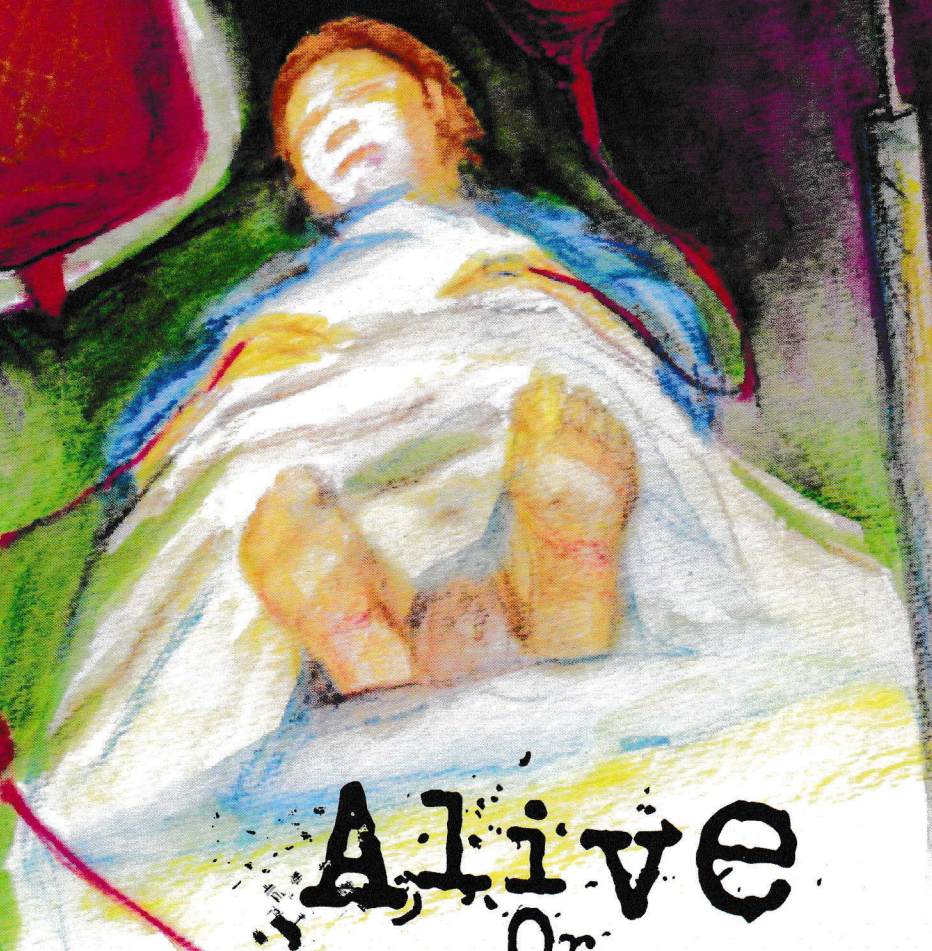


Family  
vanity  
success  
comforts  
Friends  
Security

Partying  
self  
sex  
Money

Getting by  
existing  
Surviving



# Alive Or Truly Living?

p8.12

# Jesus Fellowship of Believers

an intentional christian community



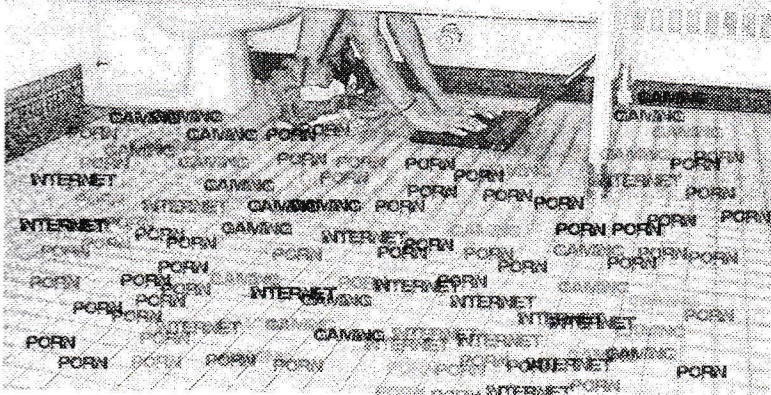
A home for sinners of all walks of life  
...who have found that God is good  
...who have discovered real life  
...who intend to love Jesus Christ with their lives.

621 Wilson Ave., Menomonie Wisconsin • [www.jfbelievers.com](http://www.jfbelievers.com)

## A New Creation

addiction recovery program

CANT GET AWAY?? NOW YOU CAN..



