

# The Blotter

May 2004

Let Them Know Us by Our Follies

[www.blotterrag.com](http://www.blotterrag.com)



In This Issue: The Art of Andrew Degraff. Rooster Bryant's Rent Gets Paid. School Lunch Menus. Peter Lund Goes for a Walk. Johnny Pence's Story of a Man and His Pipe. The Poetry of Garry Somers, G. Kay Bishop, and Eso Peomface *[sic]*.

Plus: Marty Smith's Paper Cuts and the Dream Journal.

**Doubleplus: It's our death-defying first anniversary issue!**

Doubleplusgood: We now distribute in Nashville, TN, and

**Subscriptions are Available! (Cheap! Details inside!) YIP! YOW!**

**The Blotter is:**

Johnny Pence . . . . Col. Mosby  
 Martin K. Smith . . . Publisher-at-Large,  
 Treasurer  
 Jenny Haniver . . Pseudonym  
 James C. Werner . . . . Minister of  
 Information

**Advertisers and Subscriptions Contact:**

Martin K. Smith  
 M\_K\_Smith@yahoo.com  
 919.286.7760

**Submissions and Editorial Business to:**

Jenny Haniver  
 P.O. Box 175  
 Hillsborough, NC 27278  
 mermaid@blotterrag.com

All content copyright 2004  
 by the artist, not the magazine.

Cover art, detail of *Joan*, by Andrew  
 Degraff, See pp. 8-9 for more from  
 this artist.

*The Blotter* is a production of  
 The Blotter Magazine, Inc.,  
 Durham, NC.  
 ISSN 1549-0351  
 www.blotterrag.com

We often use Bobco fonts, copyrighted  
 shareware from the Church of the  
 Subgenius. Prabob. We also use Mary  
 Jane Antique and other freeware  
 fonts from Apostrophic Labs.



*The Blotter* is published monthly and  
 distributed one weekend in the first  
 half of each month. We enjoy a free  
 circulation throughout the Triangle,  
 and in select locations in NC, VA and  
 Nashville, TN. Submissions are always  
 welcome, as are ad inquiries and  
 opportunities to cross-promote inter-  
 esting events.

**Subscriptions** are available for \$25/year (in  
 the US only). Send check or money order,  
 name and address to **The Blotter  
 Subscriptions, 1010 Hale Street,  
 Durham, NC 27705**. Back issues are also  
 available for \$3.00 each. Inquire about  
 availability by e-mail: [ediot@blotterrag.com](mailto:ediot@blotterrag.com).

*This magazine may contain typos or bad words*

**Items Worth Mentioning  
 from the desk of Johnny Pence****Happy Birthday to Us**

Did you ever do something really insanely difficult for a really long time and then look up and realize just how difficult the job was and how long it took? Yeah, me too. Happy birthday, dear Blotter. Happy birthday to you (copyright Sir Paul McCartney).

I try to think about the differences between last year and this. There are some big ones. Last year my wife was simply second-trimester pregnant instead of the current situation, where I try to put a magazine together with an eight-month-old crawling around under my desk. Last year, Marty and I thought we'd be *making* money instead of hemorrhaging it. Last year, we had to beg people to let us put the magazine in in their bars and coffeeshops. This year we have a distribution footprint in three states.

Every month is fun and scary and a little bit out of control. Every issue, I make my first distribution stop here in Hillsborough, have a cup of coffee, and think, "This issue is the best yet. This is the one where we really hit our stride."

And then, before I can scrounge up any *paying* work, it happens all over again. If nothing else, we have kept the magazine in print for a year, and that in itself is a monumental folly worthy of a mock epic poem.

**The Triangle, Nashville, Richmond, C'ville ...**

So with this issue we plant our flag in **Nashville**. It'll only be a few hundred copies to start, but I think you cats and kittens will dig the scene we're laying down. If you pick this issue up and read it *and like it*, spread the word. For all you latecomers, we'll be happy to catch you up with a grab bag of back issues, too—and that goes for anybody, not just the denizens of Music City. If you send us a check for \$15, we'll pack *at least five* back issues in an envelope and send it to you.

**Richmond**, you guys have been great. In the past few months, we've gotten *outstanding* submissions from y'all, as well as a generally good vibe. Who would expect anything less from such a cool town? But **Charlottesville**? Oh, y'all should be ashamed of yourselves! Mind you, Charlottesville is my hometown. I want to love you, but you're not making it easy. We've been distributing there since last September, and not a word from you. Not a single submission, no fan mail, not even a "you suck!" Even when I lived there (like, most of my life), there was a small band of self-important snobs in pointy black glasses telling everybody what to think, so I wouldn't be surprised if you were brainwashed into only reading what you were told to read. But the thing is, we keep putting out copies and you keep picking them up. What's up? Are you just using them as mulch in your garden? Let's have some submissions, slacker.

Nashville, don't worry. Charlottesville's always been a discipline problem. I don't expect any trouble from you. Just watch Richmond and you'll do fine. If you have any questions, you can always ask Chapel Hill or Durham.

**... and Tomorrow the World!**

Due to popular demand, we're now offering *The Blotter* by subscription. A mere \$25/year, \$3.00 each for back issues. You can get on board right away. Please do, in fact; we could use the money. Info is in the masthead there to your left. Give the gift of Blotter this summer.

—[ediot@blotterrag.com](mailto:ediot@blotterrag.com)

*and hey, thanks very very much to the New Town Drunks for playing our April 9 gig at The Cave (on very short notice) when Jim Smith hurt his back!*

## Vehicles Collide

by Rooster Bryant

Rent is late again; I'm without a car.  
The change it would take to ride the CAT, to and fro',  
Is the same that would be spent on the money order.

