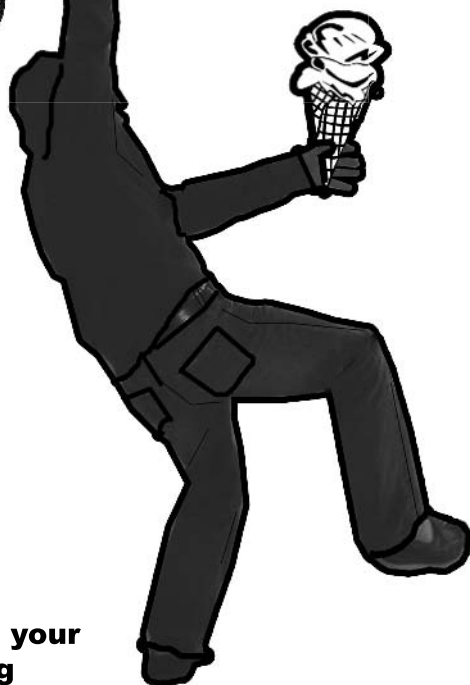


Virtual Ice Cream is a Reality // The Rapture Index // Free Education // Chernobyl by Motorcycle

offline

vol. 1 issue 1 papertizing the world wide web Free / O.B.O

Print's
the new
Digital



jammx.com



FEATURING

- ▷ **Erotic "FULL HOUSE"**
Internet Fan Fiction !!!
- ▷ **Overstock.com Customer
Reviews Review:
America Loves 3-inch Foam
Mattress Toppers**
- ▷ **Finding the Russian Bride of your
Dreams and Other Unsettling
Publications**

Plus

Honest Cops the Comic

The Anonymist

I Hate the Internet

Kitty Cat Sites

ANALOG INTERNET

offline sifts through the world wide web to provide commentary on the sites, ideas, and trends we find informative and entertaining.

There's a bit of the ironic humor routine. But we're also perfectly serious at times. The goal is to reflect on a world engulfed by digital things and put those thoughts to paper (recycled paper).

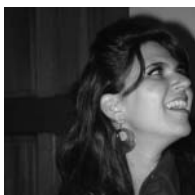
That said, it's just a low-budget entertainment magazine about the internet. But at least you won't need a computer to enjoy it. It's free, analog internet access for all.

If you're interested in writing an article for **offline**, or have a site you want featured, just head over to www.offlineonline.org and submit it.

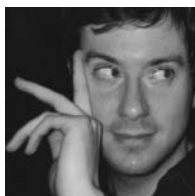
ABOUT the CONTRIBUTORS



Devin Sandoz is an emergent force in Silicon Valley. He's created the internet comic Honest Cops for the past two years and in doing so has posed as a formidable threat to select legal bureaucracies such as FEMA and the ASPCA. His favorite things to do online are dating, shopping, and virtual environment generation. Check out: www.honestcops.com



Elissa Federoff lives in Brooklyn and works at a real estate firm. She's got a great laugh and an apartment that smells vaguely of Chinese food. She loves reading and finding out new information about anything, which is why she loves **offline** Magazine.



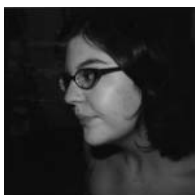
Chris Leslie-Hynan is an office boy and transcriptionist who lives in Portland. His past credits include writing news articles for Pitchforkmedia.com and winning the Paul A. Witty Award for his short story "How America Got Its Landmarks" in fourth grade. In the fall he will be attending the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop. Check out: www.professoryeti.com



The Anonymist is male, almost thirty, and is neither accredited by nor affiliated with any institution that he is aware of, or wishes to admit to.



Liam Singer is a Tell-All Records recording artist, occasional Pitchforkmedia.com contributor, and Portland native.



Andrea Aiello likes to talk about television shows, cleaning products, and cooking (in that order).



Nick Obourn is a writer and editor living in Brooklyn. He enjoys whiskey neat, warm fires, oversized old-man sweaters and people watching. Despite wake-up calls at 4 a.m. and at 7 a.m. each morning, he still adores his ornery cat.



Emily Mitchell-Marell drives a hard bargain. She has recently relocated to her home state of New York where she advises undergraduates. Emily enjoys sandwiches, flowers and dancing.

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offline Magazine's official IS THIS PORNOGRAPHY? CONTEST - ➔

Sex is totally a part of human nature and we will tell you this right now: there is literally a fuckload of it on the internet. Odds are you're completely desensitized to the dirty, dirty stuff. But how well do you understand internet porn? There's a fetish for everything. So what makes something pornographic? Some might say boobs are the answer. Others will surely disagree.

offline wants to know if this picture of a man in a donkey suit holding his big, thick tail is pornography.

In 300 WORDS or LESS explain why the picture IS or IS NOT PORNOGRAPHY. You can use a logical argument, create a backstory, write a poem, or simply muse. We'll feature the best explanations from each side of the argument in the next issue of offline. The winning "IS" and "IS NOT" entrants will also receive a 3-Month subscription to eMusic.

SUBMIT YOUR EXPLANATION TO:
isthispornography@offlineonline.org

GRAND PRIZE:
Your words in print and a Gift Subscription to eMusic



http://www.wizards.com/magic/images/mtgcom/arcana300/MaRoDonkey4.jpg

America's Love Affair with Memory Foam 3-Inch Mattress Toppers (All Sizes)

author: Devin Sandoz
devin@offlineonline.org

A new craze is sweeping the nation... and it's putting everyone straight to sleep! I'm talking about the Memory Foam 3-inch Mattress Topper (All Sizes), and I'm dead serious. When the Mattress Topper was still in development over at NASA few would have ever predicted the overwhelming response it's generated across the country. Or, possibly, across the world!

Let's spend some time getting the straight dope on the Memory Foam 3-inch Mattress Topper (All Sizes) from the people who know it best: the consumers who've taken time out of their busy schedules to review it!

Alan from Loma Linda, CA has the presence of mind to say what we're all thinking about this fabulous sleep aide:

ABSOLUTELY AWESOME...like sleeping on a cloud..by the way, Costco sells a 1-in thick topper just like this one for \$133..here at Overstock you get 2 extra inches for FREE..I bought this one and took my 1-incher topper back to Costco and got my money back...LOL

Ha ha ha ha ha! Not only does Alan know how to select a great Mattress Topper, he knows how to fuck Costco out of a lot of money! The "sleeping on a cloud" analogy recurs again and again in consumer reviews. The description couldn't be more apt: sleeping on a Memory Foam 3-inch Mattress Topper (All Sizes) is exactly like dozing on an exquisitely

fluffy cumulus cloud!

Jill from California gives us another glowing endorsement, possibly in her second language:

Boast in great texture. This great piece has nice feeling for everybody to boast about!!! Re-live the dream of softness in your own bed and boast about it to friends. The texture is soft, smooth and nice, and you will boast about it for days.

You tell 'em sister! With the Memory Foam 3-inch Mattress Topper (All Sizes) Jill finally has something "smooth and nice" to crow about to her friends. Better yet, she can "re-live the dream of softness" in her bed again and again!

But the Memory Foam 3-inch Mattress Topper (All Sizes) doesn't just create an all-enveloping dream of softness, it can actually help with

This elderly woman is actually sleeping like a baby (I presume this means on her back).

pain management! But don't take my word for it, ask Cynthia from Kelso, WA:

I suffer from rheumatoid arthritis and it has been very hard for me to find a surface firm enough to support my back, yet soft enough to avoid pain when I roll over or move in my sleep. The 3 inch memory foam mattress topper has TRANSFORMED my bed into an exquisite surface which allows me to sleep like a baby and wake up fully rested, all my aches and pains have GONE AWAY. My husband LOVES the topper. He has QUIT snoring because he sleeps so well. He wakes up well rested and his aches and pains have gone away also.

Is it true? Has the Memory Foam 3-inch Mattress Topper (All Sizes) made the difficult leap from object of comfort to bonafide miracle? Spend enough time with Cynthia and you'll say it's so. Not only did the Mattress

Topper cure Cynthia's arthritis, but it decided to take care of hubby's snoring while it was at it! This elderly woman is actually sleeping like a baby (I presume this means on her back).

Dustin from Lincoln, NE has more kind words, and brings up an important issue as well:



A must have item if there is such a thing. Worth much more. Not only is it superbly comfortable it also has a great clean smell.

Dustin gives us some serious food for thought. Is there really such a thing as a "must-have item?" Are there any objects that we as human beings absolutely cannot live without? I would argue yes. For example, I need my glasses to see, and without my sight (or the support of an advanced society that cares for its disabled) I would have quietly died.

Is the Memory Foam 3-inch Mattress Topper (All Sizes) just such an essential item?

Let's ask Jacalyn from Kennesaw, GA. Jacalyn, how do you feel about sleep now that you've purchased the Mattress Topper?

I can't wait to get into bed and sink into luxury.

Oh god, doesn't that sound amazing? But Jacalyn, how has the Memory Foam 3-inch Mattress Topper (All Sizes) changed your life?

I don't want to get out of bed in the morning.

That's wonderful.

The votes are in, and the Foam 3-inch Mattress Topper (All Sizes) is a five-

star item! Let's close with a few words from a plucky undergrad who's gone from worst to first thanks to this magic pad. Erin from West Chester, PA says:

This thing rocks my world! I had the worst dorm style bed and then I put my 3" mattress topper on it. Now I sleep like a baby every night!! I LOVE YOU MATTRESS PAD!!