Every Thursday Evening At 7pm

Blind Munchies Coffee House  
621 Wilson Avenue, Menomonie, WI  
715.235.9300

Support Local College Radio

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COLLEGE RADIO • MENOMONIE WISCONSIN

[www.streetlevelministry.com/burningdogradio](http://www.streetlevelministry.com/burningdogradio)  
[www.youtube.com/burningdogrevival](http://www.youtube.com/burningdogrevival)

# Alive Or Truly Living?

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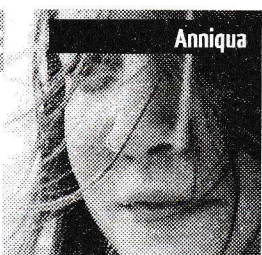
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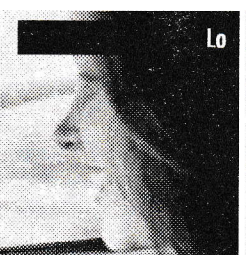
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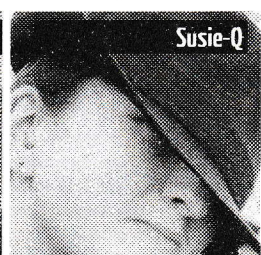
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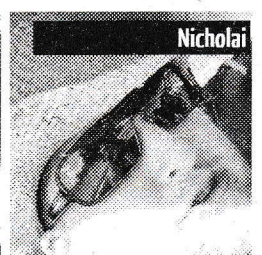
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Curly



Susie-Q



Nikolai

A quarterly publication of Street Level Ministries, a UW-Stout Student Organization

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christian student organization

**STREETLEVELMINISTRIES**  
menomonie, wisconsin  
**UW-Stout**

# Winter Car Care 101

After all, this *is* Wisconsin.



4

**T**he snow is flying, the roads are icing over, and most of us are freaking out because winter driving has the tendency to get the best of us. A number of us would find that winter driving is not so treacherous if we simply make a few basic maintenance repairs to our transporter. If you're willing to take these simple precautions, you can get through the winter without clinching the emergency brake or sliding around corners. Let's peek at a couple of updates we can make to get through the worst old man winter can dish out.

50% antifreeze. The container should say 50/50 right on the label.

**Oil** keeps your car running smoothly. Without oil, you may find yourself pulled over on the side of the road in some of the worst conditions. Checking your oil is a very simple procedure that should be done every time you fill your car up with fuel. Oil can be checked by popping the hood and finding the oil dipstick. Once located, pull it out, wipe it off with a paper towel, put it back in, and remove it one more time. When it is out, look down at the end of the dipstick to see your oil level. If it is below the "full" mark, you need to add another quart. Like antifreeze, oil can be purchased at any gas station or farm store. The brand of oil does not matter, but the name brands tend to be more expensive. The grade of oil most cars require is 5W-30, but to be safe, check your manual or oil cap, and it will say the grade of oil you need.

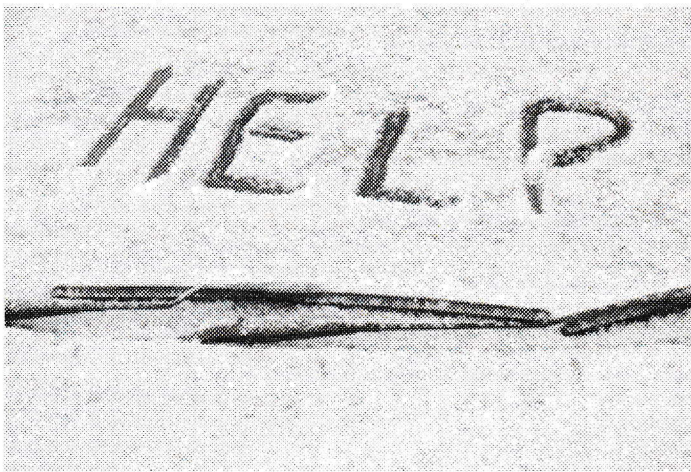
## Fluids and Tires

**Antifreeze** is essential to the health of your radiator. It is important to check your antifreeze frequently and always keep it up to the "full" line on the reservoir. Antifreeze is usually a colorful liquid that you can buy in a gallon jug at any gas station or farm store (such as Fleet Farm). It is essential to make sure the jug you buy is a 50/50 mix; mixing with green Kool-Aid will not work. This means that it contains 50% water and



**Tires:** When it comes to staying on the road, tires are unarguably the most important piece of the puzzle. Although slipping, sliding, and whipping around on bald tires can be a good time, it can also abruptly end your life. With that said, you should check to see if your tires have at least 4/32 of an inch of depth on them. You can check this with a ruler by placing it in the tread, or you can take it into a local auto body shop to inspect them and give you advice on buying new tires. Along with

having good rubber, you should check the tire pressure at least once a week. This can be done with a tire pressure gauge that you can pick up almost anywhere like the local Cenex. Make sure your tires are at the required PSI level, which will be listed right on the outside of your tire. You may need a flashlight, magnifying glass, or second opinion to see it.