I already have it all planned; my neighbor, Tommy, the madman,  
will get me there.

Today he is in routine form: He is frazzled; he is hurried—he  
trips over his own feet.

He laughs nervously with suspicious and jerky gesticulations.  
This is all normal for him.

"O.K., Roody let's go," he says, forgetting his baseball cap.

"O.K., Roody let's go," he says, forgetting his shades.

"O.K., Roody let's go," he says, forgetting keys.

With jingling trepidation, also the norm, the small black pickup  
awaits to awaken.

It's night time; it's dark; Falls of the Neuse Road holds two stops  
for us, that need to be made before my girl and I live another month  
in the petite residence we've made into our home.

It takes a bit, but the money order is in hand.

It takes a bit for Tommy to recall, "It's almost the weekend ...  
Man, I need to go by the bank," which will close in minutes.

The pedal nears the metal and the velocity amplifies in surreal  
leaps.

We make the light, money order in pocket, the truck's doors  
locked and shut,

For they were known to open sometimes when not locked.

I put the money order in its envelope as we make the light  
through the intersection.

"We need to ... be ... there ... by ... " mumbles the maniac.

Cars are going at truly high speeds and this kid may get me  
killed, merely two weeks past my last birthday. I still celebrate.

Now I have time for the seatbelt, I pull it out to strap it across and ...

Surge forward, tires screaming "murder" and I've left my task  
unfinished.

I fall back into my seat, dazed and refusing to say a word.

I know what hurts but decline to think about it.

I consider the rent—still unpaid.

I must call Carmen and tell her of the crash. She won't be happy.  
She worries so much.

First there are blue and white flashes and stares in my stupor,

Then red and white flashes and questions and nudges as I sit  
rock-solid.

In between the red, white, and blue spectacle, I think of writing  
what you're now reading, and feel like such the patriot, in the light

### The Blotter Dream Journal

real dreams, real weird

I am lying in bed. I see my face darkly  
in a mirror that is suspended in front  
of me. I tap a beard trimmer against  
clumps of hair on my scalp. It will be  
OK to let hair cuttings fall all over. I  
hear buzzing as I drag the trimmer  
back and forth. Now I see that I am  
holding a t-shirt with the neck hole  
stretched tight. I had been scraping  
this neck hole across my hair.

I am climbing many flights of stairs.  
There are quarters lying around. I pick  
up a few, but then I put them back,  
thinking "these are not mine." As I go  
up the steps I pass by several stacks  
of plastic packs. One pack is open,  
revealing \$100 bills inside. Somehow I  
know that the money belongs to the  
Boy Scouts. When I get to the top of  
the stair well, I am outside. There are  
shiny black Boy Scout medallions in a  
stack beside some more stacks of  
money. My mother and I are in a  
room. She says "Look at this." From a  
large cardboard box, she pulls out two  
wooden legs with joints at the knees  
and ankles. Then she pulls out several  
wooden feet. I say that the Boy  
Scouts use those all the time and she  
should just give them back to them so  
that they can reuse them.

Please send excerpts from your  
dream journals to Jenny at  
[mermaid@blotterrag.com](mailto:mermaid@blotterrag.com). If nothing  
else, we love to read them. We  
won't publish your whole name.



show, such the trooper, never even saying "Ow." It only hurts when I move anyway, and though the hood and front end of the truck wince in pain, distorted from abuse, I stay staid.

Tommy screams, cries, apologizes, and lashes out at the other driver—unlike Tommy, black like me. It is indeed the other guy's fault, and everyone but the driver, Tommy, and I go to Wake Med.

The engine blows steam, frustrated. I reflect similar sentiments.

In the long run, I will be the one who doesn't get paid for this, while everyone else can thank Allstate.

I will be the one who gets worse and has to go to the doctor anyway.

This is all true, but happens only after we trudge on in silence, smoky and bent, to pay my rent.

With this done, I called the li'l lady on Tommy's cellie.

She's not surprised that I kept going after the accident.

Hell, I would have taken a bus the rest of the way if I had to.

This is probably why she loves me.

She and my sister plead with me to get checked out. I fight it.

She ain't too crazy about that part of me.

I don't blame Tommy but I find it hard to look into his eyes now.

Tommy says he's sorry a few more times and moves away some weeks later.

Rent was paid, though. Rent is paid.

Rooster Bryant didn't supply a writer's bio, but I bet he's the kid you have to sit next to on the bus—you know, the one who looks a little too smart and just a little bit scary. You don't want to make eye contact, but you can't help but stare ... anyways, that's how I imagine him.



## City and County School Lunch Menus

### City Schools

### County Schools

#### Monday

Flame-grilled Chilean sea bass, white asparagus, and wok-fried rutabaga (in peanut oil; olive oil may be substituted) with rhubarb chutney. Mixed-berry tartlet. Organic unpasteurized milk.

Gruel

#### Tuesday

Vegan stir-fry of bok choy, shiitake mushroom, water chestnuts, daofu or tempeh. Fresh lychees. Soymilk.

Gruel w/ mutton

#### Wednesday

Grades K-12 will participate in cooking lessons with Les Halles' *chef du cuisine*, Anthony Bourdain.

Mutton buttons. Ketchup.

#### Thursday

Mesculin mix with pomegranate-seed vinaigrette, hummous, tabouleh, tzatziki. Fresh mint, fresh organic tomatoes, fresh mozzarella, pita. Passionfruit nectar or mineral water.

Frozen pizza and fries. Ketchup.