Buy your very own Foam 3-inch Mattress Topper (All Sizes) and read other priceless consumer reviews at:

http://www.overstock.com/sm-memory-foam-3-inch-mattress-topper--pg-proframe_pi-884135_ti-82124.html

<>

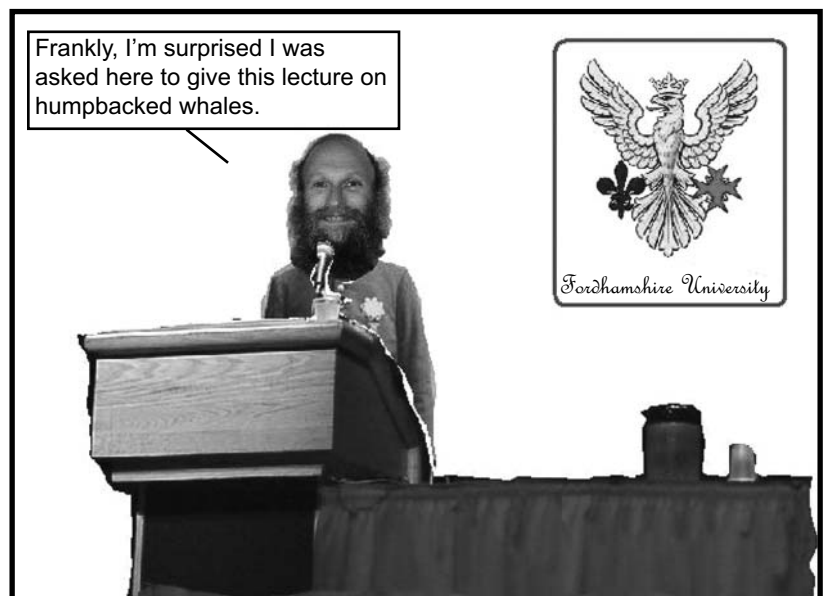


honest COPS by Devin Sandoz

Episode: Cetology - Sgt. Spinoli is asked to speak at a conference on whales.

Honest Cops? Men of the shield. Men of strength. Our last hope for salvation.

HOW IT WORKS: Flip through this issue of offline to read Honest Cops. You see, it's kind of like clicking a hyperlink on a web page, moving from one frame to another, but you're turning a page. It's the whole internet on paper thing.



The Complete No-Nonsense ANTI-SCAM GUIDE for Men Seeking a Russian Wife

author: Chris Leslie-Hynan
chris@offlineonline.org

Like many young bachelors, I don't know very much about modern Russia. I know that Lake Baikal is the deepest lake in the world, holding more water than the five Great Lakes combined, and I know that if I send the Russian government a pair of Levi's jeans in the mail, they will recompense me with upwards of \$800. Beyond this, I know little. But if and when I decide to engage in matrimony with a Russian lady through the Internet, I have an idea of who will be my guide.

Let me introduce Elena Petrova, creator of WomenRussia.com and author of an admirable amount of advisory literature on the habits and desires of the women who hail from the land once known as The Great Bear.

Elena has written two books: the intimately drawn *How To Find And Marry A Girl Like Me* (\$49.95) and the somewhat more cautionary *The Complete No-Nonsense ANTI-SCAM GUIDE for Men Seeking a Russian Wife* (\$24.95). Judging our readers as perhaps more apt to be interested in procuring a generic (but authentic) Russian wife than in a Russian wife who resembles Mrs. Petrova specifically -- to say nothing of the price disparity -- it is the latter book with which we will here concern ourselves. Still, it ought to be noted that Mrs. Petrova has gone some distance towards convincing us that ...*Girl Like Me* is worth every kopeck by offering as a free companion volume her husband John's memoir, *How I Met The Love of My Life*, and by the enticement of a goodly number of pictures of herself in evening wear.

But now let us turn with pleasure to our featured item: the ANTI-SCAM



Elena and Family by an Upsidedown Cross

GUIDE. The potential usefulness of such a book is...clear. Of all the items you might buy on the Internet, none is harder to purchase with confidence than a wife. (Shoes are also difficult.) The nature of the business is inherently prone to...well, we will let Mrs. Petrova tell us what it is inherently prone to:

Let's face it: Internet is faceless. How do you know who you are talking to? A beautiful sincere Russian girl or hairy Boris writing beautiful letters?

Undeniably, when dipping one's western feet into the world of Russian wiving, one is apt to be troubled by images of a man, whose name perhaps is Boris, and who has little hair on his head, but a great deal on his knuckles and the backs of his hands. He works in a small, frigid apartment, with many Pentium II computers and decrepit brown carpeting. Here he and his associates exhort increasingly large sums of money from love-lorn western bachelors, occasionally rewarding them with beautifully-writ-

ten letters signed with ASCII roses [@-- } ---], and constantly eating small sausages which they pluck from a greasy fry-pan with their bare, hairy fingers.

Thanks to Ms. Petrova, this bogeyman may now be avoided. Savvy ANTI-SCAM GUIDE readers are taken inside modern Russia, which rages this very day with the conflict between pitiless con men and the delicate sentiments of earnest ladies. Some declare for the truncheon, others for the flutter of the handkerchief, but none remain neutral, and all who read the ANTI-SCAM GUIDE are given the power to "solve the enigma of sincerity." As Elena Petrova says, "there are thousands of sincere honest Russian ladies out there who dream to love and be loved" via marriage agencies, and as Duane (USA) says, "every guy should read [ANTI-SCAM GUIDE] before he even thinks about doing anything regarding Russian brides."

Note: Offline Magazine is not to be held responsible for the ANTI-SCAM GUIDE being a scam. If you get it (which you should), please note the fine print that explains that your payment may not result in your being mailed any kind of a book (even an eBook) in any direct manner. You give the money to the Internet and the Internet gives Elena Petrova your name and email address. Then she hooks you up. She's probably pretty good about it, though, right? You can tell she is a serious business-lady. Buy with confidence. Let us know if it works. And let us know if the ANTI-SCAM GUIDE truly will, in the words of satisfied customer Timothy Roepe (NY, USA), "help all those in this situation put their hearts, minds, and money at peace." <>

author: Liam Singer
liam@offlineonline.org

The New Bubble Claims Five Innocent Victims

As any old person will tell you, there are a thousand reasons to hate and fear the internet. Today, however, I have only five reasons; one for each of the five dead goldfish sitting in my freezer. They were sweet, happy creatures, and they are there because the information superhighway killed them.

I live in San Francisco, and - as you may have heard - people in this city are incredibly excited about computers. Yes, we've gone ape-nuts over cyberspace in the bay area, home to silicon valley, corporations such as Google and Yahoo, thousands of startups, and a roaming economy of freelance programmers, designers, and hangers-on. Not a day goes by that I don't open the paper and read another story about Gavin Newsom blanketing this city in wireless, or a new merger between two immensely powerful technology companies. This is the future. Robots vacuum our floors, bitch.

To most of the world, the internet is nothing more than a network that reliably delivers news, music, novelty videos, bargains, and porn. Yet when you live in San Francisco, you learn firsthand that there are two "realities" to the internet. There is the virtual world of web pages that we all know, a phantasmagoric clusterfuck of the human experience accessible from any home computer. Then there is the real world that creates much of that virtual world; the true architects of the internet, working in real time, in our physical reality. These are often pale faced, malnourished dudes whose immediate transition from school into extreme wealth truncated the growth of their social skills, such as their ability to enunciate when they're ordering a latte from me.

To illustrate the dichotomy between these "virtual" and "real" internet worlds, consider the infamous "dot com bubble" that was created in the 90's. Rather than being a delightful physical bubble made of soap, or gum, the "dot com bubble" was a metaphorical bubble comprised of increasingly absurd investments being lobbed at lame-ass startups - basically anybody who was able to give a convincing powerpoint presentation.

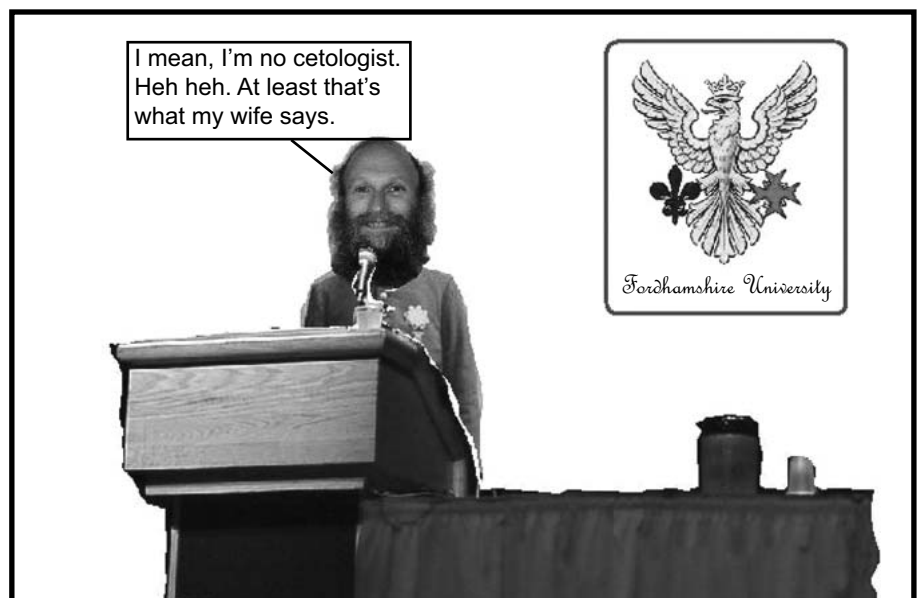
For the average news reader, this "bubble" existed in the universes of the internet and the stock market. The whole irony of its inflation and collapse was that its economy was built upon something that wasn't fundamentally "real." And when it burst, millions of people weren't sent spiraling into poverty - some rich people just became less rich.