### Wipers and Battery

**Windshield wipers** will save you during those intimidating times when you are stuck behind the plow truck. Having a good pair of wipers is like having a good pair of socks; it makes all the difference. If you are desperately trying to recall the last time they were replaced, now is the time to get new ones. From now on, once a year is a good rule of thumb. It's a good idea to purchase a new set before winter. You can pick these up at Walmart, an auto part store, or any farm store. When you head to the auto parts section, you will need to look for the book that lists the right sizes for your car. Once you have the book, page through it to find the make and model of your car and it will list the size and brand you need.

Write down the part number on a piece of paper so you do not have to look for it again. You can do this with oil and air filters for your vehicle as well. Along with wipers, every time you fill your car with gas, you should also fill the windshield wiper fluid to the appropriate line. Be sure that the fluid you are using is rated for freezing weather. This will be labeled right on the bottle.

**Batteries** are essential, because they are usually the only way your car will start. If it starts any other way, you should definitely be concerned. The best way to see if your battery is still in good shape is to take your car to an auto body shop, and they will test it for a small price. Even though taking it somewhere to get it tested kind of bites, you will appreciate not having to deal with a dead car when you're trying to get to work or school. Also, when you take your car in for a battery check, if the battery is still good, you may want to ask if they can clean your battery posts. These are the knobs that stick out of your battery to give the car power.

### Winter Safety Kit

Whether you are heading to the Twin Cities or planning a long road trip home, it is a good idea to store these useful items in a duffel bag in the trunk of your vehicle in case of an emergency.

- Battery jumper cables
- Large flashlight and extra batteries
- First aid supplies
- Extra blanket and warm clothing
- Basic tool kit (screwdriver, pliers, adjustable wrench)
- Bottled water
- Highway safety flares in good condition
- Windshield ice scraper
- Replacement electrical fuses (check the owner's manual for specifics)

You will find that you cannot go wrong by following these simple steps to keep your car maintained during the winter. Listed below are a couple of places in Menomonie where you can go to get your car checked and some general prices for the parts you may need.



**Mills Fleet Farm-** Get your car fixed at the mechanic shop, or go inside for parts and fluids.

**Advance Auto-** Get your parts and advice here, especially if your check engine light is on. They will check your car when the check engine light is on for free.

#### General Pricing

Battery: \$75-\$100

Wiper Blades: \$7-\$13

Tires (4): \$300-\$400

Quart of Oil: \$3-\$7

Antifreeze: \$10-\$15

Windshield Wiper Fluid: \$3-\$5

Good Safety Kit: \$20

# SNOWMEN [EXPOSED]

Winter has an unfortunate tendency to bring out the blues, but it is actually an excellent season for ingenuity. We've taken the liberty of traveling all over Menomonie looking for the most exciting, or at least, *interesting*, snow sculpture creations. The snowmen that have been rolled up all around town range from traditional to very unconventional in design. We've encountered everything from dismemberment to mobility among these crafty snow beings. What do you think: Are these snowmen abominable or adorable?

**WARNING:** Graphic Content



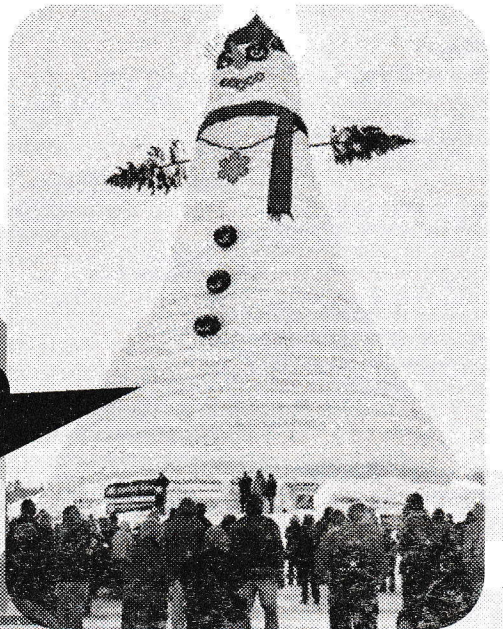
## Stubby

6 What happens when you mix over-eager builders with a dusting of snow? The answer, I'm afraid, is quite tragic. Stubby was rolled up after the first snowfall of the season; an amateur snow building mistake. A late November warm spell left this poor snowman hideously disfigured. Severe melting caused some pretty nasty dismemberment, and poor Stubby will never look the same. To all snowman enthusiasts, let this be an example of the ill-fated results of poor planning.