#### Friday

Herbed mixed grill of Kobe beef, New Zealand prawns, free-range local chicken, *and/or* an eggplant/ zucchini/root-vegetable medley. Belgian endive leaves with Stilton-walnut chevre. Venezuelan chocolate (68%) and strawberries. *Chateau Etang des Colombes Corbieres* 2001 (France: 40% Grenache, 30% Carignan, 20% Syrah and 10% Mourvedre)

Frozen pizza and fries. Ketchup. Cookie. Milk.

*\*\*please note that grade 5-8 students participating in the Vocational Dog Fighting program's field trip out to Skeeter and Peanut's place should pack a lunch.*

**Editor's Note:** *The Blotter* magazine is staunchly apolitical. It is therefore important for us to say right here and now that this is an absurd piece of extremely crude "comedy" with absolutely no basis in fact and no point at all. Please ignore it.

## Condition Two

Date: Mon, 10 Oct 1999 22:09 +1300

From: Peter Lund <pml@io.com>

**editor's note:** The following piece takes place at McMurdo Station, Antarctica. There's a lot here that's left unsaid—like exactly what it means when the author decides to go stretch his legs during “Condition Two” weather on Antarctica. (See photo below. This is actually a nicely focused, high-resolution image.) It doesn't talk about *why* Peter needed to go outside to stretch his legs in a potentially deadly white-out storm, although the reader can check the date and note that it's very, very late in the Antarctic winter. A certain amount of cabin fever can probably be assumed.

Peter has actually written quite a lot about his years on the ice, and is working toward a deal to get it published. In the body of his writing, a lot of which I've read, it becomes apparent that life in Antarctica is simply very, very different from what you or I might know, and we as readers would do well to embrace the confusion that arises from things left unsaid in this piece. At least, that's why I wanted to publish it. I'm all about embracing the confusion.

However, a couple terms might be worth clarifying: **Condition One** weather is the worst it gets on Antarctica. You're not allowed to travel. You can get lost between one building on the station and another. **Condition Two** weather means travel off McMurdo station is restricted. In technical terms, any of the following are true: winds 48-50 knots, temps between -100° and -75° F, and/or visibility between 1/4 mile and 100 feet. A skua is a nasty seagull, and the **Skua** mentioned here is a kind of junk pile at the ends of public-building hallways where you throw out things that others might find useful, so named because people go scavenging in them like seagulls. Peter also uses the term **FNG** below. This is just a guess, but I bet that F is what it always is in acronyms, and that NG is “New Guy.”

It's Condition Two outside right now; Condition One at the runway. It's been that way for several days. There hasn't been a plane here since a week ago Friday. This seems to bother the people who want to leave.

Today started out very slowly. I attended a meeting where there was a great deal of discussion about a problem that had already been solved, but for some reason we needed to debate it again with the management present. That's ok. Everyone left the room with the same understanding. Things started to get slower after that. At some point I decided that there was no way I was going to get any work done. I went to lunch and enjoyed a very boring meal with a few friends (there's only so many ways to cook chicken). The dessert cart didn't even

look appealing. Hmmmm...

I wandered around in the hallways of B-155 for a few minutes. Of course I didn't realize I was doing it until after one of the painter crew, Liz—the one with the purple hair that really looks good—came up to me and said with a grin, “Wandering through the halls aimlessly? That's a good winter-over trick.” I decided that a different kind of walk was in order.

Outside the snow was blowing all over the place. In town it didn't appear to be coming from any one direction because of all the buildings. It just sort of bounced around carrying the snow like trillions of pinballs. I put my hood up and started walking over to the other side of town; towards Ob Hill.

The ascent up the Hill was very different from all the other times I'd done it during the winter. I could only see about 100 feet in front of me before things started to fade to white. It was the opposite of darkness. I was standing in a white universe with



dark light instead of a black universe with bright light. There was a lot going on in this universe. The wind was racing with itself, trying to see how fast it could whip around this rock or up the side of that hill.

I continued on up the hill with my feet sinking in to the newly formed drift. This is when I remembered the two gaping holes in my right boot. They're only four years old, but I guess it's time to turn them in to Skua. I ignored the fact that my right foot was getting heavier but not really any colder. I was creating far too much heat for that to be a concern. At least it wasn't getting wet—the Gore-Tex saw to that.

The winds decided to see if I was willing to play with them. As I climbed, they did their best to move me off my course. Sometimes I let them take me in a new direction. It didn't seem to matter if I was off of the path, I was still moving up the mountain and I was still making progress. In fact, lots of times I had better footing since the snow wasn't compressed into ice. Sometimes I decided to push back against them just to see what they would do. Often I chose this tack when they tried their hardest to move me beyond where I wanted to go. I pushed back with full force so that I stopped, held in the air at a weird angle, or I crouched low to the ground so I could hold on with both hands, or sometimes just face it

head on like a ship splitting a wave with its bow.

I came to the midpoint. The wind and snow were so thick and powerful that I held on to the old wooden stand (mostly gone now) for support. I have no idea what this thing was for. It may have been a



Scott's Cross on a rather nice day.

marker of some sort, or a silly tourist thing with a plaque on it. Now it's just a piece of wood stuck in the ground with lots of graffiti on it. Regardless, at that moment it helped to keep me from being blown over the side of the hill.

For some reason, the midpoint never seems like it's in the middle.

The first half of the trek is always a lot longer than the last. I know I took more than just a few steps, but it seemed as if that's all there was before I was at the top. Perhaps time just compressed enough to make it seem so.