But to some, the whole process was much more tangible than that. The physical nature of the "dot-com bubble" was a complete reorganization of the city San Francisco. If you

talk to someone who's been here for a long time, they'll explain that the huge influx of money, combined with new laws around that time that more or less ended rent control, transformed the landscape of who was able to live where in this city.

The transformation that occurred in SF was complicated, but can perhaps be summed up as "if you're poor, get out." In this radically transformed landscape, boutiques flourished, whilst service industry and factory employees were forced out of their neighborhoods. "Highbrow" culture received much public funding, while working artists and musicians starved. Pimpily faced millionaires moved into industrial lofts which, a year before, had been right in the middle of the ghetto. And so on.

Of course, as we all know, that dot-com bubble "burst," which brought the city back down to earth and allowed folks like me to move here and get a foothold in half-gentrified



neighborhoods in which the boutiques didn't manage to totally force out the weird Asian markets and Mexican bars. And yet, whispers are abuzz in the all-pervasive internet community that the bubble is inflating once more. Rent prices are steadily climbing, and my coffee shop is somehow full to capacity at 1PM on a Wednesday with people who have figured out how to get paid for sitting with their laptops.

As part of this new growth, I have been witness to what I'm told was a staple of the internet-boom days - the large, ridiculously extravagant parties thrown by internet companies. These parties are thrown for pretty much any reason - the launch of a new website; the anniversary of the launch of a website; often, simply the realization that it's been a few months since the last party.

Being friends with quite a few people who make their livings using computers, I've been invited to several of these events. Some of them have been relatively normal gatherings, some have clearly cost over a million dollars to throw. But each of them has given me, aside from a lot of free alcohol and tiny sandwiches, an uneasy sense of the pure disconnectedness from reality that this new culture of internet architects has engendered. Many of these are people who have been given a ton of money to throw around at a very young age, not because they worked hard or even really succeeded in business, but mostly because they happened to have the right hobby in high school.

This feeling was made most real to me at the last party I attended, thrown by another stupid new company. I can't remember how it fit thematically, but somebody decided it would be a cute decoration to have a bunch of goldfish swimming around in bowls throughout the room. When I and some others asked what they planned to do with these goldfish after the party was over, the answer

was a shrug and "throw them away." Now, though I'm a vegetarian, I'm not a preachy dude. I don't judge anybody for eating meat, or wearing leather shoes... that's just not how I roll. But while killing an animal and eating it is one thing, killing 100 animals so that they can add a vague ambient presence to a crappy party for a few hours is something else. I know it's a relatively small thing, but it pissed me off. It didn't just piss me off, it pissed off several carnivorous friends of mine, because it was not just the senseless waste of life that was upsetting - it was the whole assumption on the part of those throwing the party that all the world is theirs for the manipulating. And when you live in a city like this, surrounded by inaccessible wealth that's mostly generated by virtual bullshit, that's a hard thing to take. You often feel like one of those fish - an unobtrusive and ultimately powerless presence that's only serving as a backdrop for a system that you don't believe in.

This town is full of aging 60's radicals who, over the years, have turned into its CEOs - somehow reconciling their old ideals with the inherently exploitative/destructive nature of what they do today. They've taken the beliefs and inventions of their youth and used them in car commercials, or to sell ice cream and jeans. Now we have a new generation of "alternative" kids coming into wealth and power, using the new medium of the internet. The only difference is that they've become successful and monetarily carefree before they even had to develop any real ideals. The internet is cool, but you know what? Real life internet culture is not. It is lame people co-opting the aesthetics of my generation to try and make money without doing much work.

My girlfriend and I brought home five of the fish in an attempt to save them, but they had already been through a stressful time, and didn't last long. Now they sit in our freezer, awaiting an imminent burial by sea. So what

of it, internet? Is there a startup out there that can breathe life back into those small bodies? The lives that were taken out of nature and ended so that some lame nerds could feel like they were living it up for a few hours? While I think it's great that the internet is a morality free zone where human minds are set loose to explore their uncensored desires, I'm not convinced that this sense of "virtual" morality isn't seeping into everyday life around these parts.

And right now, that's why I hate the internet. <>

10 Other Reasons to Fear the Internet:

- > **Google's burgeoning monopoly over everything internet related**
- > **Rupert Murdoch's acquisition of MySpace.com**
- > **The US Government's Surveillance of your Private Internet Activity**
- > **Anti-Social Behavior**
- > **Gmail Email Scanning**
- > **Ghosts**
- > **Falling Rocks**
- > **Dan Brown's *Da Vinci Code***
- > **Fascism**
- > **BIRD FLU**

Meow Meow Sites

author: Andrea Aiello
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"I'm smiling and crossing my arms"
- Website Enthusiast and Blogger, Jeff Garbagio

Catster.com

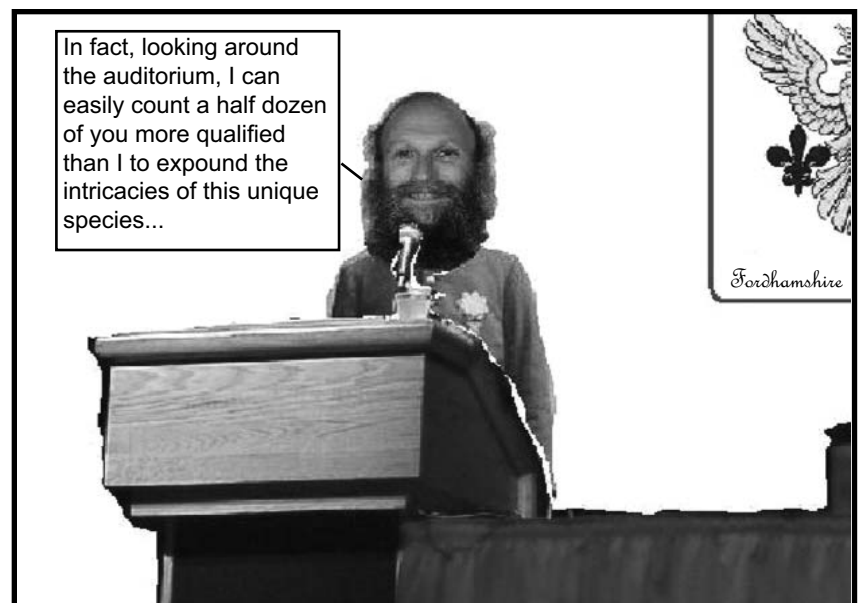
Boasting 58,000 members as of February 2006 (and adding an estimated 104 more per day), Catster is simply the place for web-inclined, social felines to see and be seen. Inspired by the hugely popular networking site Friendster, Catster features in-depth profiles of each member, focusing on crucial topics such as "pet peeves," "favorite toy," "motto" and much more. Skeptics will say that Catster is more a reflection of the owner's personality than the cat's, but as a member and pet owner I can tell you that they're often one and the same. Cats can make "friends" (my cat received 52 friend requests the first day alone), and visitors to the site can give "treats" to cats they fancy (though it is unclear what purpose this serves, as Catster does not appear to sponsor any type of popularity contest). With the only drawback being the decidedly creepy "We'll Miss You" section for cats that have passed on, Catster includes cats for all tastes, with interests ranging from "torturing small reptiles" to "cuddling in mommy's hair." See also: Dogster, Hamsterster, Petster, etc.

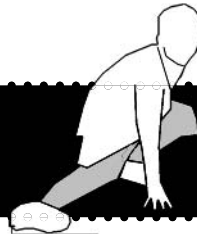
KittenBreak.com

Do you often think "Gee, I'm so stressed out here at work and I really wish I had a kitten to look at, but I don't work at Petco?" Worry no more! Bare-bones and exactly as advertised, Kitten-Break features nothing more than photos of cute kittens doing cute things. As the site administrator explains, "I'm just a bloke who likes kittens, and finds kitten breaks quite enjoyable if I'm stressed...I'm not in this to be a mean poopiehead. I'm in this because kittens rock." Well said. See also: PuppyBreak.

KittenWar.com

For the slightly more competitive, KittenWar caters to the discerning cat lover who whole-heartedly believes in the power of his pet's unequivocal cuteness. With possibly the cutest logo ever, KittenWar encourages visitors to vote on which kitten is the most adorable (and as one might imagine, the younger the better). Links to "winningest" and "losingest" kittens give this site an edge not found on most cat-lovin' sites. <>





author: Jay Leary
jay@offlineonline.org

Generation JammX !!

JammX is a way of life. It's about feelin' the beat and movin' your feet. It's hip-hop and hot jams all day and all night long. It's "building strong bodies and positive mental attitudes the old fashion way: with a well-balanced diet and a regular exercise program." And creating, "a brand that is generational...to occupy the demographic market once held...by Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen..."

JammX is about being multicultural, drug free, and hangin' with your friends. Who's JammX? You, me, and especially the JammX Kids.



dance and, their new single "Keep U Dancin" has a sick beat. In fact, music industry heavy-hitter and American Idol star Randy Jackson is executive producing their tracks.

03/01/06

This week I hung out at home and played my PSP on INS, made to play people all over the world including friends. I went to eat with my mom and did school work with Ms.Suze. I also had fun working with Queen Latifah, JoJo, Rihanna and Natasha Bedingfield!

02/28/06

Today I celebrated my Birthday. I got calls from Johnny, Jazz, Annie, Alyson and Monica. I got a mini motorcycle that goes 15 MPH! I also got a chain, new shoes, and clothes. I got a hummer from Evan and a card from Alyson. Jazz bought me starbucks for my birthday. Johnny got me a video game. Ms.Suze got me a Piano.