## The Motorhead

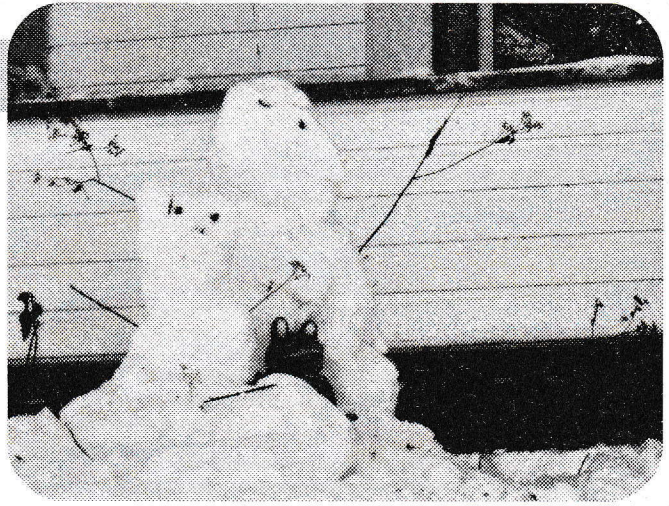
This fantastic creation gives a whole new meaning to the word "snowmobile." Most likely the work of some clever college students, he made an appearance after the impressive mid-December blizzard that blanketed northern Wisconsin. No longer bound by the traditional rules of snowmanity, this motorhead now has free reign over the open highway. If you happen to pass him during your morning commute, the crazed look in his eye may be one reason to take caution.



The largest recorded snowman, or more accurately, snow-woman, was built in 2008 in Bethel, Maine. She stood 122'1" tall.<sup>1</sup>

## The Happy Family

What could be better than a snowman? Two snowmen! In fact, leaving your charming little snowperson outside without a companion could be considered gross negligence. And, of course, your snow family is never complete without the pet...frog. Rumor has it that frogs are all the rage with snow families this season. Being much more challenging to construct, a stuffed toy can easily be substituted to create the same effect. Nothing brightens up a home as much as a couple of lumpy snowmen and their pet frog on your doorstep.



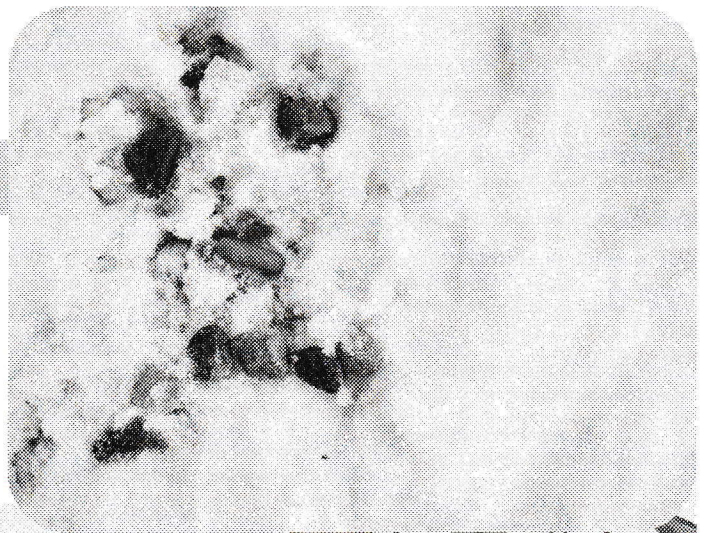
## The Odd Couple

Snowmen are particularly fascinating because they have the ability to switch species interchangeably. Take, for instance, the odd pair that sprang up unexpectedly on Broadway this year. Obviously, the first thing that comes to mind when it's time to build a snowman is: seahorse and bear. Judging by the intricate details and careful sculpting, these were most likely assembled by one of Stout's talented art students, or at least a very creative spirit with some time on their hands. One thing is certain: these "snowmen" undoubtedly make Menomonie a little bit more interesting.

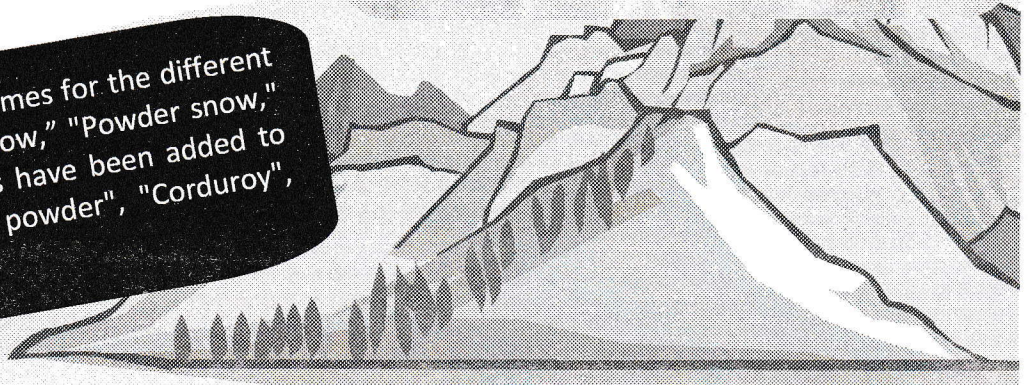
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## The Puddle

