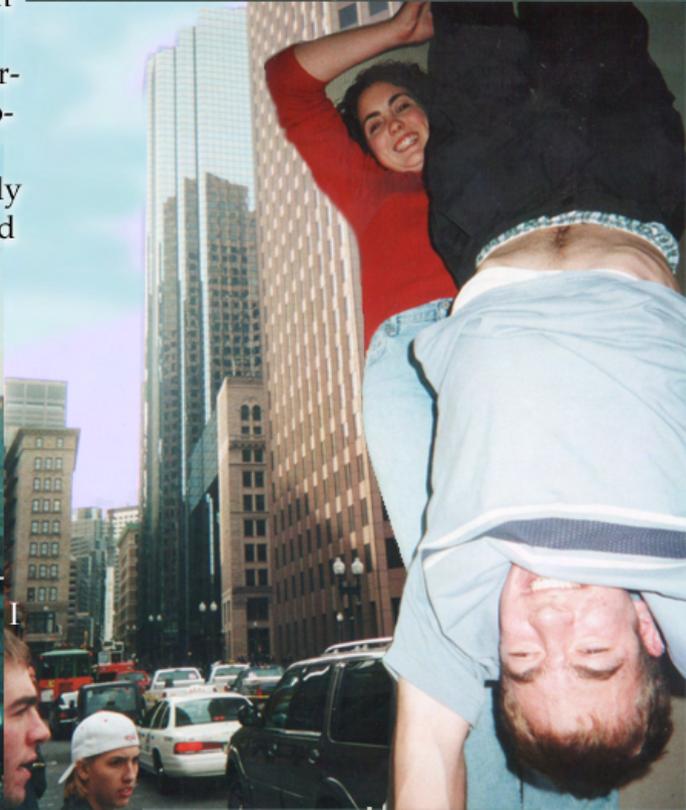
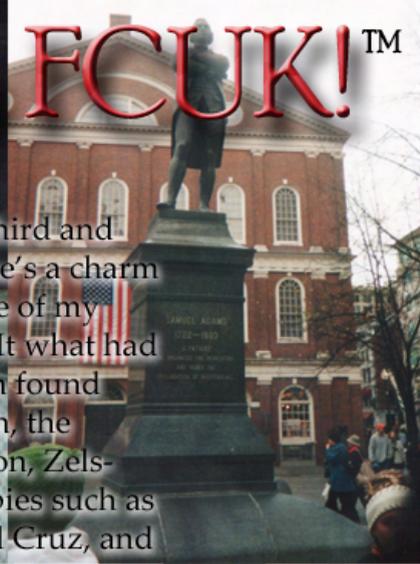
Boston: Cool as FCUK!™

Boston, Massachusetts, became the site of my third and final journalism trip. As the saying goes, third time's a charm and Boston managed to become the most enjoyable of my voyages as a member of Blackhawk Publications. It what had become a semi-annual event for some of us, I again found myself in the company of the incomparable Mariah, the bodacious Roxie, and the terrible threesome of Jason, Zelsdorf, and Arp. Some uneducated journalism newbies such as the infamous William "QBarrister" Baresel, Raquel Cruz, and Brandt Dustiheimer joined the group. Fun was certain to ensue!

The adventure began with typical Buttleman insanity as the crazed journalism teacher declared the group had to become acclimated to the surroundings of Boston. Mariah and I decided the best way to accomplish such a task was to immediately find a high-priced seafood restaurant and spend beaucoup bucks on lobster. We ditched the group and traveled the Legal Seafood where the suave Todd served us lies about the pleasant feelings lobsters have as they are brutally murdered for our feasting enjoyment.

Following this humorous and tasty beginning, I made the decision to forsake all educational elements of the journalism trip in favor of enjoying the company of my fellow lazy bums, Mariah and Roxie. I found myself spending the majority of time with them instead of the outlandish company provided by the guys. I waged unholy war with Mariah in the Game Boy Advance game, Advance Wars, with me ultimately rising in victory. I ended up accompanying Roxie to Harvard Square where I found an utterly awesome comic book shop and she found, well, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle stuff. Roxie even let me go along on a dinner outing with her genius brother, Ray.

If that all weren't enough, the rest of the time was spent discussing the insanity of our families, playing cards, and watching The Fast and the Furious. (Yes, Jason, people do race cars on the streets!) Wonderful eating experiences highlighted the whole trip. Aside from the oh-so-buttery lobster, I was able to chow down on some Greek, Japanese, Chinese, and, of course, gourmet pizza and who could forget the incredibly expensive tiramisu ordered from room service. Even better was the QBarrister "Q & A" session over dinner!