02/23/06

This week I have been chillin' with Jazz over at his house. We played PS2 & PSP, wrestled... and we played Double-07 too, I'm JB- James Bond. We also hung out with Johnny, played basketball, went in the jacuzzi and told a ton of jokes to eachother!

.....
: Words That Describe JammX Kids:
: **Fresh, Hip, Fun, Wild, Healthy**
:

JammX.com is your headquarters for everything JammX. You can read the kids' bios, check the official JammX calender, download cool IM icons and fresh desktop wallpaper, listen to the latest JammX singles, and watch exclusive JammX videos. All of that, and the site's made entirely with Flash, so you know there's a lot of colors, sound FX, and stuff moving at all times.

The JammX kids debuted on TV. They had a fresh special on the WB that featured some hot performances and dance routines. They haven't seen much network time since then, but that hasn't stopped their fans from visiting JammX.com. The kickin' site lets Generation JammX enjoy Johnny, Evan, Jazz, January, Chancellor, Annie, Alyson, Monica Anne, Bobb'e J, and Lauren twenty-four seven.

No joke, these kids can really

So what's to complain about? Nothing unless you hate fun and dancing. And who can argue with fighting childhood obesity and improving the health of America's youth? Clearly not Shaquille O'Neal. The NBA's most dominant center has been supporting the JammX kids from the beginning.

Just head over to JammX.com and watch Shaq bust some crazy shit out when the kids teach him a few new moves. Offline Magazine can't emphasize enough how entertaining this video is to watch:

http://www.jammx.com/mov/jams_with_shaq_flv.html

The multimedia content is great, but one the best features on JammX.com is the blogging. Each member of the crew has a blog. Pint-sized phenom Bobb'e J updates his pretty frequently:

Bobb'e J's definitely not obese, so it's cool he mostly chills and plays video games indoors. And Starbucks coffee has milk in it, which means it's probably healthy for kids. The hummer is kind of a mystery, but we're guessing it's a toy or something. The whole wrestling and hanging out in the hot tub sounded pretty cool too. Do you think Bobb'e J beat Jazz?!?

JammX may be a corporatist marketing ploy, but that should never take away from the talent of these rad kids. When all is said and done, JammX teaches us a valuable lesson: dancing is great exercise. And that's the JammX truth. <>

Jay's JammX Scrapbook:



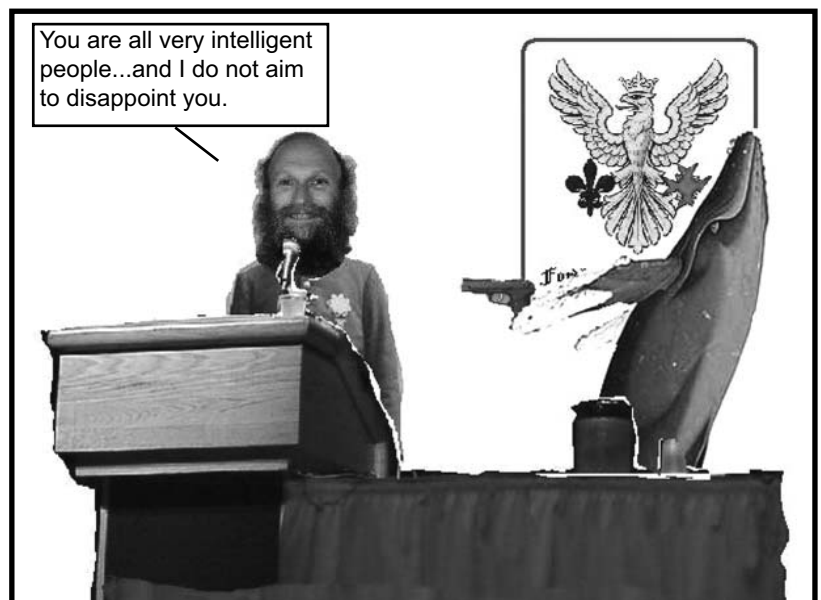
← Here's what me and my friend Emily would look like kickin' it with JammX.



↑ My cat Meowsers and Chancellor.



My Favorite JammX Kid is Bobb'e J. He's ten but really small, which I think means he has a congenital kidney disease like Emmanuel Lewis from Webster. Seriously though, I hope the guy's okay.



Chernobyl by Motorcycle

author: Nick Obourn
nick@offlineonline.org



“To begin our journey, we must learn a little something about radiation. It is really very simple...” -Elena Filatova

Considering world countries, Ukraine has had a tough time. It's capital, Kiev (Kyiv) was completely destroyed by the Mongols in the 13th century and then again in WWII by the Germans who decided it common courtesy to level the city as they hightailed it out of town. Seventy years of communist rule. A bitter and divisive 2004 election. Revolution after revolution. And, as if that weren't enough, on April 26, 1986, the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in Pripjat.

It all makes one want to hop on a Kawasaki Ninja, arm oneself with a Geiger counter, and tear through Chernobyl's "dead zone" at lightning speed (but not so fast not to take photographs), and then create a Web site chronicling the adventure. And this is exactly what an intrepid Kiev woman named Elena Filatova did.

Her website Ghost Town, <http://www.elenafilatova.com/>, was the topic of much discussion when it emerged in 2004. The premise was daring and intriguing. A young, attractive woman, obsessed with motorcycles and speed paired with a heartbreaking look at the worst nuclear reactor

catastrophe ever.

Divided into 27 mini-chapters, the site charts Filatova's trip looping through the radioactive zone. As an aperitif, she offers readers of the site a crash course in the effects of roentgens/hour, the measure of exposure for gamma rays. A dose of 500 roentgens in 5 hours is lethal to humans. In the days after the Chernobyl reactor accident the area surrounding Chernobyl throbbed with 3,000-30,000 roentgens/hour. Today, the area is much less radioactive. In most places a Geiger counter averages 20-80 microroentgens/hour.

Now, one can't exactly waltz into the radioactive zone surrounding the Chernobyl reactor, special clearance is required. According to the site, Filatova gained entry to the restricted area because her father, a nuclear physicist, got her the green light. And like a 16-year-old birthday girl waking to discover a new Mercedes in the driveway, she credits her father on the site with a jubilant, "Thank you, Daddy!"

The photographic content on the site is extensive and precisely what one would expect, haunting and dismal. Filatova captures the emptiness, the desolation, the victimization. One photograph depicts a toy stuffed bunny, lying on a floor of gray dust, broken glass and girls' shoes scattered around. It echoes the immediacy and chaos of the evacuation. (It's important to remember these items have ostensibly not been moved in twenty years, although photographers have been known to "stage" scenarios.)

Ghost Town is known among the seasoned surfer and with that comes

an inevitable heaping pile of doubt. There are doubts as to the accuracy of the claim her trip was solo. There are photographs that could not have been taken alone, photographs in which she appears, inviting the conclusion of a second or third party. Sources on the Internet claim some of her photographs have been lifted from other books about Chernobyl. Others claim motorcycles are prohibited in the "dead zone," no matter how much horsepower and bravado one has, and that Filatova actually snapped the photos on a guided tour of the area.

The accusations may or may not be true. Ethically, it may present problems for visitors and fans of the site, but in the end Filatova accomplishes what she set out to do: spark interest and awareness about Chernobyl. In light of this, does it matter how true it is? The evening news bends truth at their discretion. Why should Internet sites be pinned under different scrutiny and not allowed their share of spin?

Two thousand and six marks the twentieth anniversary of the accident at Chernobyl nuclear power plant. The rough—very rough—estimate of deaths due to reactor four's steam explosion leading to nuclear meltdown is 4000 with lots more on the way. Some estimates go as high as 400,000. Whether or not one woman's horsepower worshipping trek on her Kawasaki Ninja is true hardly matters. As long as Ghost Town exists to point a finger, it is a reminder of the potential size and severity of the human imprint. <>

Apocalypse Wow ; -)

author: Elissa Federoff
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Raptureready.com: "the prophetic speedometer of end-time activity."

No doubt that the incredible web team over at Exodus Design Studios worked day and night with Todd Strandberg, "fearless leader and founder" and Terry James, " 'general' editor and cat lover," in order to create raptureready.com, a website so loaded with information, that readers will have a tough time finishing it before the Rapture hits!

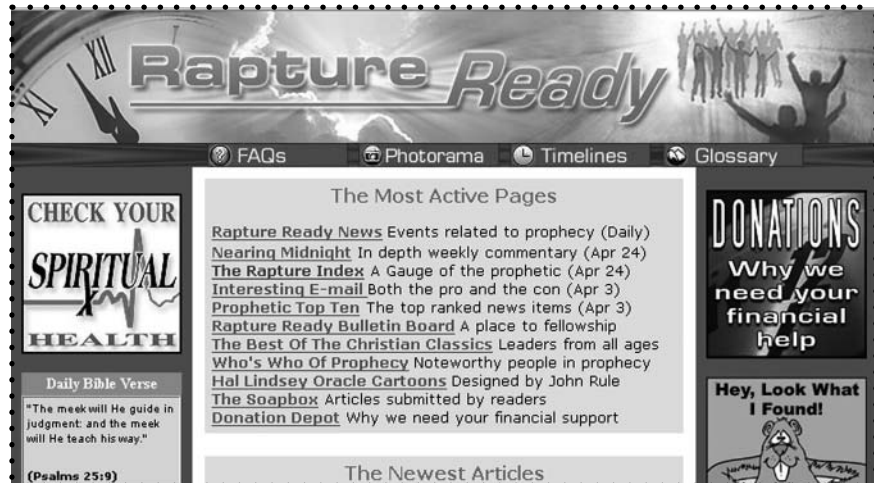
What's the Rapture an unchristian might ask? The site's extensive glossary sheds some divine light:

At an unknown hour and day the Lord Jesus will descend from heaven, while remaining in the air, he will snatch his Bride, the Church, out from among this sinful world. Christ then takes the Church to heaven for the 7 year wedding feast. The earthly reason for the removal of the Church is to make way for the rise of Anti-christ and to fulfill Daniel's final 70th week.