The life cycle of the snowman is a dreadfully short period of time. Accidents are quite frequent. A lost limb, stolen nose, or unexpected warm spells are all means to an end for this transitory race. This photograph is a prime example of one of the most common causes of snowman fatalities: melting. In fact, approximately 86% of snowman deaths are caused by melting each year. It's a gruesome sight. Oftentimes, the eyes, nose, and arms are the only remains. Keep in mind, the next puddle you splash through could be all that's left of your friendly neighborhood snowman.



Skiers in the 1900's developed names for the different kinds of snow, such as "Fluffy snow," "powder snow," and "Sticky snow". More names have been added to that list such as: "Champagne powder", "Corduroy", and "Mashed Potatoes".<sup>2</sup>



# LOCAL EVENTS CALENDAR

## Academic

**Monday, January 24**  
Classes Begin

**Friday, March 11**  
End of Third Quarter, Spring  
Break Begins 5:00 p.m.

**Saturday, March 12 - Sunday,  
March 20**  
Spring Break Week, No Classes

**Monday, March 21**  
Classes Resume, Beginning of  
Fourth Quarter

## Athletic

**Wednesday, January 26**  
Men's Basketball vs UW-La  
Crosse  
Menomonie, WI 7 p.m.

**Saturday, January 29**  
Women's Track and Field vs  
Warren Bowlus Open  
Menomonie, WI 12 p.m.

Men's Track and Field vs Warren  
Bowlus Open  
Menomonie, WI 12 p.m.

Women's Gymnastics vs UW-  
Whitewater (Parents' Night)  
Menomonie, WI 6 p.m.

**Wednesday, February 2**  
Women's Basketball vs UW-  
Stevens Point  
Menomonie, WI 7 p.m.

**Saturday, February 5**  
Men's Basketball vs UW-  
Oshkosh  
Menomonie, WI 4 p.m.

Women's Basketball vs UW-  
Oshkosh (Alumni Day)  
Menomonie, WI 6 p.m.

**Wednesday, February 9**  
Men's Basketball vs UW-  
Superior  
Menomonie, WI 7 p.m.

**Friday, February 11**  
Women's Gymnastics vs John  
Zuerlein Invitational (Alumni  
Night) w/UW-Oshkosh, UW-Eau  
Claire  
Menomonie, WI 6 p.m.

Men's Ice Hockey vs UW-  
Stevens Point  
Menomonie, WI 7:30 p.m.

**Saturday, February 12**  
Men's Ice Hockey vs St. Norbert  
College  
Menomonie, WI 4 p.m.

**Tuesday, February 15**  
Men's Basketball vs Crown  
College  
Menomonie, WI 7 p.m.

**Saturday, February 19**  
Men's Basketball vs UW-Eau  
Claire  
Menomonie, WI 3 p.m.

Women's Basketball vs UW-Eau  
Claire  
Menomonie, WI 5 p.m.

**Friday, February 25**  
Men's Track and Field vs WIAC  
Championships  
Menomonie, WI 1 p.m.

Women's Track and Field vs  
WIAC Championships  
Menomonie, WI 1 p.m.

**Saturday, February 26**  
Women's Track and Field vs  
WIAC Championships  
Menomonie, WI 1 p.m.

Men's Track and Field vs WIAC  
Championships  
Menomonie, WI 1 p.m.

**Friday, March 4**  
Women's Gymnastics vs  
Hamline University (Senior  
Night)  
Menomonie, WI 6 p.m.

**Saturday, March 12**  
Women's Gymnastics vs WIAC  
Championships/NCGA Regionals  
Menomonie, WI 4 p.m.

**Saturday, April 2**  
Softball vs UW-Stevens Point  
(DH)  
Menomonie, WI 2 p.m.

**Thursday, April 7**  
Softball vs UW-Eau Claire (DH)  
Menomonie, WI 4 p.m.

**Saturday, April 9**  
Baseball vs UW-Platteville (DH)  
Menomonie, WI 12 p.m.

**Sunday, April 10**  
Baseball vs UW-Platteville (DH)  
Menomonie, WI 12 p.m.

**Wednesday, April 13**  
Baseball vs Viterbo University  
Menomonie, WI 2 p.m.

**Thursday, April 14**  
Men's Golf vs UW-Stout  
Invitational  
Menomonie, WI 9 a.m.

**Saturday, April 16**  
Baseball vs UW-Whitewater  
Menomonie, WI 12 p.m.

Softball vs Luther College (DH)  
Menomonie, WI 2 p.m.