Fortunately for this trip, I was able to avoid the evil grasp of the outrageous Deb Buttleman-Malcolm. I made it my personal mission to stay out of her way after dealing with her for so long. I had no interest in accepting the farce that was Central's "First Amendment" award and had no desire to be sent on some crazed meeting that could in her deranged mind somehow help me get to college. After all, I had to witness Roxie get up early in the morning to head for a fruitless meeting that Buttleman assured would result in a full-ride scholarship of sorts.

Thus I stayed far away from Buttleman and waltzed into my third contest relatively confident in the quality of my artistic piece crafted in Photoshop. Of course, Buttleman was skeptically and immediately rambled at me afterward that my entry could be disqualified for some idiotic reason, like I cared! I was just in Boston for the lobster. Still, I was able to win an excellent award for the Photoshop art for my third "national award" in as many years. That little tidbit was of no interest to Buttleman as she assured me that had I entered another contest she had in mind I clearly could have gotten a superior rating which would have helped with college which would have...I was listening to Linkin Park with my eyes closed as she continued to ramble.

The trip ended with a lackadaisical flight back home. On the way, we had the odd experience of bumping into Central's old friend, Ricky Harris, whom Buttleman immediately talked her head of to. Additionally, with much riding on the line, the whole group of us paid attention to the score of the Packers-Bears game as we had layovers from flight to flight. Packers won, 20-12, in a perfect end to a pretty much perfect trip.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY
Joe Jerome

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THANK YOU
GRATITY NOT INCLUDED

CSUR DAY
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Thank you
Happy Birthday
Jason

After years upon years of lonely, uneventful birthdays, I had no reason to believe my eighteenth birthday would be any different. After all, the year before had been spent bitterly alone in my room watching Georgia play Georgia Tech while downloading a "Happy Birthday" MP3 from one Adam Page. I assumed this year would be more of the same plus the added bonus of finally being able to kill myself with the privilege of buying my first set of cancer sticks!

Let's just say I was in for a surprise, a surprise party, in fact. In all honesty, I expected more people than Adam to remember my eighteenth birthday. I was even somewhat hesitantly expecting to go see the movie, *Monsters Inc.*, with Aaron Young and the Laurens. Besides that, I expected a birthday filled with some Hallmark cards and Chinese with the parents.

Completely unbeknownst to me, a conspiracy was at work throughout the entire day. True to his word, I ended up seeing the movie with Aaron and company. Somewhere during this, Jason Held started harassing me to go to dinner with him later that evening. I was originally hesitant to do anything with him that evening simply because I did not feel top-notch and I was rather stuffed from popcorn. After being bombarded by voice mails from Jason (and Aaron who was in on the plan), I got dragged to Hooters by Jason and his sister, Bonnie, for an allegedly random dinner out. Much to my surprise, there awaited a host of my closest friends. I was utterly blown away. The rest of the night was a blur of being dressed as a wiener-sucking woman and finally realizing just what happiness is.



Mock Trial All-Stars



After my success two years previous as part of a beyond lazy mock trial team, I decided to definitely give it a go again as a senior even if I meant irritating the ever-irritable Brad Hartje and missing the state debate tournament for the fourth time! I had always been interested in a law so mock trial had been right up my alley. This last year I, along with my entire team, took the same approach towards working on the case that I had as sophomore. That is that I did not work on the case at all. We spent most team meetings looking at old yearbooks or watching me get into fisticuffs with our self-proclaimed star witness, Geerts.

Despite our dismal worth ethic, we managed to destroy our competition at the district level and blast off to the state tournament. We were a team of true-to-life Mock Trial All-Stars. There was myself along with the veteran unit of nice-but-mean Emily, Mariah, and Jason along with Becky, Geerts, and Meagan the Dogface. Of course, once at state we were summarily decimated by the team that went on to win it all. Our star witness, as luck would have it, was impeached three times for being absolutely ignorant of the case and I made the ludicrous objection of "Case Error." We nevertheless had a jolly good time. After all, Mock Trial 2002 was the birthplace of Dogface, but that's a whole other story!

DISTRICTS: MY DEBATING FAREWELL

For my final year, I made Student Congress and the debate team a pretty big priority despite not giving a rat's arse about the team or the coach. My final tournament, the District Congress, had been delayed from early March to mid-April. Had the tournament been in March, I might have cared, but by April it was difficult to muster the energy to even go to the thing, unfortunately.