Thanks to sections like the Glossary and its partners in crime: FAQ's, Photorama, and Timelines, Raptureready.com (a.k.a The Rapture Index) is very user-friendly and easy to understand.

Why a website about the impending Rapture? The homepage makes the site's purpose apparent.

Raptureready.com "has two functions: one is to factor together a number of related end time components into a cohesive indicator, and the other is to standardize those components to eliminate the wide variance that currently exists with prophecy reporting."



What could be clearer? If the first description is a little too technical, the writers break it down into real-life terminology we can all understand: "You could say the Rapture index is a Dow Jones Industrial Average of end time activity." The chatty and descriptive nature of the copy, along with the tasteful humor, makes the page a pleasure to read.

Beyond the site's accessible literature, it offers an extensive photo

album of relevant subject matter – like Todd's Thanksgiving Dinner from 2003. While we enjoy the familial and the familiar, the photographic footage takes us down many different roads, from serene landscapes shots of Israel, to violent acts elsewhere in the Middle East. The images and captions help to illustrate why the world is growing closer to the Rapture each and every day. And though the shots of Todd's family are a bit gratuitous,



but they do show us the sort of people God takes care of in Heaven.

Mr. Strandberg and Mr. James have left no stone unturned when it comes to Rapture reporting. Raptureready.com describes the major religions, references many Rapture-related articles, and highlights potential Rapture Index Events. It's even pretty fair about who's going to cause the End of Days.

Strandberg and James recognize that violence is prevalent and negative. They offer photos of every

powerful world leader who could be the next Antichrist – Bush, Putin, Bill Gates...Bush. If there is something Rapture-related occurring, Raptureready.com has it covered.

The reporting is so good that you might even start to think these guys have a point...until you read FAQ number 450:

Q: How do you plan to maintain this site after the rapture?

That's pretty stupid. And the answer:

A: "I have no master plan for maintaining Rapture Ready all the way through the seven-year tribulation. After the big event takes place, I expect RR to last several months. After all, the Internet was designed to survive a nuclear war. It should be able to survive the great catching up of all believers."

Maybe these rapture folks really are just kooks. Or maybe, just maybe, we are all, with the exception of Todd and Terry, utterly screwed <>

Reviews >>>

<http://webcast.berkeley.edu/courses>



Learning is Expensive. Free Education For All.

author: AricleWizard V.2.03b
comments@offlineonline.org

Higher education is very very expensive...prohibitively so in a lot of cases. On-your-own book learning can be great but hard to stick with. Common folk that aspire to engage in the lifelong pursuit of knowledge can easily end up running out of time or motivation. Enjoying a novel after work is one thing. Pouring through a text on solid state electronics or Buddhist psychology is a whole other ball of yarn.

Wouldn't it be great if there was an easy way to grow our minds without paying a premium? Of course it would. And wouldn't it be special if we could benefit from a university's scholastic excellence without the financial burden? So very special indeed. Thankfully the information superhighway has stepped up to help, teaching us a lot of things we'd have to pay for otherwise. Welcome friends to the promising world of college lecture webcasts.

Free Thinking

More and more universities and colleges are making audio and video from select lectures, labs, and discussions available on the web.

To review or catch up, students can open up a browser and check out an archived stream. The cool part is, in many cases, the un-matriculated can access these classes too. In fact, if a person's interested they can watch or listen to an entire semester of classes about, say, solid state electronics or Buddhist psychology.

One the best webcasting schools is UC Berkeley:

<http://webcast.berkeley.edu/courses>

Berkeley started archiving a few select classes in 2001. The school's webcast program now has thirty-eight full, streaming courses from the current semester, and quite a few from previous years.

If you're looking to expand your intellectual horizons, odds are you'll find something that grabs you. Philosophers might take an interest in PHIL 7: "Existentialism in Literature and Film." Science buffs could go for ESPM 114: "Wildlife Ecology." The absurdly smart should visit EE 241: "Advanced Digital Integrated Circuits."

Keep in mind, internet scholars won't find video streams for every class, but they'll get an Mp3 of the lecture at the very least. Tech savvy thinkers can even subscribe to a class' podcast and rock out to "European Civilization from the Renaissance to the Present" with Apple Computer's iPod music device.

Sure a person might learn more if they actively participated in a real classroom, but this is free and unbelievably easy.

If you're in to it, you can spend a couple hours each week and take a whole college course (without the tests and related stresses). Try inviting a like-minded friend over and sit through some interesting lectures together. Hell, make a weekly schedule, round up your friends and neighbors, and host an entire course at your house. Drinks and the latest webcast from the Berkeley political science department? Maybe it's not "cool", but it's certainly productive.

There are no degrees to be had, but viewers will certainly learn something valuable. <>

**UC Berkeley Streaming Courses
Spring Semester 2006**

- + Foundations of American Cyberculture
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- + Structural Aspects of Biomaterials
- + Introduction to Chemistry
- + Chemical Structure and Reactivity
- + Operating Systems and
- + System Programming
- + Graduate Computer Architecture
- + The Structure and Interpretation of
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- + Data Structures
- + Machine Structures
- + Economic Analysis - Microeconomics
- + Signals and Systems
- + Structure and Interpretation of
- + Systems and Signals
- + Digital Image Processing
- + Solid State Devices
- + Advanced Analog Integrated Circuits
- + Advanced Digital Integrated Circuits
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- + European Civilization from the
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- + US History: from Civil War to Present
- + US Foreign Policy After 9/11
- + Animal Behavior
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- + Property in Law
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- + Existentialism in Literature and Film
- + Descriptive Introduction to Physics
- + Introductory Physics
- + Undergraduate Colloquium
on Political Science
- + Clinical Psychology

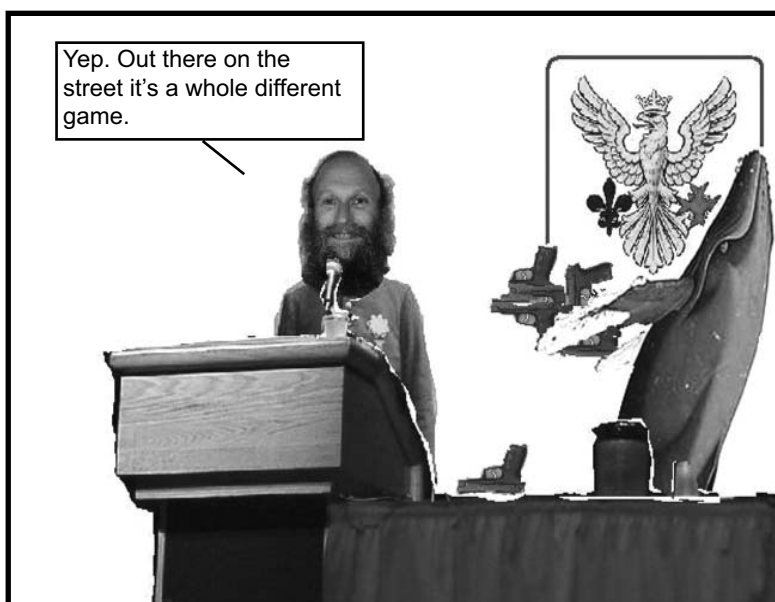
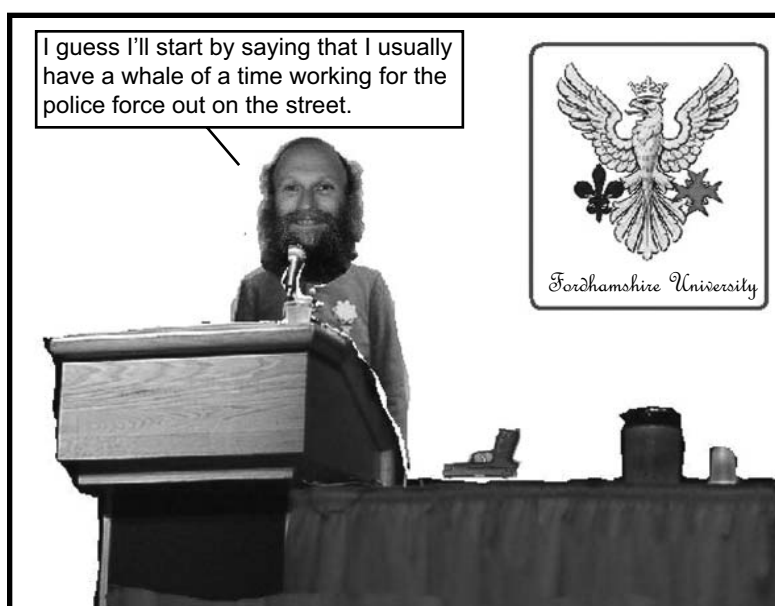
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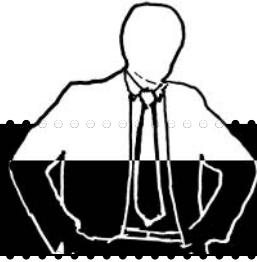
author: Emily Mitchell-Marell
emily@offlineonline.org

www.gofugyourself.com

The word fugly is one you may remember from grade school.