**Sunday, April 17**  
Baseball vs UW-Whitewater  
Menomonie, WI 12 p.m.

## Entertainment

**Thursday, January 27**  
FREE Infinitea Game Night,  
Infinitea Teahouse, Eau Claire,  
5:00 - 8:00 p.m.

**Saturday, January 29**  
FREE Poker Tournament, Jake's  
Supper Club, Menomonie, 1:00  
- 5:00 p.m.

**Wednesday, February 2**  
Film Showing: *For Colored Girls*  
7 pm, Applied Arts 210

**Thursday, February 3**  
FREE Infinitea Game Night,  
Infinitea Teahouse, Eau Claire,  
5:00 - 8:00 p.m.

**\*Friday, February 4\***  
FREE B-Movie Showing  
The Blind Munchies Coffeeshouse  
621 Wilson Ave., Menomonie  
7:00pm

**Saturday, February 5**  
FREE Poker Tournament, Jake's  
Supper Club, Menomonie, 1:00  
- 5:00 p.m.

"The Menomonie Five," Mabel  
Tainter, 7:00 p.m.

**Wednesday, February 9**  
Hayor Bibimma African Dance  
Company  
7 pm, location TBD

**Thursday, February 10**  
FREE Infinitea Game Night,  
Infinitea Teahouse, Eau Claire,  
5:00 - 8:00 p.m.

## \*Friday, February 18\*

FREE Live Music; Blank Page  
Empire, The Blind Munchies  
Coffeeshouse, 621 Wilson Ave.  
Menomonie, 7:00 p.m.

**Feb. 24-27 and Mar. 4-6**  
"The Sound of Music," Mabel  
Tainter, 7:30 p.m. all days  
2:00pm Sat. and Sun.

## \*Friday, March 4\*

FREE Live Music; Zoo Animal  
The Blind Munchies Coffeeshouse  
621 Wilson Ave., Menomonie  
7:00pm

## Recreation

**Wednesday, February 2**  
Stout Adventures Lead Climbing  
Class 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

**Saturday, February 12**  
Stout Adventures Cross Country  
Ski Clinic 10:00 a.m. - 12:00  
p.m.

Stout Adventures Adaptive Cross  
Country Skiing 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

**Wednesday, February 16**  
Stout Adventures Full Moon  
Series - XC Ski 9:00 - 11:00 p.m.

**Friday, February 18 - 20**  
Stout Adventures Winter  
Camping Trip at Black River Falls  
State Forest

**Friday, February 18**  
Candlelight Snowshoe Hike on  
Red Cedar Trail 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

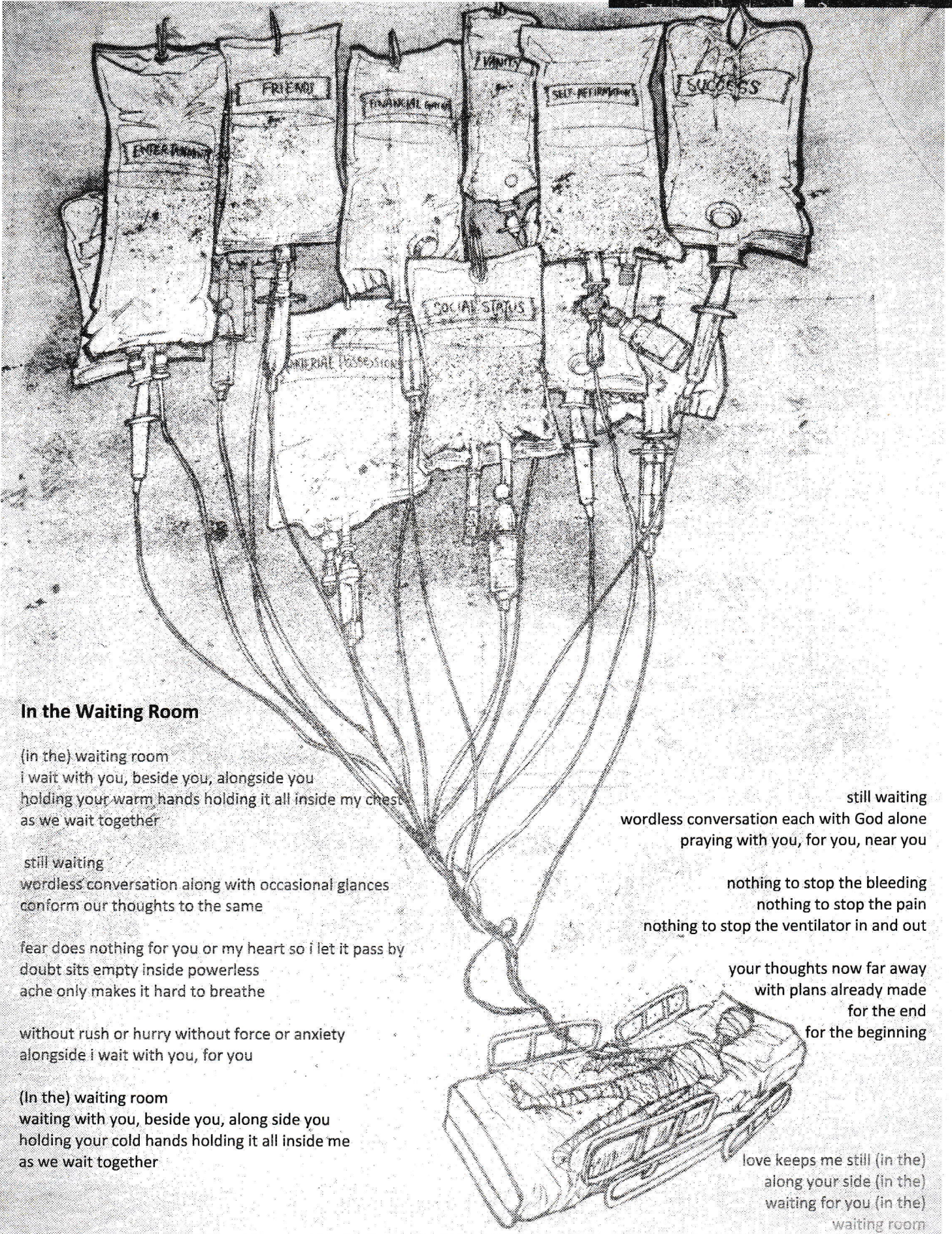
**Tuesday, February 22**  
Stout Adventures Deep Water  
Safety Clinic 8:00 - 10:00 p.m.