I entered Districts headed for the prestigious Senate along with the venerable Charles Devon Karr while my heirs-apparent, Bieber and "QBarrister" Baresel, were each in a House. We were truly the Fantastic Four. Districts had been condensed into a single day and I spent the morning speaking with glee! I gave the "base" judging the system the shaft as I spoke at every turn. I launched into tirades about credit-cards and advertising in schools. I never had so much fun ridiculing others' positions. Still, by the afternoon, I was suffering from heat-exhaustion along with the prospects of being judged by my own "coach," Hartje.

I finished in the top five and made the final ballot which was something that had been stolen from me last year thanks to my own team. After Charles gave a ridiculous farewell speech, we, the actual debaters, voted for our two Senate champions. I managed a respectable third place, missing out on a bid to the National tournament by one place, but I was pleased considering I thought nothing of my competition (especially the moron who took second place) and I had finally demolished the big idiot, Chris (Crapp) Rapp. I even got a gavel and with a proud march off the now-defunct Marycrest campus said farewell to four years of Student Congress.



Blackhawk Publications Land of Insanity and Stupidity



In what would become one of the most controversial aspects of my high school career, I became involved with Central High's Blackhawk Publications thanks to the influence of Mr. Editor-in-Chief, Jason Held. I originally signed on to do some editorial cartoons and maybe an opinions article or two. I had no idea I was about to be sucked into an absolute black hole. Before the year was up, I stumbled into being the so-called editor-in-chief of the yearbook and a technical expert extraordinaire.

The insanity stemmed from our esteemed advisor (or dictator or slave-driver), Deb Buttleman-Malcolm. If I got into the entire legacy of Blackhawk Publications, I would be typing for forty years. (Actually, it might not be a bad idea to document just how asinine the whole rotten journalism program is, but that can wait for another compendium devoted entirely the subject!) Let it be known that Buttleman (along with her eccentric husband "Bob") is quite possibly the most insane woman on the fact of the planet. If it is not insane administration conspiracy theories that are bothering the woman, than it is those diabolical evil Wiccans or the phenomenon known only as the "Ghetto Fabulous." I should probably stop there, or I risk making myself seem just as nutty as Buttleman.

I originally snubbed my nose at Buttleman my freshman year after she laughed at my request to join the newspaper then, but Jason somehow tricked me into believing publications was not that terrible. After all, they did go on fun trips (to win national awards to win \$2000 in scholarships to "go east coast", but I digress), and, truth be told, I was not too put off by publications until I formally started working in the news lab at the end of my junior year. Six months later, I was suffering from migraines, hair loss, and chronic indigestion. I tried to pack my bags and leave the publications hell known as Kemper Hall, but I was more or less trapped. However, in exploding at everyone, I was able to buy myself some sanity and independence that I will continue to flaunt and abuse until the very end.

I must impress upon anyone reading that publications is far more insane than I will ever be able to adequately express. Still, good things came out of Buttleman's domain. I was able to hitch rides to Kansas City (which I stupidly have no pictures of hence it's absence from this chronicle), San Fran, and Boston while making (or becoming better) friends with some awesome people. I also got to win some pretty nifty awards and I got to plaster my name all over the newspaper and yearbook just because I am cool like that! Would I take it all back? Depends on whether that crazy woman Buttleman is babbling incoherently at me or not.



MASKED
DANGER:
THE DANGERS
OF HORSE
BACK RIDING

Inside:
Life after
high school
2001 Technology

Yearbook Insanity

Six months as editor-in-chief

I already discussed my disdain for Blackhawk Publications, but the whole thing got even more insane when I was appointed one of the "tri-editors-in-chief" of the 2001-02 Yearbook. That evil-doer, Buttleman, had a grand scheme in mind where I would illustrate virtually the entire yearbook with Roxie Speth handling layouts and Emily Jacobson writing the copy. Unfortunately, it was never my desire to draw an entire yearbook; my ambitions were more than that. Additionally, I had no idea how to produce a yearbook and neither did my partners in crime.