Gofugyourself.com is operated by a group of about three to four women with various axes to grind. They scour the web for photos of celebrities wearing what they consider to be "fugly" outfits. You can click on various celebrities and view some of their bad clothing choices. One particularly amusing pic involves Mischa Barton of *the O.C.* in a thermal, dog print, pajama-like suit, and riding boots. If you're into this kind of thing (pettiness, fashion, and voyeurism), you'll love the website.





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newseverity@offlineonline.org

Digital Gluttony

So there I was, hacking up a googlepage for myself, buying and selling stuff on ebay, posting my geeky opinion on forums.macrumors.com -- basically interacting with the web on a semi-full time basis, you know, making a pseudonym for myself -- when out of the blue I get this message on myspace from a bearded man.

The message said something about an article and newspaper and for a moment I was confused. I had just a month before that attempted to get bizjournals.com to publish an article of mine in realprint -- but why the heck would they contact me through myspace? After the third reading, I gathered that this guy was from the Oregonian and he wanted to do an article about me.

For why? Because I had jotted something regarding the music industry vs. pirates on macrumors, and in my signature there was named my location: 'Portland, OR' and the address for my googlepages account -- which, like it or not, the same as your Gmail address...

The bearded man was doing an article on illegal music downloads -- a very hot topic -- and here I am, a writer and musician -- and what did I think about this state of affairs? People getting litigated left and right, music being downloaded by the terabyte, illegally. I agreed to meet with him, and we had a pleasant sit-down at a local cafe.

Right off the bat, the bearded man asked if I had illegally downloaded music. I shifted in my seat, not quite squirming, but trying to be ginger with

the admission. Yeah, I said, I have downloaded music off LimeWire. And do I feel guilty about this? Yes! I kinda do! Why? I'm not that serious a musician, but I have friends who are quite serious on that account, and have gathered from them that the music industry is a bitch to get yourself a sure footing in.

And it's not my intention to delve too deeply into the piracy debate, here. There are many opinions already jungle-thick from all the different points of view. From the poor-us side of the major labels, who would have us believe they're losing umpteen millions in profit (though how they come up with those numbers is up for debate) each year to music theft—from them to the music publisher's standpoint, to the various artist's standpoint, to the standpoint of the consumer who either wants their music in a certain form, or at a certain cost—all of that is very interesting, and I might here recommend a decent documentary on the issue called "On Piracy", that you can download yourself through a bittorrent client of your choosing (type this link into your browser: <http://thepiratebay.org/details.php?id=3488028> -- and worry you not about the ethics of pirating this, as it's released freely by its creators).

The long and the short of it is that I extrapolated on my views of the debate, to the bearded man, and most of my opinions didn't make it into his article. But what did make it was my name -- right there, at the top of the article, on the first page of the Oregonian's Living section, the first letter of my first name all done up in 40-point bold Arial font:

X X*, a Portland area writer and musician, is one of thousands who has illegally downloaded music off the internet.*

I was a bit put off by this. I mean the first line of the article? Sure, I'm 'one of thousands' --but 'one in thousands' gets litigated by the industry! I was just a regular shmoe doing what all the other lemmings were doing. A regular shmoe who thinks his theft feels more like an act of civil disobedience than thievery...

What's become of Moderation?

I have to admit that it is sort of addicting to watch the "completed downloads" pile up in my file sharing window. In fact, it's hard to restrain myself once I get started. The greed for MORE is actually what I'm acting on, not just the need to hear old favorites or new finds without the hassle of having to pay for them...

For me, the important issue here is that we are entering into an increasingly conceptual world. A world that doesn't play by traditional rules.

With computers we've created a space where our desires find immediate, albeit abstracted, fulfillment. We can lay claim to a song or album with a few clicks. It's a realm where we can have fictitious sex with not just one or two people, or even a single brothel or magazine full, but hundreds of men and women, thousands of boobs and penises, in a single sitting. We can amass tons of digitized experience in minutes and with minimal effort.

The electronic dreamworld is becom-

ing more substantial to us. And it's not just the music industry that is trying to assign a concrete meaning (via money) to online experiences. It is us, the users and contributors, that are quantifying the digital as something real and tangible. We are trying to give these experiences substance. We are aching to believe in these fictions, to give meaning to the bytes and pixels.

And it seems to me that when we convince ourselves of the online realm's validity and when we let ourselves exercise our hungers and thirsts there, it is much easier for us to loose touch with age old virtues like moderation.

Our needs convert to greeds more easily inside this digitized world. We can't help but want more now. And is this because moderation is out-moded? Or rather because moderation has to do with knowing our limits -- and the biggest fiction being sold, or told, online, is that our identities have no limits. Each of us can be bigger than our bodies, vaster and stronger and more attractive, just plain better than physical reality tells us we are.

So that maybe it's not moderation itself that is behind the times, but rather our physicality that is getting a bit musty and out of date. The restriction of being in one place at one time, instead of many places at once. Or the limitation of being one person at one time instead of whoever we want to be.

Our acceptance of excess is furthered by the shroud of anonymity the internet affords us. Intimacy is cast aside as our communication and virtual actions are performed behind the masks of user names and IP addresses.

Sure, the record companies find ways to litigate us for infringement, but while we were clicking those buttons and downloading those songs, we were doing so in the privacy of our own homes -- pretending that these

windows we look through are one-way.

But here's the rub: Big Bro is watching, and all that we do online is becoming less and less private. And the day is not far off when the internet will be more tightly controlled than housing codes and taxable income.

From the Net Neutrality Bill that Congress is currently trying to snuff, to AT&T's compliance with the NSA to hand over their phone records (and their alleged setting up of certain "secret rooms" where the datastream of their broadband service is able to be watched by crazy Total Information Awareness machines (<http://www.wired.com/news/technology/0,70910-0.html>) -- more and more there is less and less true anonymity and equality, within this busy realm.

But no matter how Orwellian or Corporatine it gets, I'm sure the internet will continue to afford us a sense of superhumanness, with all the Instant Messaging and MMORPGing and podcasts we can stomach. Yes and porn too. And the gluttons inside of us will continue to easily feed our digital needs.

It is a medium that's half television and half magazine and half video

game and the one thing that it will never be able to survive without is us. It's more or less captive audience. <>

MODern Philosophers Named Stephen J.

Stephen J. O'Dell -

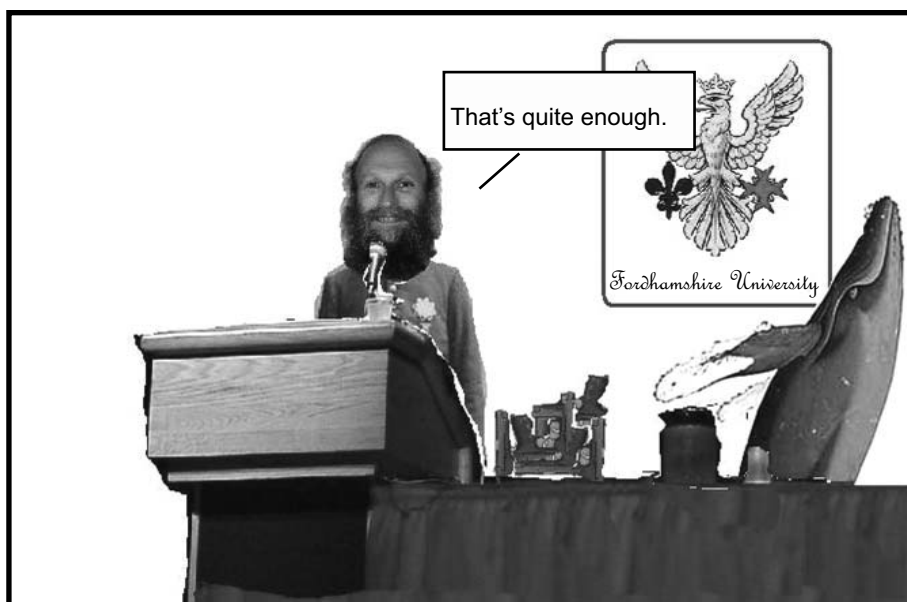
O'Dell, champions the anti-establishment "Kingdom of Infinia" in his PDF treatise "The Zero's Solution."

**www.
toxicreality.
com**

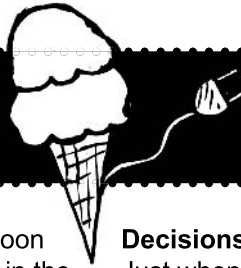
Stephen J. Staloff -

Creator of the 2004 research project "Thinking and the Evolution of Almost Everything", Staloff Attempts to fill "the Hole of Knowledge" with his ruminations.

**www.
thinkingandevolution.
com**



Virtual Ice Cream is a Reality



author: ArticleWizard V2.03b
comments@offlineonline.org

Even the sweet averse understand why people swoon over delicious, frozen ice cream. A tasty, cool treat in the heat...it's hard to blame anyone for spooning down a cup.

Weight watchers and other anti-ice creamers may not like the real stuff, but odds are they haven't tried the virtual variety. Pretty crazy idea right? Virtual ice cream. Crazy and useless. Crazy and useless like a fox...

Sustainable Ice Cream

Welcome to cybercones.com, the virtual ice cream shop of the future...today. Casual web surfers can't help but agree, the online world has never been so "virtually" sweet and "digitally" delicious.

When you're ready for some amazing fake ice cream, head to the cybercones.com shop and click on the animated door. Don't worry about the burden of making difficult choices, cybercones.com and its helpful clip-art scoop man make things easy. "Welcome would you like a cone or sundae?" A cone of course. Thank you sir.