**Saturday, March 5**  
Stout Adventures Rock Fest  
Climbing Competition

**Friday, March 11 - Sunday,  
March 20**  
Stout Adventures Sea Kayak Trip  
to Florida for Spring Break

**Wednesday, March 23**  
Stout Adventures Women's  
Climbing Night 8:00 - 10:00 p.m.





**In the Waiting Room**

(in the) waiting room  
 i wait with you, beside you, alongside you  
 holding your warm hands holding it all inside my chest  
 as we wait together

still waiting  
 wordless conversation along with occasional glances  
 conform our thoughts to the same

fear does nothing for you or my heart so i let it pass by  
 doubt sits empty inside powerless  
 ache only makes it hard to breathe

without rush or hurry without force or anxiety  
 alongside i wait with you, for you

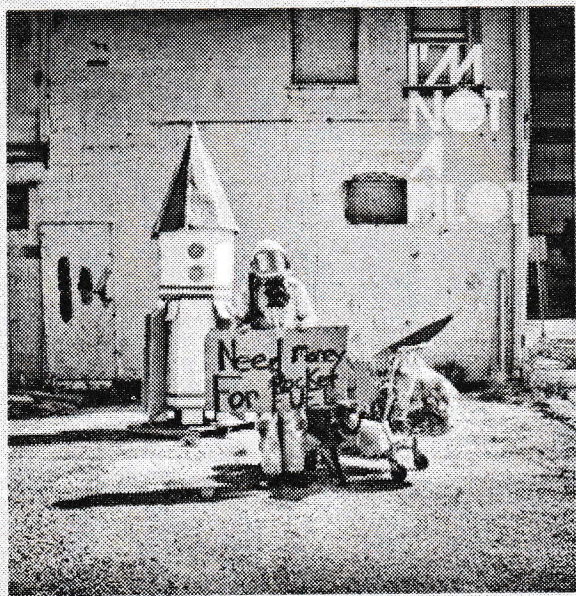
(In the) waiting room  
 waiting with you, beside you, along side you  
 holding your cold hands holding it all inside me  
 as we wait together

still waiting  
 wordless conversation each with God alone  
 praying with you, for you, near you

nothing to stop the bleeding  
 nothing to stop the pain  
 nothing to stop the ventilator in and out

your thoughts now far away  
 with plans already made  
 for the end  
 for the beginning

love keeps me still (in the)  
 along your side (in the)  
 waiting for you (in the)  
 waiting room