There was very little wind on this last half of the hike. Through the last couple hundred feet the air was almost placid. I could hear Scott's cross creaking every once in a while, reminding me that it was there. Erected in 1912 by the survivors of Robert Falcon Scott's failed second expedition to the Pole, this wooden cross has slowly been worn away by the wind. The inscription is barely legible. The painted letters stand out like mesas on an expansive wind-worn plain of wood where once they were canyons. The last line of the carved words read, "...and never to yield."

I laid down on the ground and just looked around. I could see nothing but white in every direction. The town below was not there anymore. The buildings at the base of the hill were gone. The only things that existed were the rocks, the cross, the snow, the wind, the light, and myself. This universe was physically small, but intense nonetheless. Its sounds were constant yet different, everything was changing yet the same. The wind kept playing its game and the snow was enjoying the ride. This universe had just as much in it as the other one.



"To Strive To Seek To Find And Not To Yield"

After a while I noticed that the snow and the wind had decided that I was a rock and were doing their best to slowly cover me up. My black pants were now very white, almost buried. I noticed the stalactites forming on the inside of my hood and decided it was probably a good idea to head back down. I was still very warm and comfortable — but then again that's the best time to leave. I stood up and headed down.

The path was not clear. It was also not the reverse of my ascent. The wind and snow continued their game, filling in the depressions that I had given to them. This made the way back down just as much of an adventure as the way up. The path was not set. Right? Left? It didn't matter. So long as I was moving down, the question of Right or Left would sort itself out.

I reached the midpoint again. Still odd the way it took longer to get there from the top than it took to get to the top from here. I guess my brain is just a bit wacky.

Now the wind was at my back, still wanting to play a little more. I decided to let it help me along. I glissaded down through the light fluffy powder. Before long I dropped my right foot behind because of all the snow building up in the boot, which is not normally the way I do this. It was like writing left-handed when you're used to using your right. I almost took a spill or two, but managed to stay up. Soon I was near the bottom. The snow here was much harder and the slope much steeper. I could see some of my footprints from before. They were almost completely filled.

It didn't take long at all for the evidence of my passage to disappear. The prints were still there of course, and when the soft snow around them is eventually blown away they will

reappear, altered, different, a shadow. No one will know whose they were, and perhaps no one will look closely enough to see them individually, but maybe someone will see that they form a path that they can follow.

The weather at McMurdo Station is calm most of the year. It tends to be playful mostly when everyone is arriving or leaving. In this swirl of activity it is very easy for your footprints to disappear — for the product of your work to become altered, different, a shadow of what it was. No one cares when their footprints disappear. You just make more. Why should your work be any different?

I will be leaving this station soon. In what direction I do not know. Left? Right? I'm not sure. Certainly it will be North. It doesn't matter. The Left and Right will sort itself out.

Peter M. Lund is a fairly hardcore individual who worked several years on Antarctica in some technical capacity or other. He has now moved those skills to much more hospitable environs in Kazakhstan.

**sarajo berman**  
 RCSC #190  
 registered cranioscral therapist  
 by appointment only  
 919-688-6428 sjberman@mindspring.com

**CREATIVE METALSMITHS**  
 Don H. Johnson | Kim Maitland  
 117 E. Franklin St., Chapel Hill  
 919-967-2037 creativemetalsmiths.com

**Altered Image**  
 Hair Designers, Inc.  
 1113 1/2 Broad St  
 Durham, NC 27705  
 (919) 286-3732

**CAPITAL FITNESS**  
  
 509 W. North St.  
 Raleigh  
 834.8400  
 www.capfit.com

# Drew Degraff

"I grew up in the country in rural upstate NY. I went to the Pratt Institute in urban downstate NY. I like Miro, Otto Dix, Schiele, Gary Baseman, murals, ads, public bathroom walls, bad photos, and antique sporting goods."