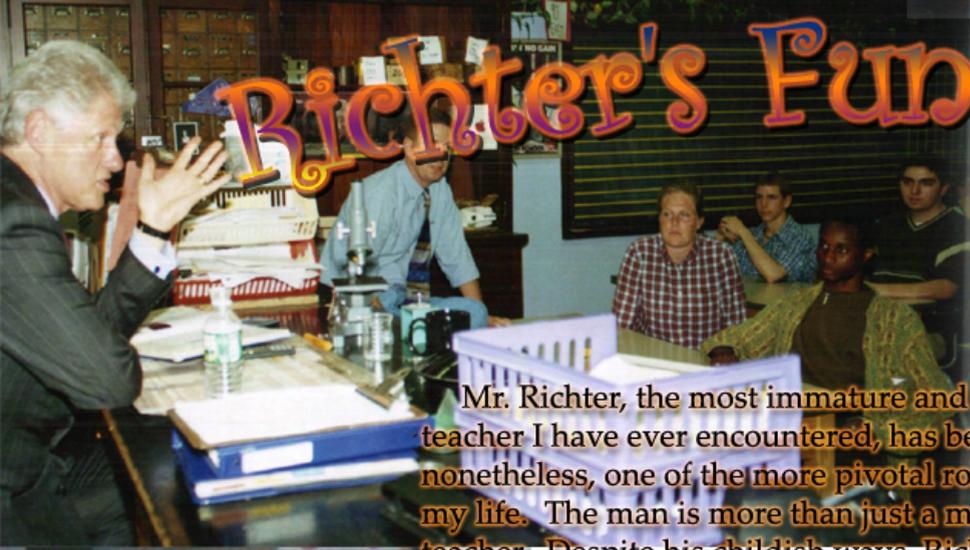
This allowed Buttleman to virtually take control of the yearbook and turn it into an absolute circus as everyone will see if and when the book is published at the end of the 2002 school year. It is very hard to explain what exactly went wrong with the yearbook. Buttleman continued to preach that we were an elite class of great potential. We had the theme, "Alice in Wonderland" stuffed down our throats which while full of awesome things to do for a yearbook would quickly become mutilated by Buttleman's schemes.

I began rebelling from the yearbook just weeks after being anointed editor. I wanted no part of the mismanagement and stupidity going on in Kemper Hall. It did not help that I had to deal with crap coming from the newspaper, as well, but I will not go there considering the three editors (Jason Held, Adam Zelsdorf, and Katie Knorovsky) are all people I hold in obviously high esteem. All the while, Buttleman almost seemed to laugh at my attempts to get into college because I had cast aside her idiotic and short-sighted advice.

By August of 2001, I had reached my breaking point. After Emily Jacobson conned her way into becoming the centerpiece of a pathetic looking cover (which was later partially rectified thanks to, again, Mariah Cunnick and Photoshop), I began snapping on Buttleman left and right. I ditched publications, giving up my alleged editorship (which I contest meant nothing considering Buttleman called all of the shots), and took AP English with the admirable Mr. Miller.

All was not lost, however. Assuming the yearbook comes out, everyone will witness just how much Joe Jerome greatness is sprinkled about despite Buttleman's interference. I was able to secretly glorify myself while accomplishing my mission of getting most of my friends pictures into the yearbook while giving those glorified newspaper editors, Jason and Adam, the shaft when it came to my centerpiece division pages. Again, like I said regarding publications, to truly express the complete insanity of the yearbook would require a separate biographer and forty years of non-stop bantering.

Richter's Fun House

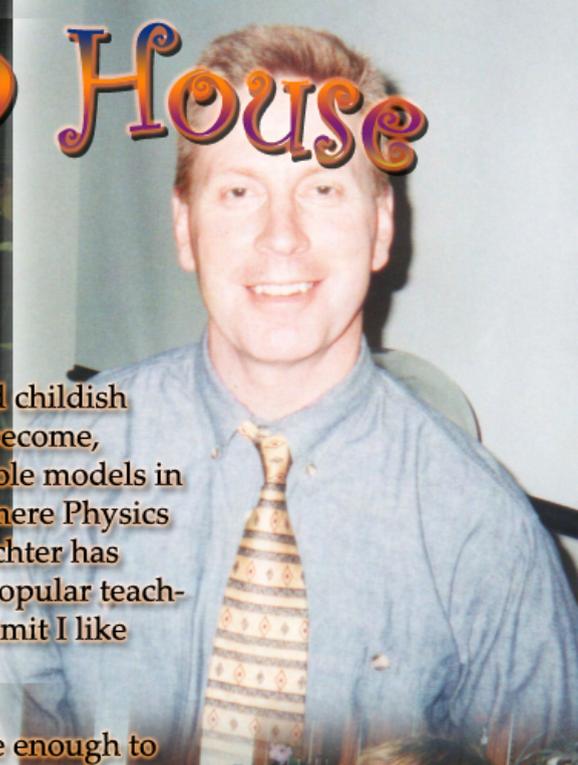


Mr. Richter, the most immature and childish teacher I have ever encountered, has become, nonetheless, one of the more pivotal role models in my life. The man is more than just a mere Physics teacher. Despite his childish ways, Richter has managed to become one of the most popular teachers in the school and even I have to admit I like him.