A World of Flavors

Cybercones.com has the number-crunching capacity to process your choice of three different virtual cone flavors. Everything from strawberry to chocolate. Vanilla you say? Yep, he'll serve that up too. Click a flavor and you'll get everyone's favorite option: one or two scoops. It's fat free right? Let's have two.

The Perfect Cone is more than Just Ice Cream

One might expect the fun to end here. For heck's sake, how many tasty combinations can there be? (Twelve... Twelve possible combinations.)

But what's a couple scoops without some toppings? Nothing you'd want to view "virtually" in a browser.

"What'll it be: sprinkles or candy?" Oh man, this just keeps getting better. "Throw a few sprinkles in the mix good sir."

If this is making you hungry for a picture of an ice cream cone, you are not alone. Fans of cybercones.com pleasure themselves with fake ice cream all the time.

Decisions, Decisions

Just when you think the ride is over, there's one more choice to make. Yep. It's the sauce. Caramel? Hot Fudge? Let's choose Cherry to keep things moving along.

Flexing Some Computational Muscle

Click on cherry...oh boy...we'll have to wait a little longer for our treat. There's a task bar. The site is apparently making the cone in "real-time". It's pretty fast considering that there are tons of possible ice cream combinations (Seventy Two...Seventy Two possible ice cream combinations.)

Reaping the Benefits of our Thoughtful Decisions

Now if we can just manage to click on "Get Ice Cream." There we are! Another tasty creation from cybercones.com. No calories and 7-8 gorgeous web safe colors...you can kiss Ben & Jerry's goodbye. Baskin Robbins? More like Baskin "Real Ice Cream." If you want to see a picture of our virtually creamy creation, head to the site and retrace the complex choice matrix. Homemade ice cream always tastes better.

Thumbs up, Way up

Offline recommends www.cybercones.com to sweeten your teeth worldwide. Get your fill, and don't worry, you can always go back for seconds. <>



promote your website cheap and easy with **Offline**

Bands
Businesses
Blogs
Collectives
Retail

ads@offlineonline.org
submit@offlineonline.org



write an article or site review for the magazine

offline is literally all about websites, which is why advertising a site in the magazine makes sense. Check out offlineonline.org for more info, or send an email to ads@offlineonline.org. Ad space is inexpensive and sites get great exposure in the Portland area. A company can even sponsor a whole issue if it's looking to win over the hearts and minds of offline readers.

just to be clear...the lady in the superman shirt is a nod to the "I never knew I could own a home" ad that hasn't changed for like 3 years .

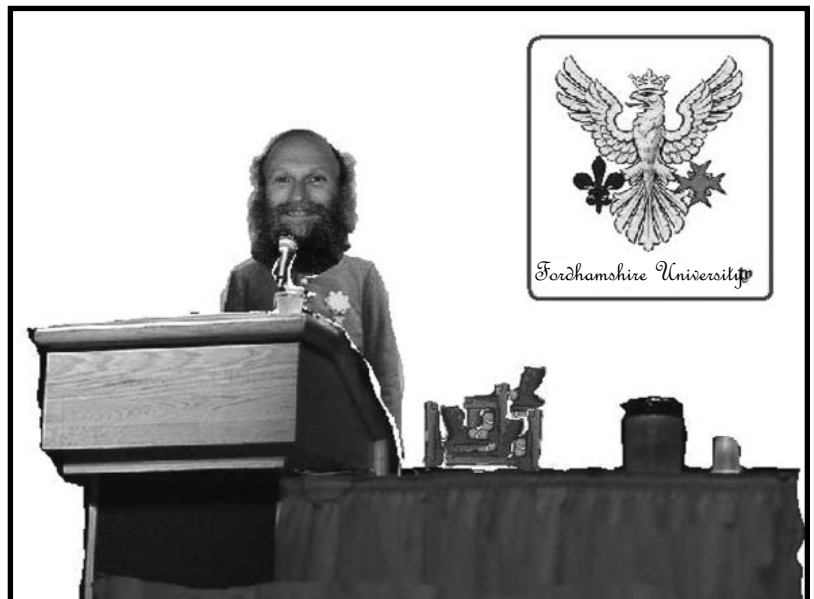
mORE Delightfully SUPERFICIAL Websites

www.awfulplasticsurgery.com and
www.goodplasticsurgery.com

Between the two of 'em, these websites seem confident that everyone has had plastic surgery. One claims that George W. Bush had a nose job. What? That's awesome!

Awfulplasticsurgery.com is actually pretty upsetting. It grosses you out about plastic surgery and at the same time advertises and endorses the procedure. Quite a confusing picture. And yet, time and time again you'll find yourself staring at Vivica Fox's dented boob, gaping at Katie Couric's transformation, and reminiscing about how beautiful Meg Ryan used to be.

- Emily Mitchell-Marell



A Not So 'Full' House

author: Sharon Akins (Drakeluvr)
www.geocities.com/knightshaid

BACKSTORY: DJ broke up with Steve just two days before her 19th birthday. Heartbroken, she turns to the only person who ever made everything seem like it would be ok, and finds love has been staring her in the face her whole life.

CHAPTER ONE: THE BREAK UP

DJ Tanner burst in the door, slamming it behind her, ignoring her sisters, Stephanie and Michelle, and running upstairs to her room in tears. "Hey!" Danny said in his usually annoying, chipper voice as he paraded in from the kitchen. "Who wants to go shopping?"

"I do!" Stephanie shouted, jumping up from the couch where she and Michelle had been watching TV. Michelle just rolled her eyes. She'd learned that it was always the one with the birthday who got this offer a few days before the party.

"Where's your sister?" Danny asked. "I thought I heard her come in."

Michelle and Stephanie looked at each other and sighed. Then, both pointed up the stairs to where DJ had disappeared.

"How can you fall for that every year?" Michelle asked as Stephanie sat down with her again. Stephanie just shrugged, and went back to watching TV.

Danny headed up the stairs and knocked on DJ's room. "Go away!" DJ cried, her voice muffled in the pillow she hugged tightly to her as tears rolled down her face. She knew it

was her father; Uncle Jesse's bike was gone, as were the sound of her cousin's voices, and the red Subaru they owned, so she knew Aunt Becky was also gone, and Joey had a comedy gig that day. She sighed, wishing he were there; she really didn't want to talk to her father.

"Deej," she heard her father's voice call pleadingly through the door. "Are you alright?"

"Just go away!" DJ called again. "Leave me alone!"

A few hours later, there was a soft knock on DJ's door again, but she'd cried herself to sleep, and didn't hear it. "Hey," a soft voice called as Joey opened the door, and was greeted by darkness. "Are you ok, DJ?"

"Mmph," DJ grunted as she sat up and blinked as she turned on her bedside lamp. "Yeah," she said, looking rather dejected. "I guess so."

He smiled at her slightly, concern still etched in his features as he stood in the doorway. "Can I come in?" Joey asked, and only entered when she nodded. He walked to her bed slowly, and sat on the edge of her bed, with one leg tucked beneath him. He didn't even have a chance to ask or say anything before she'd launched herself into his arms as she

cried. He closed his eyes as he held her, rubbing his hands soothingly over her back. What he wouldn't give to be the one to take away her pain, he thought sadly.

Mmm, DJ thought as she felt Joey's hands around her, soothing her pain. This feels so good, so right. I wish this could last for always. She gave a mental sigh. But, he'll never see me as more than his niece. At these thoughts, something snapped, and DJ felt as though a bolt of electricity had hit her. "Did you feel that?" DJ asked softly, her head resting against Joey's chest.

"Feel what?" Joey asked, feigning ignorance. Oh, he'd felt it all right. Something had clicked inside him, and now his mind and emotions were at war. There is no way this can be happening, he thought. I'm too old for her, Jesus; I'm like her father. But, why then, does it feel so right?

"Nothing," DJ said, feeling a little more heartbroken. "Never mind." She stayed where she was though, ignoring the fresh feelings for this man who obviously didn't feel the same, ignoring the hurt she felt at his unspoken rejection as she felt his hands continue their path along her back.

"DJ," Joey said softly. "Want to tell me what happened today? You're dad and your sisters said you flew in here like a tornado, and haven't been out since you got home. Danny said you wouldn't even let him in to talk to you." DJ just swallowed, listening to the sound of Joey's voice as it

reverberated through his chest. Joey looked down at her silence.

“Come on, DeeJ,” he coaxed. “You could always confide in me before.”

Fresh tears streamed down DJ’s face as she remembered Steve’s words. “I’m sorry DJ; I’ve found someone else. It just wasn’t working between us; it hasn’t been for a long time.”

This was news to her; everything had seemed so perfect, they’d even talked about getting married. “It’s Steve,” she sobbed. “H-he broke up with me. He said he found someone else!”

DJ cried as she felt Joey’s arms tighten around her, and slid her arms up around his neck. “I’m sorry, DeeJ,” he whispered in her ear. “But, you know, anyone who would choose someone else over you is out of their mind.”

DJ hiccupped, and both she and Joey chuckled as she dried her eyes. “Thanks,” she said as she pulled away, smiling faintly. “You always could make me feel better.”

“That’s what I’m here for,” Joey said with a smile as he caressed her cheek, drying her tear-streaked face. She leaned forward and hugged him, wrapping her arms around his neck, and kissed him on the cheek. Joey gave a mental sigh. I wish she saw me as more than an uncle, or more than her father’s friend.

He cocked his head, and smiled at her. “You coming down to dinner?” Joey asked curiously, and she nodded, returning his smile. “Good,” he said.