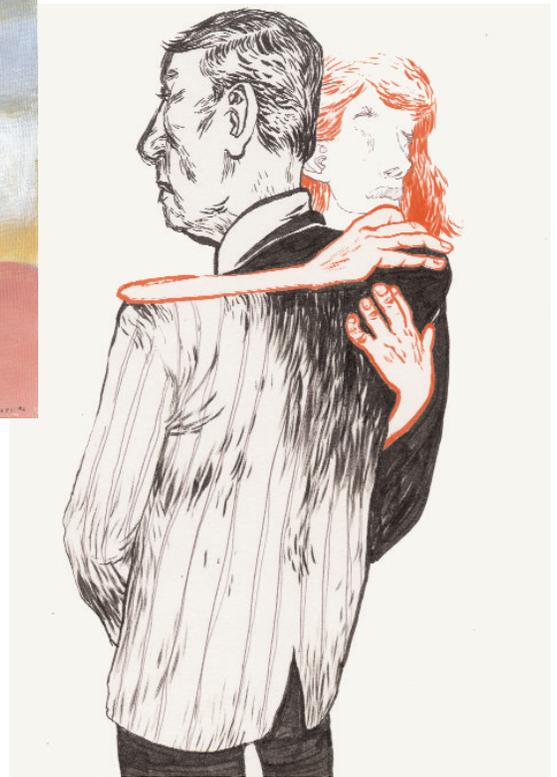


Left: **Joan**

Above: **Apollonia**

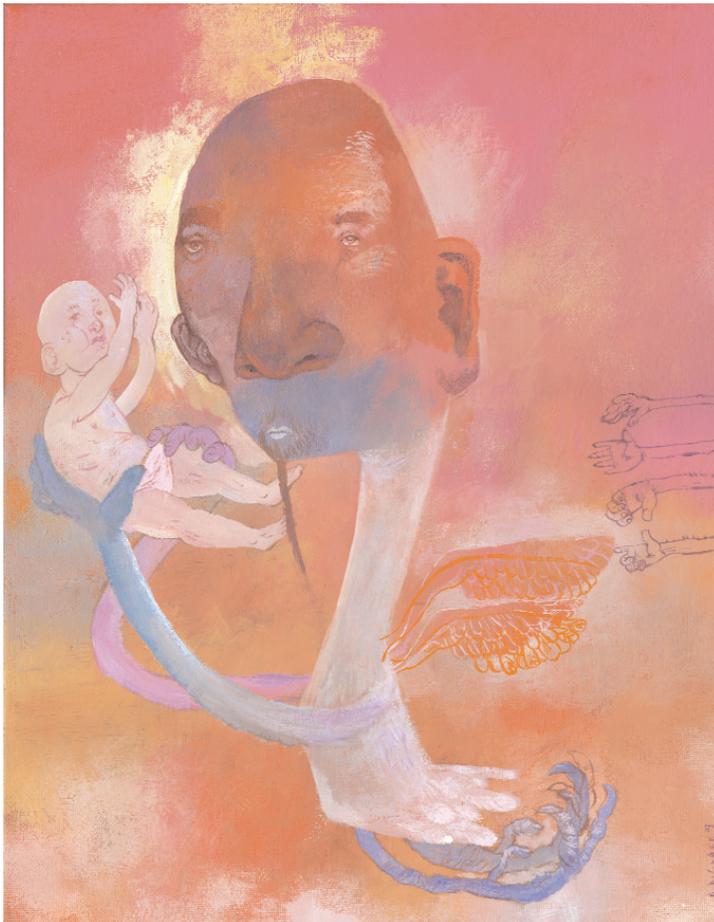


John Henry



Dancing

Stork



Donut



## Paper Cuts

### Books You Might Not Have Read

by Martin K. Smith

#### *Same-Sex Unions in Premodern Europe* (John Boswell/Random House, 1994)

---

“Oh no,” I hear you whimper, “no more about the Gay Marriage Controversy!” Well, yes and no. This book’s premise—that 1,500 years ago, Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches were sanctifying holy unions for same-sex couples—may well get readers verklempt and talking amongst themselves, but the book itself is devoutly non-controversial. It’s a Scholarly Work: formal and academic in tone, turtle-cautious at every step, and footnoted to within an inch of its life. (Boswell, who died in ’94, held the imposingly titled A. Whitney Griswold Professor of History chair at Yale.)

Boswell found what he believed to be actual examples of such liturgies in ancient manuscript collections from libraries and monasteries across Europe, and provides translated versions in an appendix. The book’s main body, though, is a history of marriage, sexual mores, and the slow Christianization of same throughout the Graeco-Roman world. The definition of “marriage,” he first points out, has gone through some changes in two millennia.

It is my understanding that most modern speakers of English understand the term “marriage” to

refer to what the partners expect to be a permanent and exclusive union between two people, which would produce legitimate children *if they chose to have children*, and which creates mutual rights and responsibilities, legal, economic, and moral.... Such a relationship is both more and less than any variety of heterosexual coupling in the ancient world, most of which were property arrangements.... These societies provided few means of acquiring wealth besides ownership—of land, of persons, or of precious items. People could not simply go to work and draw a salary ... [and] since marriage was by and large a property and dynastic arrangement, a man might well have a wife for dynastic and economic reasons, plus a concubine and a number of slave women for sex (or love), as Demosthenes and others noted. He might even go to prostitutes on top of all this. This appears to have been a common pattern for prosperous Greek and Roman males, and was not considered immoral or even promiscuous.

The Graeco-Roman hubby didn’t always limit himself to female slaves either. “From the evidence of Augustan poetry, one could conclude that Roman

men of a certain status had a male slave called a *concupinus* whose specific function was to meet their sexual needs before marriage. As part of the wedding festivities he was dismissed (at least from this post), and there was risqué humor about the situation.”

The early Christians hardly even worried about marriage, believing as they did that Jesus would be back any minute with His new heaven and new earth, rendering their current world and its rituals irrelevant. They saw marriage as better than burning (1 Corinthians 7:9) but a distant second to celibacy, which kept the soul unstained by bodily corruption. Those who did marry tended to use the existing forms of their local culture. The Church didn’t declare marriage a sacrament requiring priestly intervention until 1215.

Boswell also presents, from literature of the times, a thriving tradition of same-sex pairings. We’ve all heard the rumors about ancient Greeks loving boys (actually more like young teenagers, and it seems to have been more a love of beauty in general, regardless of gender); they also had legends of warrior-hero pairs like Achilles and Patroclus, and the historical fact of the Sacred Band of Thebes, a battalion formed entirely of male couples, and regarded as damn good fighters by everybody who met them in combat. The Christians had their own deistic duos: David and Jonathan from the Old Testament; and the martyred saints Perpetua and Felicitas, Polyeuct and Nearchos, Serge and Bacchus. The latter “were Roman soldiers of high standing in the late third / early fourth century.... They were also Christians, united in their love for each other in a

way that recalls the description by Tertullian of a Christian heterosexual married couple.”

Boswell concludes:

Residents of the nations emerging from pagan antiquity into the Christian Middle Ages had many reasons to condemn heterosexual arrangements, viewed as a terrestrial convenience or advantage, and at the same time to admire same-sex passions and unions—the residual cult of the masculine and masculine attachments to the many examples of military martyrs joined at death by their devotion both to God and to each other. All of this makes it less surprising that when the Christian church finally devised ceremonies of commitment, some of them should have been for same-gender couples.