Through him, I have been fortunate enough to meet the former President of the United States, William Jefferson Clinton, which was an incredibly experience. It is always a neat time to shake the President's hand and talk with him for a moment. Richter was also the subject of an award-winning Photoshop illustration I did. It is almost like fate seems to make luck rub off the man or something. I guess the end of the rainbow had a pot of gold with Richter standing aside or something.

Even with all of the crap he gives me (and the crap I give him), I do have some good memories. Especially from my Physics class where everyone, including Richter, threw balls at me or shined laser pointers in my eye. Then there was the time Zelsdorf and Geerts nailed me with a quickly revolving slinky. Ah, the memories, but I did manage to get through both terms of Physux, as I call it, with an A+.

My relationship with Richter took a turn for the worse this year after I again found myself back on the sixth floor. I figured while I was up there I might as well make his life miserable, so I along with a bunch of other slackers signed up to be lab assistants. Since that time, the four (and sometimes five of us) pass the time drinking pop and playing video games all while Richter barks. Good times.





Farewell to Kemper Hell



After almost two hellish years in Kemper Hall dealing with that unsightly, ungodly thing known only as Deb Buttman-Malcolm, MJE, my time in Publications finally came to an end in late March of 2002. From my early days of being eager to craft a worthy newspaper and yearbook to the bitterness that spewed forth from me everyday after Buttman declared my choice of font "illegal" in San Fran, I grew to utterly hate Kemper Hall and cherish the day when I would no longer have to deal with that insanity.

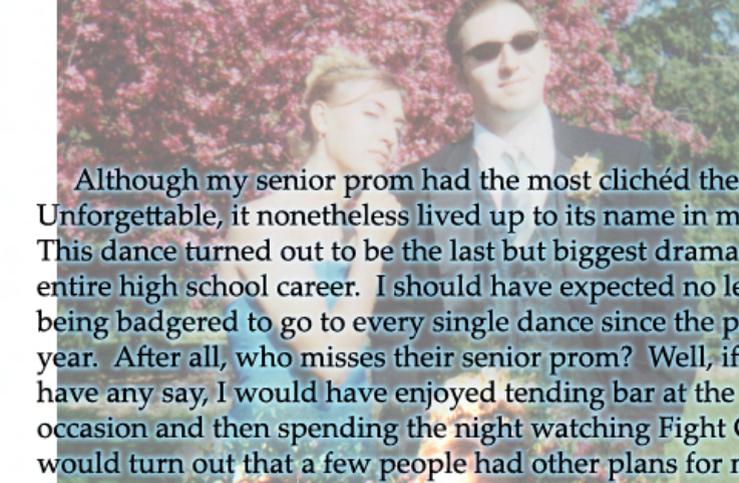
Of course, with that said, I still allowed myself to get dragged back into Kemper Hell in the C Term of my senior year at the suggestion of Roxie Speth. What can I say? I'm a glutton for punishment and aside from Hag-woman I actually liked most of my Kemper Hall cohorts. Coming back one last time allowed me to do one last salvo of nifty yearbook drawings and a fantastic point/counter-point about sexism with Roxie along with concluding my always delightful yellow e-notes to Hannah!

The final term of Kemper Hell was quite the doozy with Buttman physically assaulting poor Emily, Megan unleashing the Coke Condom, Manny and the foam, Buttman's inane nervous breakdown when Adam didn't get to be Student Journalist or get covered in the almighty (HA!) QC-Times, and, of course, my final act of defiance against Kemper Hell and the putrid evil it represents.

On the last day of the final term I decided to take a wondrous-smelling sharpie marker to the walls of Kemper Hell doodling delightful little sketches of all the senior editors on the wall! With the support of Manny, the upcoming keeper of the dungeon, I spent the day doing utterly dismal caricatures of my favorite newspaper and yearbook eds! I figured I could start an artistic tradition on the walls of Kemper; too bad Buttman despised me and wanted to press criminal charges.

Of course, even the school administrators thought the drawings were harmless. In fact, the custodians thought they were pretty cool and should probably just stay, but Buttman would not have that! Any reminder of Joe, the one person who routinely called her the insane psycho that she was, simply had to go, and thus I was forced to procure some shiny white acrylic paint to paint over the dull off-white matte walls I had defaced! With that, I more or less said my final farewell to Kemper Hell. Still, I would return several more times to save the graduation issue from being a blank sheet of paper with a masthead and collage branded heavily with my name just to spite that evil woman. My final visit to Kemper Hell would come at the end of May 2002 when I was forced to steal a yearbook due to poor record keeping, but I made a solemn promise to Brandt Dustheimer never to ever return.