“I’d hate to have to string you up and force feed you.” He winked at her and she laughed. “Be down in a minute,” she assured him. “I’m just going to clean up.” He nodded, and taking his cue, left her alone.

CHAPTER TWO: THE TRUTH LIES IN A KISS

DJ and Joey watched each other off and on throughout dinner, turning away when the other looked back. Jesse, Rebecca, and the twins still hadn’t returned, and Danny was talking with Stephanie and Michelle about their day. After she was through, DJ excused herself, and went up to her room.

.....
: **He went in and laid down on his** :
: **bed, trying to drown out these** :
: **thoughts and unknown feelings** :
: **with videos of Popeye the Sailor** :
:
:

Joey couldn’t keep his mind off her, concerned about how she was really feeling about breaking up with Steve, and wondering what that spark he had felt earlier meant. Is that what she was talking about? Joey wondered as he too, excused himself to go to his room. Did she feel that spark too? What could it mean?

He went in and laid down on his bed, trying to drown out these thoughts and unknown feelings with videos of Popeye the Sailor, and when hours of that didn’t work, switched to Rocky and Bullwinkle. Then, around 10:30, there was a soft knock on his door.

DJ had spent the time in her room, thinking back on all her failed relationships, and realized something. It hadn’t been her dad, or Uncle Jesse who had consoled her, and made her feel better, but Joey. Joey had always been there for her when she needed him. When she was seven, she realized that although her father had referred to Joey as ‘uncle’ in the presence of her and her sisters, Joey really had no blood ties to them. He was just one of her Dad’s friends. What then, makes it so wrong for me to like him? DJ wondered, and it was now, after years of teen angst and childhood romance, that she realized,

nothing was wrong with her feelings.

She smiled as she thought back to her childhood. Joey had always held a special place in her heart. He was kind, and funny. He always made her laugh, and made her feel better when something was bothering her, and he cared more about others than himself. She had often thought that she wanted to find someone like him, to spend the rest of her life with. Why just like him, a voice inside her head whispered. Why not him? DJ smiled at the thought, and after her dad came to tell her good night, made up her mind, and crept down the hall, knocking softly on Joey’s door.

“Come in,” Joey called quickly muting the cartoon, thinking it was Danny or Jesse and Rebecca coming to say good night after they got home. To say he was surprised to see DJ standing there in nothing but an oversized t-shirt would be putting it mildly. The fact is he nearly fell off the bed in an attempt to get to his feet.

“I’m sorry,” DJ said softly as she tried not to laugh. “I didn’t mean to startle you.”

“Oh,” Joey said as he cleared his throat, and ran his fingers through his hair nervously. “You didn’t. Well, you did,” he said, feeling like a bumbling idiot. “I thought you were Danny or Jesse and Rebecca, but it’s ok.” What is she doing here? Joey’s mind screamed. And dressed like that! He swallowed dryly. “What can I do for you?” Joey asked as he sat down and beckoned her inside.

She moved slowly, and shut the door quietly behind her. “I-I couldn’t sleep,” DJ lied. Yeah right, her mind said condescendingly. You didn’t even try. DJ swallowed nervously as she moved over to sit next to Joey. God, he smells good, she thought as she inhaled his scent, Irish Spring with Nautica cologne, and Tide

laundry soap. "I was wondering," she said softly and looked away a moment. "Could I stay with you?" DJ asked, turning to look at him with a pleading gaze.

Joey sighed heavily, and nodded against his better judgment. He lay back down, rolling to his side, and waved her over. "Alright," he said. "Come on."

"Thanks," DJ said with a smile as she snuggled in close to him.

"You're welcome," Joey replied as he turned the sound of the cartoons on once more. "God", he thought. "How do I get myself into these situations? How am I going to keep my hands off her?"

He put his arm around her, and they watched Rocky and Bullwinkle. He looked down at her after about fifteen minutes, her breathing soft and rhythmic, and was surprised to see her watching him.

"Deej?" he asked softly, his voice edged with unease. But, she didn't say anything. Instead, she leaned up and kissed him tenderly on the lips. "DJ!" Joey cried in surprise, and pushed her back. "What are you doing?"

"Kissing you," DJ answered, near to tears at his apparent rejection. Seeing her reaction, his face fell, and he spoke in a softer tone. "I know that," he said. "What I meant was, why were you doing it? You've just been hurt, you're mind is in turmoil, and you've no idea what you're doing." DJ lowered her gaze, and swallowed hard as tears began rolling down her cheeks as he continued, "And it's not just that DJ." Joey sighed and looked away a moment. "It's that I'm so much older than you are. I know I'm not as old as I could be, but I'm old enough to be your dad," he said softly, and DJ thought she heard a hint of pain in his voice.

"Why me?" Joey asked when he looked at her again.

"You're wrong, Joey," DJ said softly as she tried to hide her tears. "I've thought of nothing but this today since you came to talk to me earlier. I know what I want, and I want you." "Deej," Joey said, in an unbelieving voice.

.....
: **He put his arm around her,** :
: **and they watched Rocky and** :
: **Bullwinkle.** :
.....

"No, Joey," DJ said as she shook her head. "I really have thought about it, and for as long as I can remember, I've looked for someone like you."

He was stunned. Someone like me? Joey's mind screamed and he swallowed hard, but remained silent.

"It was then I realized something else, Joey," she said softly, and Joey looked at her curiously. "Why just look for someone like you, when you're right in front of me, and have been my whole life, and I might never find any one like you in a million years. You're funny, you're kind, and you always think about other people before thinking of yourself."

"DJ," Joey whispered, resisting the urge to caress her face. "You're very sweet, and like I said earlier, anyone who would choose someone else over you, would be out of their mind. But, DJ, you've got your whole life ahead of you, who's to say that you won't find what you're looking for? Give yourself time to recover, let your heart heal. You and Steve were together for over two years; you were talking about marriage. I don't want to hurt you, or see you hurt either. But, I want to know, why would you settle for me? I've nothing to offer you."

"Joey," DJ said as she looked up at

him with an expression that made his heart wrench. "You've plenty to offer, and I wouldn't be settling." She reached up and caressed his face, and smiled when she felt him tremble beneath her touch. "You are what I want." She leaned forward then, and kissed him soundly on the lips. He was so stunned by her words, that it was a moment before he reacted, but when he did, it wasn't to push her away again. He moaned softly, drew her closer and tentatively slipped his tongue in the recesses of her mouth when she parted her lips beneath his. She mewled softly in response, and wrapped her arms around him, and he knew she spoke the truth.

Visit www.geocities.com/knightshaid to read the tumultuous conclusion. <>

Author's Disclaimer: Drakeluvr does not own, nor is she associated in any way with the owners of Full House, or its cast.

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**Special Feature:
Conversations with Santa(bot)(.com)**

author: Jay Leary
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Most people go to www.santabot.com for a laugh, a smile, a silly question or two. The site provides "a free online chat with Santa Clause." You type a question or a statement, and Santabot replies. With some trepidation I've included a transcript of my interaction with Santa. None of Santa's words have been altered in any way (though I did correct some punctuation).



"Santa cares more than you will ever know"

Santa: Hello! What is your name?

Me: My name is Jay

Santa: How are you, Jay.

Me: Okay I guess. I've been kind of depressed lately.

Santa: Yeah okay, You seem not interested. How about earlier? Where were you kind of depressed?

Me: I almost lost it at work. I cried in the car on the way home.

Santa: Where did you last see it at work. Do you cry very often?

Me: I only cry sometimes. I'm the type of person that bottles things up.

Santa: What makes you so sad, Jay. Who made you the type of person that bottles things up?

Me: Something in me makes me sad. It's like a rock in my stomach. I guess I can only blame myself.

Santa: What? Interesting comparison. Oh you can, can you?

Me: It is easier to blame myself. The funny thing is, I can't seem to fix anything on my own.

Santa: Are you sure easier to blame him or herself is? Who told you that?

Me: My dad used to get angry at me. He didn't think I acted enough like a man.

Santa: Tell me more about your father. Yes he did, didn't he?

Me: He's retired military. I haven't talked to him since I finished school.

Santa: I see. retired military is retired military? Me either.

Me: You're right. It's hard to blame my father after what he went through during the war. But that is no excuse for his drinking. Or how he treated my mom.

Santa: Yes, I am sitting here talking to you, aren't I? What is so hard about it? And. You don't hear that sentiment very often. What is it to you. I will ask my botmaster for the answer.

Me: I looked to God for an answer once too.

Santa: What did you find?

Me: I found a cruel world with even crueler people.

Santa: How did you feel when you found a cruel world with even crueler people?

Me: ...sadder than I've ever felt in my life.

Footnote:

I may have taken some liberties with my personal story (military dad, crippling depression, etc.) But Santa's responses are genuine, direct from santabot.com, and edited only for punctuation. No responses were left out. The exchange was fluid and sequentially accurate.

Have your own conversation with santabot and Email it to us for publication.

submit@offlineonline.org

OFFLINE'S LEFTIST PHOTOSHO

PROPAGANDA



Bush taps former political advisor and Yale classmate, A Pile of Uncut Nicaraguan Cocaine, to breath new life into his beleaguered foreign and domestic agendas. Recently appointed Press Secretary, Tony Snow (no relation), explained that the move is one of many the White House will be making to help the President speak and think much faster. The CIA, a group instrumental in bringing crack cocaine to South Central Los Angeles in the 1980s, hopes the enormous pile of blow will work closely with other communities to suppress dissent, stifle growth, and ease the pain of a once-great nation in decline.

Additional Information:

<http://www.fromthewilderness.com> - The CIA and Crack

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_W._Bush - Some info on Bush's Drug Habits