The liturgies and prayers themselves usually invoke Serge and Bacchus, 1 Corinthians 13, or Psalm 133, and use various symbolic gestures such as the partners joining right hands, which the priest wraps with his stole. Boswell translated the originals carefully, trying not to slant one way or the another, and offers warnings of how tricky it can be to put ancient languages and concepts in modern dress. “Greek terminology regarding marriage was so fluid that it is nearly impossible to infer the precise nature of a relationship from words alone. ‘*Gamos*’...was the most common legal term for a wedding, but, as Redfield observes, ‘*Gamos* is the name, in its primary significance, not of a ceremony but of the sexual act itself.’ ... A further complication in analysing the

sources is presented by the fact that the common words for ‘husband’ and ‘wife’ were simply the nouns for ‘man’ and ‘woman.’” He has provided some sources in their original Greek, so bilingual readers can try their own translating if so inclined, and a few hetero ceremonies are also included for comparison.

Reading a book like this is hard work (and so is reviewing it), but if sexual history interests you, it may be worth your while. You needn’t worry about the footnotes unless you yourself are a full-bore academic. (Footnotes in this kind of Scholarly Work are just academics code-talking to each other; to us, they’re like background static on the radio. A simple sentence on, say, early Christian marriage will be trailed by: “#31. Caesarius of Arles, Sermon 44.5, [*Corpus Christianorum...series latina* (Turnhout, 1953 -) 103:108]; noted by Ritzer as a ‘Gallician usage,’ pp. 212, 260; cf. Brundage p. 92, Stevenson, p. 58, and Molin and Mutembe, cited above, n. 7., pp. 291-292. Cf. ‘The Penitential of Theodore’ [Christian Era 668-90], 12:1, suggesting that this custom was not limited to Gaul [translated in John McNeill and Helena Gamer, *Medieval Handbooks of Penance: A translation of the principal libri poenitentiales and selections from related documents* (New York, 1938), p. 208.]” *Zzxxxxxshwxxxxzzz* ...)

The story of Boswell’s researchings might have made a more interesting narrative, though. We get a few fragments: An elderly Jesuit, showing him through an ancient tome, suddenly got flustered and turned over a page, muttering something about “no longer used” or “not important.” Queried, his

# Advertise in

# The Blotter

it’s cheap, easy,  
effective, and keeps  
us in print. call  
marty at  
**(919) 286-7760.**



Through the Moon  
Editorial and Publishing Services

self-publishing assistance  
manuscript editing/evaluation  
desktop publishing copyediting  
brochures web services  
consulting

[www.throughthemoon.com](http://www.throughthemoon.com)  
919.643.2968

discomfort was so singular that it sparked not only Boswell's academic curiosity but also his gaydar. Then when the Vatican found out exactly what he was working on, they wouldn't let him back in their libraries....

Meanwhile, wedding "traditions" continue to evolve, like any other living social custom. A gay union I went to some years back had the women all teary-eyed afterwards saying "what a beautiful service it was" while the men cracked beers and bachelor-party jokes; there was a regular tiered cake, but with two grooms, along with a sheet cake iced with the rainbow flag and adorned with Teletubbies. And Allen & Sons Barbecue catered the reception. Over in the other camp, Miss Manners recently answered a letter from distraught parents whose daughter and her boyfriend wanted to walk down the aisle buck naked. My imminent husband and I are planning for sometime next year, legal status notwithstanding (maybe our pastor can say "In spite of the powers *not* vested in me by the government..."). Controversy, shmontroversy, we say—the folks who matter to us will recognize it, and them that don't won't get invited. No champagne for you!



**Martin K. Smith** is the publisher of *The Blotter*, and writes monthly book reviews of books that you really aren't likely to have read. Past installments have featured biographies of porn stars, '50s pulp sci-fi, and a sixteenth-century English allegory, romance, and how-to guide about fishing. He's a frequent DJ on WXDU, Duke University radio, and pretty much everybody knows him.

## August Evening

### prologue to *Waking Up*, a novel

by Johnny Pence

In the yellow evening haze of August, in the deafening whir of cicadas, an old man got down off his old horse and did a little dance to get his circulation going again. When the pins and needles faded, he bent over with one hand in the small of his back and patted an old dog's head.

He had something for everybody in his saddlebag. The dog got a hambone, the horse got an apple, and he packed himself a pipe. The three of them sat by the edge of a flat creek, that fed into the Pee Dee river and then crooked southward, sprawling for miles with the tide down to Georgetown. They enjoyed each other's company and the evening in the way they'd become very comfortable doing as they grew old together.

It was 1909, and Major Thaddeus Thackeray had finished his dinner about a half-hour ago. His boys were back at the house, holding their bellies and making "wooo!" noises, sipping at glasses of whiskey and thanking the girls.

It was the Major's habit to ride to the creek on these summer evenings if the horse was still saddled, and the dog was never more than ten feet away from the Major. That poor old dog had been having trouble getting

around lately, and she would cry if he was going too fast. That wasn't often a problem, because there wasn't much to hurry the Major.

People told him he ought to put the dog down. While he was at it, he should spend another round on that feeble old horse. You can imagine that the Major didn't listen.

"Good ol' hoss. Good ol' dog. Good ol' hoss. Good ol' dog," he said in a private, familiar singsong. He sat crosslegged on the grass, one hand patting the horse's flank and the other the dog's head, maybe picking a tick off one, the other, or himself.

He thought for a moment about how good things were, and how bad they'd been. He was proud of himself and what he'd done since the War. The lawyers were straightening everything out. He had his house in order.