I stand proud knowing that I continually stood up to that vicious psycho. My last encounter with her had her yelling at me for not following Quill & Scroll protocol to which I promptly laughed in her face and told her, once and for all, to SHUT UP!

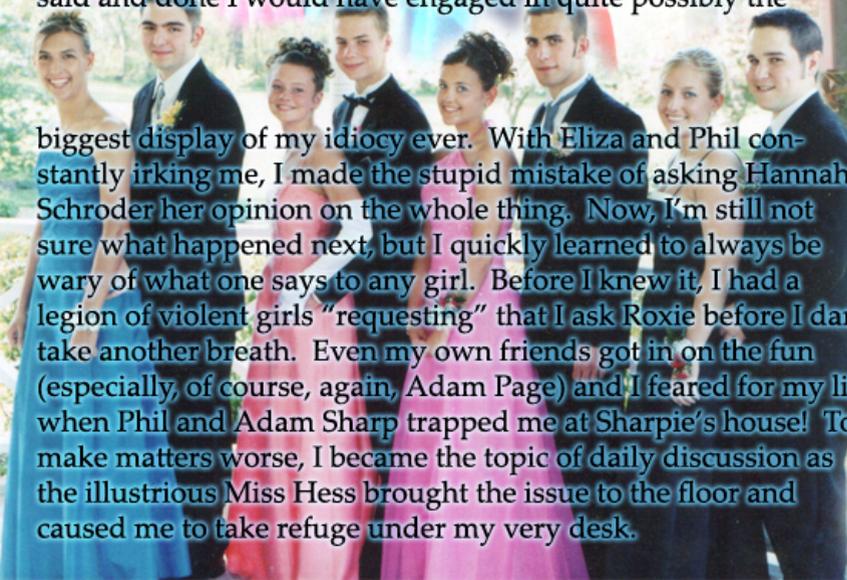


Although my senior prom had the most clichéd theme, Unforgettable, it nonetheless lived up to its name in my mind. This dance turned out to be the last but biggest drama of my entire high school career. I should have expected no less after being badgered to go to every single dance since the previous year. After all, who misses their senior prom? Well, if I was to have any say, I would have enjoyed tending bar at the grand occasion and then spending the night watching Fight Club. It would turn out that a few people had other plans for me.

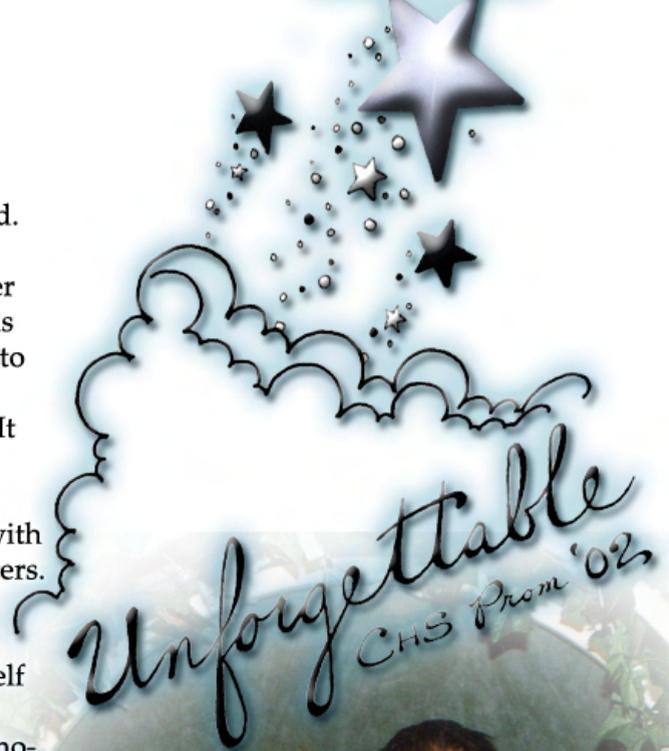
Planning prom was one of the duties that I was charged with accomplishing as one of the eight lackluster senior class officers. Although I had no enthusiasm what-so-ever for prom, I managed to have some excitement in actually planning the thing. I took it upon myself to force a design drawn by myself and a champagne glass chosen by my lunch buddies as the official prom souvenir. Later on, I would demand that the photograph backdrops not be green! While I recognized everyone else's excitement for the dance, I was content to sit the whole thing out especially since going would mean being trapped on a boat cruise!