He'd been looking forward to today for a good while. He'd known it was coming, and coming today, since he got back from Arkansas. He uncrossed his thin legs and leaned back on his elbows. The horse's reins were tossed loosely up over the saddlehorn, and the dog had spun around enough to get comfortable and flop down.

The Major took another good, long puff on his pipe

before he'd have to set it down, then he pulled out his Blackhawk to make sure it was loaded. It was, and he relaxed, set it across his lap, and went back to getting the best of his pipe.

The horse shifted his weight. The moment stuck and repeated in Thaddeus Thackeray's mind, the moment he'd been waiting for.

A gator three times the size of the biggest one anybody had ever seen covered the ten feet between the horse and the creek in the blink of an eye. The Major had squeezed off a .357 slug into the beast's left eye before it killed the horse, but even a big round like that won't stop a fifty-foot lizard. Apparently, it won't even slow one down. The Major knew what he would do and he did it without thinking: aiming for two more shots, then fanning the hammer for the remaining three. His pistol was empty.

The horse's neck and front legs were broken in the instant of the gator's lunge. *Fait accompli*, the ancient monster turned one yellow eye and one blasted socket from the dead horse to the man who had just maimed it. The dog stood between them, barking like she was only a year old. She leapt without a trace of the arthritis that had slowed her down so bad lately and sunk her remaining worn, brown teeth ineffectively in the dragon's thick hide. The gator lunged again, misjudging the distance, and ground the old mongrel beneath its belly. She yelped once and the major's heart sank to hear the old girl cry, but

now it was over and he knew it was for the best. He put his pistol back in the holster and threw the gunbelt a couple yards away. It was a nice pistol and he wanted Félix to have it.

He realized that he didn't know what to do next—he'd seen the gator in his dreams and he knew what was going to happen, but he didn't know what to do while it happened. It was a good day to die, so he went back to his pipe, by God.



Johnny Pence is me, the editor of this magazine and a freelance writer and editor. This is the prologue to my novel *Waking Up*, due out around Christmastime from Trevisi Publications. Buy a copy or else.  
—ediot@blotterrag.com

**wxdu**

Duke University Radio

88.7

103.5 fm

**www.wxdu.org**

Request Lines: 684.8870 & 684.8871



**firefly**

Cool Shoes

Fluevog  
Dr. Martens  
VANS  
PONY  
Caterpillar

605 Glenwood Ave Raleigh 821-4536 fireflync.com

**CARR BURRITOS**  
Home of the Flour Chips

Mon - Sat • 11am - 10pm  
711 W Rosemary St • Carrboro  
www.carrburritos.com  
**933.8226**

Proud Supporters of the Orange County Literacy Council.

**BRANCH'S  
CHAPEL HILL  
BOOKSHOP**  
and  
**The Blotter**  
present  
Our Latest  
**Serious  
Literary Event**  
*friday, may 21*  
**7:00 p.m.**

Every Month, join past and present *Blotter* authors, artists, poets, and special guests. Open mike readings follow.

(Sign-up for open spaces, 5 minute time limit for open mike readers)

Also at Branch's in the near future:

Sun., May 9, 2:00: David Weber, *Windrider's Oath*. Tues. May 11, 7:30: Kristin Ohlson, *Stalking the Divine*. Saturday, May 15 1:30: B. J. Mountford, *Bloodlines of Shackelford Banks*. Wed. May 26 7:30 Dennis McFarland, *Prince Edward*. Sun. May 30 2:00: Sarah Dessen, *The Truth About Forever*. Sat. June 5 7:30 John Amen, Joanna Catherine Scott, Sarah Lindsay, Nathan Leslie: **Poetry Event** Thurs. June 10 7:30 **Spoken Word Live Taping** Michael Morris, *Slow Way Home*

**branch's chapel  
hill bookshop**  
243 s. elliott rd.  
in village plaza  
968.9110

www.branchsbookshop.com

*your hair looks good like that.*

**Obituary  
by Eso Peomface**

he was lazy and a slob  
and he hated his job  
but we loved him just the same

he was ignorant and pretentious  
and he hated all of us  
but we loved him just the same

he was pale because he wouldn't leave our  
house  
and we wanted to kick him out  
but we loved him just the same

he took advantage of innocence  
and every other dollar we made he spent  
but we loved him just the same

he was too liberal and too rude  
and every other word out of his mouth was lewd  
but we loved him just the same

he was undriven and slept to much  
and he used depression as a crutch  
but we loved him just the same

he was intelligent but never went to college  
he was caring and kind but left nothing behind  
and we love him because we gave him his name

Eso Peomface is obviously a pseudonym, and that's about all the information we have from this one. Sorry.

G. Kay Bishop has an e-mail address that would suggest she works for the EPA, but beyond that is also something of an enigma.

**Death in Aspic—A CBA News Special Report  
by G. Kay Bishop**

It has recently been determined  
That food is the leading cause of death in humans.

The surgeon general is uncertain what to recommend:  
Eating in moderation? Food-Free Fridays?  
Perhaps—sober, state-owned restaurants....

The Catholic Church has compromised  
By discontinuing wafers (for Man does not live by bread alone),  
But (considering the Holy Spirits, the Benedictines, and quadrupled  
attendance at Mass)  
The Pope was firm about wine.

Farmers are dumping grain onto Third World stock markets  
As quickly as possible before the news spreads,  
And food-related industries are preparing a massive ad campaign

To persuade people that dining is a pleasure  
They simply cannot live without.

Meanwhile, biochemists are working around the clock  
To perfect photosynthetic implantation techniques  
For the President and his Cabinet.