All of changed one night during spring break when I happened to randomly find myself in the company of the eternal love birds, Eliza and Phil. With prom more than a month away, an eternity in my mind, these two along with Stefan the German started to quiz me on my non-existent prom plans. They "suggested" I ask the ever-fun Roxie Speth. While I momentarily thought that would be a good idea, I promptly assumed that it was just a foolish suggestion on their part and dismissed the notion on the grounds that she wouldn't be interested.

That would not be the end of it and before everything was said and done I would have engaged in quite possibly the

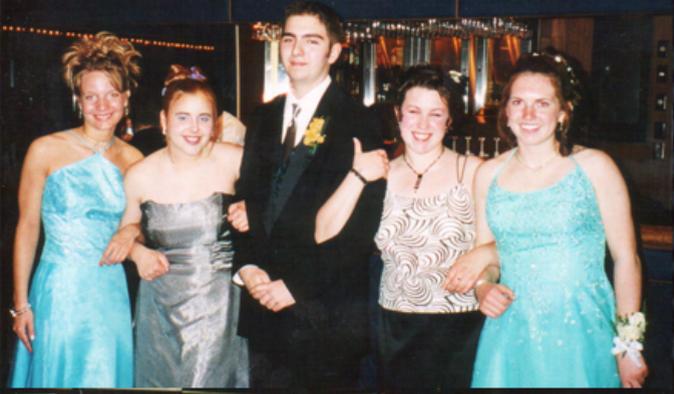


biggest display of my idiocy ever. With Eliza and Phil constantly irking me, I made the stupid mistake of asking Hannah Schroder her opinion on the whole thing. Now, I'm still not sure what happened next, but I quickly learned to always be wary of what one says to any girl. Before I knew it, I had a legion of violent girls "requesting" that I ask Roxie before I dare take another breath. Even my own friends got in on the fun (especially, of course, again, Adam Page) and I feared for my life when Phil and Adam Sharp trapped me at Sharpie's house! To make matters worse, I became the topic of daily discussion as the illustrious Miss Hess brought the issue to the floor and caused me to take refuge under my very desk.



Unforgettable
CHS Prom '02





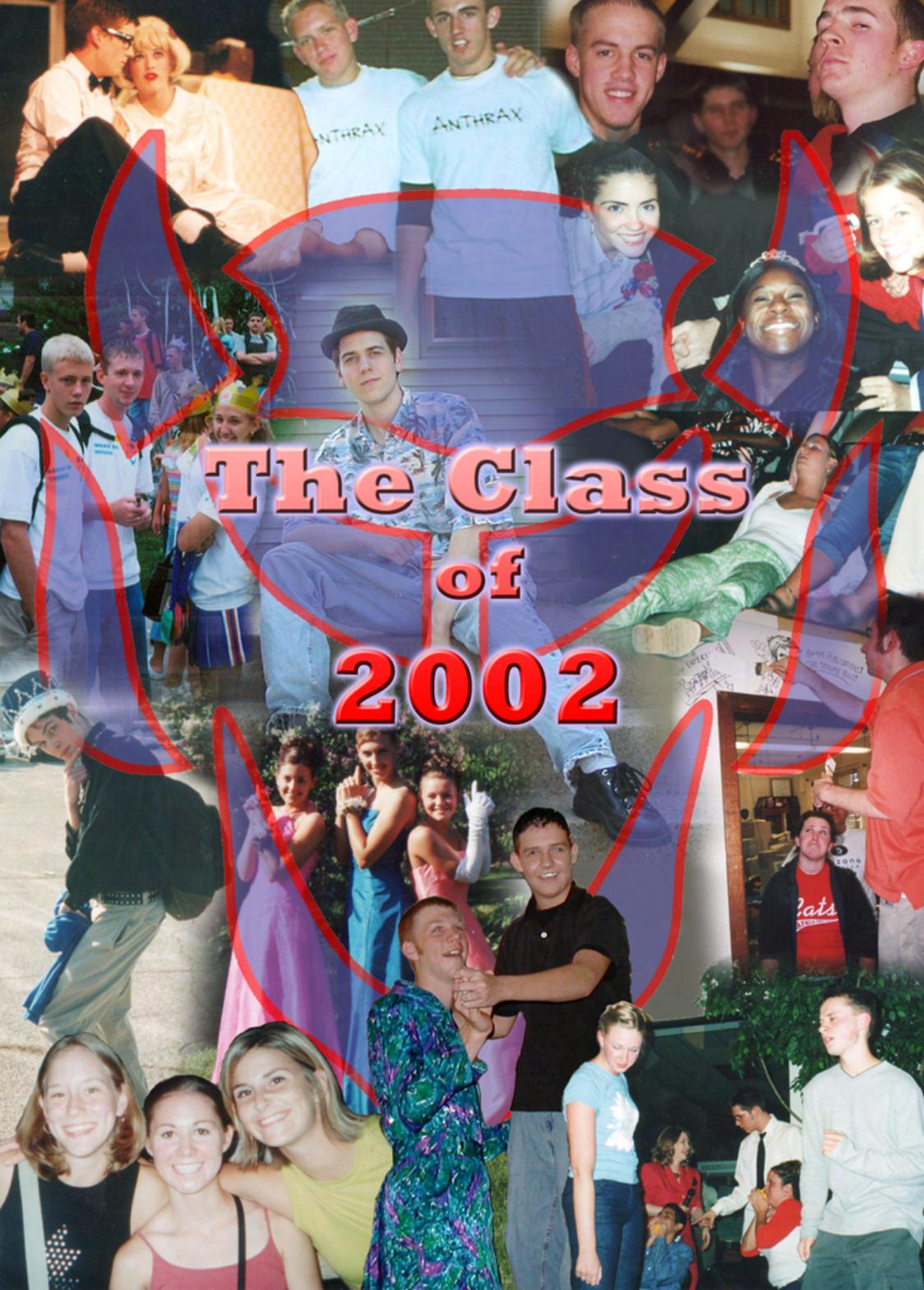
Thus, a great drama ensued over the next few weeks until I finally somehow managed to overcome nerves, peer pressure, and the assorted death threat and asked Roxie to prom. Of course, by this time, she knew exactly what was going on and still surprisingly said "yes" to my utter delight (although this would later turn into another drama that I think I'll just let fade into the forgotten depths of history). Then there were the mini-dramas of which group to eat with (we both decided against an evening with the "show choir people") and when Lea would contractually get me a corsage!