Consumers throughout the nation seem calm, but apprehensive;  
And children continue to report  
That the pigs and the trees are laughing.

## 1077th Anti-aircraft Regiment by Garry Somers

"The first combat with a German Panzer column occurred on the approaches to the Tractor Factory. The unit involved was the 1077th Anti-Aircraft Regiment. The crews of these AA Guns consisted of young girls who had volunteered for combat duty with the Army. The Artillery unit was positioned on the flat ground of the Steppe. We saw that they were all alone as there were no Soviet troops either to the left of them, or to the right. We fully understood that it was their duty to stand and defend this ground to the last person living." Copyright Stalingrad-info.com

Here's to the brave women who  
Work in the factory that makes tractors and combines  
That grow our wheat fields.  
300 girls that raise their hands and march away.  
My sister, who was once so shy that she  
would not buy candy from a store  
and gave me her coins to purchase sweets.  
She wipes sweat from her face with an arm  
curved with hard muscle from twisting bolts of steel.  
Her nimble hand holds the charge rod that  
loads a band of twenty millimeter into the barrel.  
I would not recognize my sister's eyes. They are darker  
and move precisely, watching the horizon.

Here's to the strong women who  
struggle against invaders, advancing to the challenge  
facing our motherland.  
My own mother, whose voice is softer than the wisps of down-feathers  
blown from nests by the river's edge,  
she sang to me to cure my hurting head and  
her hand, calloused as a boot, smoothed my hair  
until I slept. She cracks open crates with an iron bar,  
stacking the ammunition. Throwing the empty boxes in front  
for some small protection. I would not recognize  
my mother's eyes. Their hearts are gone, now she has gone cold,  
snow wind off the steppe, and deadly.

Here's to the fearsome women who  
Crouch in shallow shellholes while bombs rain down.  
Rise in the aftermath and shoot again.  
My daughter, it seems only last year was too young to wear shoes in the summer  
running through the grass with her hands out, falling laughing to hide  
shouting Find me Poppa, Find me!  
Her thin fingers grasp a screw wind and elevate the gun to zero.  
Aiming at a Panther, sending rounds peeling off  
in a steady thumping line across the flat land above the light brown grass.  
I wouldn't recognize my daughter, her nose bleeds from concussion, she shakes  
her head  
and hawks copper-colored spit on the dust.

Here's to the lonely women, each one a hero  
each one dead, for nobody is coming in relief.  
My lover, so accepting and inviting, now she stands  
in the slick death of a girl she does not know,  
that worked with her in some other part of the factory.  
A girl that could have been a friend while they stood, while they waited, eating  
bread from a dusty sack,  
not saving it for a later that didn't come, not saying anything.  
Her hand gone, sliced by a bit of iron whickering past,  
a terrible black bird. Wrapped tightly around her upper arm, her hair cloth.  
I would not recognize my lover, she dies quickly in the August sun and no one  
goes to her and holds her head and weeps.

When Garry Somers told me he had a poem that was a fake translation of a nonexistent Soviet ballad about real WWII women volunteers shooting AA guns at a panzer column, I knew exactly how I was going to use this very page.

# Submit

## The Blotter

Needs and Wants Your Contribution

# So Give It Up

We prefer e-mail submissions in all cases,  
and they go to  
[mermaid@blotterrag.com](mailto:mermaid@blotterrag.com)  
or paper copies can go to

Jenny Haniver  
PO Box 175  
Hillsborough, NC 27278!

### Send us:

Short prose (stories and  
nonacademic essays),  
Poetry,  
Photojournalism/-essay,  
Journalism that goes beyond or  
beneath what you might find  
elsewhere,  
Comix, and  
Fine art that would reproduce well  
on this type of paper.

### Guidelines and Administrivia:

Do not send original work of any  
kind! Your submissions will not  
be returned.

Lo-res images may be attached to  
e-mail submissions, but no other  
attachments. Paste all text into the  
e-mail body or send paper copies  
to the P. O. box above.

We will not type anything for you.  
Handwritten stuff is really not  
considered; we need an electronic  
copy of all text, and you have to  
supply it.

An e-mail address or reply SASE is  
required before we will respond.

Try to send stuff that is somehow  
resonant with what we have  
already published.

We strive to be apolitical. Bear  
that in mind.

You keep all copyrights but allow  
us to print your work one time.  
There is no payment yet.

# The Blotter Presents

# Holden and Velvet

May 20 | 10:00 p.m.  
Berkeley Cafe  
217 W. Martin, Raleigh



## DANCE NOIR. FOR ARMAGEDDON.

From the provocative author of the volatile novel "*sweet piece*"  
a one-hour preview of his audacious 36-song rock opera.

An arresting new voice sings a collection of seductive,  
hypnotic rock, disco and samba songs full of passion, insight and  
"jaw-dropping honesty\*" unlike any you've heard, soon available on disc.

### Featuring

Club Child • Sweet Resurrection • Venice in Peril  
When Autumn Kills Our Spring • Sometimes I Weep for the Devil  
Guilt and Smoke and Mirrors • Waiting for Danny to Call  
Hell in Hollywood • My Favorite Bar • Tehran-geles  
I Guess It's Just Her Way • Love in Vain

NEW SONGS OF LOVE ARRESTED BY SPACE AND TIME

## SILVANUS SLAUGHTER CONSTELLATIONS COMPROMISED



amazon.com

with Special Musical Guests and Dancing Goddess | Listen in at [www.constellationscompromised.com](http://www.constellationscompromised.com)

THE BLOTTER MAGAZINE presents at RINGSIDE • Durham • JUNE 25th 9:00 PM