But everything somehow managed to go off without a hitch and the prom boat didn't even sink! Roxie looked delightful and I looked sexy as usual in dress clothes! Dinner turned out to be a surreal affair at a private country club overlooking a golf course with a waitress hell-bent on destroying Eliza's dress. We then managed to get lost trying to find our way to the silly boat, but I certainly managed to have a good time.

Prom actually was not so much a dance as it was a festive gathering on a boat. I spent most of my time mingling with people; I was saddened to note that it seemed as if many people just weren't having a very good time. I was just happy the weather was nice! So the evening went by rather rapidly. Roxie and I were able to get a reasonably nice picture of the two of us even if it was a little awkward looking thanks to our perverted photographer, Mr. Gill, but I shall leave it at that. Thanks to Leigh, I was able to dance like an absolute moron one last time to "Sweet Home Alabama," and with that the dance was over.

Fortunately, the rest of the night awaited although I seem to have few distinct memories of everything that transpired. Watching people act like morons (especially Kobi, of course) under hypnosis was easily the highlight of the never-ending After Prom which, unfortunately, a group of us gave up chances to win prizes at in order to not wait in line forever. I did manage to snag \$25 for designing the tickets and artwork for the event, but it took massive persuasive skills to get the daft Mr. Simmons to fork over a prize ticket for me to keep as a souvenir.

The long-hyped night ended at Kobi Lazenby's watching "Pretty Woman" although I was the only person particularly enthralled by the movie. At six in the morning, our remaining group trotted out to Hardee's where everyone was either too tired to speak or was beginning to go a little insane (like drooling or shooting snot rockets randomly). Eventually, everyone called it a prom and went home. Despite my usual hatred of dances, I managed to have a stunningly great time, and I probably owe that all to Roxie. She was a lot of fun; too bad the poor girl had to go with a such a moron!



The Class of 2002

Journey's **End**

After prom and then assuredly after the class picnic, my great and glorious senior year quickly came to its final act. The great curse of the 4.0 reared its ugly head one last time but was quickly vanquished with a few last minute academic miracles. On the social front, I managed to keep myself from burning out on everyone and I was lucky enough to end the year with more valued friends than ever before. High school ended just as well as I ever could have hoped. As cheesy as it may sound, everything I had initially dreamed of on that first day in 1998 managed to be fulfilled. Of course, knowing me, it assuredly won't be long before ambitions shall start anew...