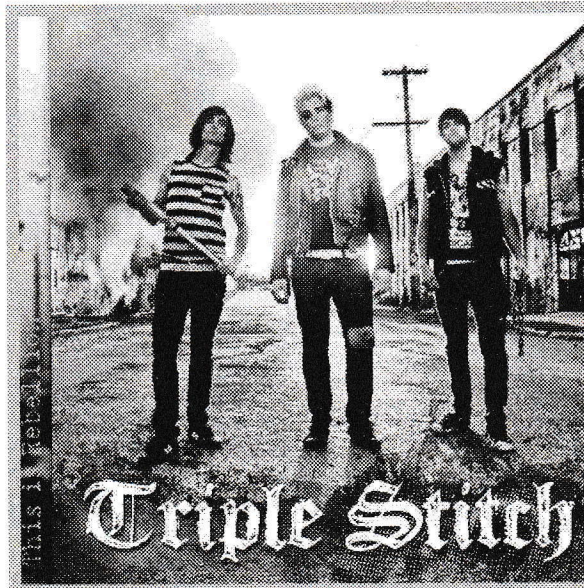
### I'm Not a Pilot

Album: *Need Money for Rocket Fuel*  
Release Date: November 10, 2010  
Genre: Loosely classified guitar-less indie rock  
Website: [www.imnotapilot.com](http://www.imnotapilot.com)

A homeless man holding a sign with the words, "Need Money for Rocket Fuel," inspired the title of I'm Not a Pilot's newest musical release. This sort of quirkiness invariably set the framework for an album that leans away from the familiar and into the obscure. All of the members are from Milwaukee and have become a homegrown hit as they have quickly become one of the top bands in the city. In fact, they recently won the Shepherd Express "Best of Milwaukee 2010" Award for Best Rock Band. Their sound is uniquely retrofitted for the music scene today due to its constant stream of energizing highs and lows culminating in steady rhythms and mesmerizing lyrics. Their newest album generates the distinct sense that you just walked into the recording studio of a professional orchestra that decided to take their classical training and jam it into a new genre that's ¼ classic and ¾ bold and tantalizing. Its

classical undertones are not surprising considering their cello player is also a member of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra. Frontman Mark Glatzel's intricate vocals and piano along with Peter Thomas' cello channel what should be a ragtag sound into that of a driving energy punched through with intermingling layers of depth, which is a departure away from what is usually expected from a four-member band. Adrian Esguerra (bass) and Steve Vorass (drums) add the necessary layers of rhythm and sound that drive the ensemble. They have been compared to bands such as Matt Pond PA, Sufjan Stevens, The Fray, Keane, and Radiohead. Since releasing their first album in 2009, their underground success has led them to stages at Summerfest and Cornerstone. Next summer, they plan to tour the west coast.

**Recommendation:** Support a Wisconsin artist *and* satisfy your need for songs that happen to be the perfect mix of classical and indie.



### Triple Stitch

Album: *This is Rebellion*  
Release Date: October 23, 2010  
Genre: Pure punk rock  
Website: <http://www.myspace.com/triplestitch>

Triple Stitch's infectious passion and drive explodes out of their songs and ignites you into a fist-pumping, head-banging rocker. Their purpose transcends their raw, edgy sound, reaching out to those who need to hear the message of hope. Last December, they invaded The Blind Munchies Coffeehouse and unleashed a torrent of music on a crowd that, by the end of the night, were embroiled in a mosh pit at the foot of the stage. Between all the craziness, they spoke about their passion for Jesus and delivered His message of hope. Pretty surreal coming from a band whose guitarist goes by the name "The Jager," but it proves they're all about breaking stereotypes surrounding both their genre of music and the way to approach Jesus. Jimmy Riot on bass and vocals, The Jager on guitar and vocals, and Roddy Leroy on drums, first debuted their successful album *The*

*Rock N' Roll EP* back in 2009. Since then, they have made appearances at Cornerstone, Sunshine, and Lifelight music festivals. Their most recent album, *This is Rebellion*, is a mash-up of pulsating rhythms, wild guitar riffs, and resonate lyrics, all culminating in the distinct notion that this punk rock band is all about delivering their message in a powerful, unforgettable way.

**Recommendation:** For all those seeking an end to dispassionate punk rock

# ARNOLD ON THE LOOSE: UW-SUPERIOR

The quest to reach Arnold Schwarzenegger started with a simple but fascinating question: what was his experience like on the campus of the University of Wisconsin-Superior? Yes, it's true. The one, the only Arnold Schwarzenegger is not only a bodybuilder, actor, and former governor of California, he's also a 1979 graduate of UW-Superior.

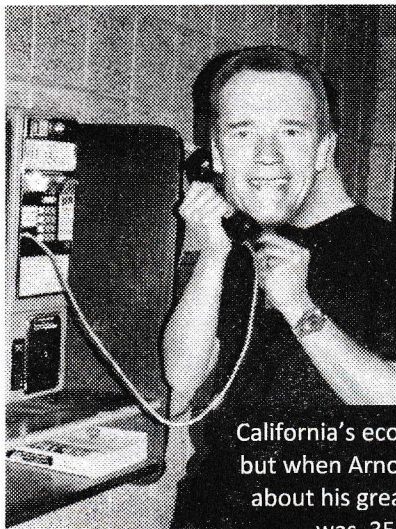
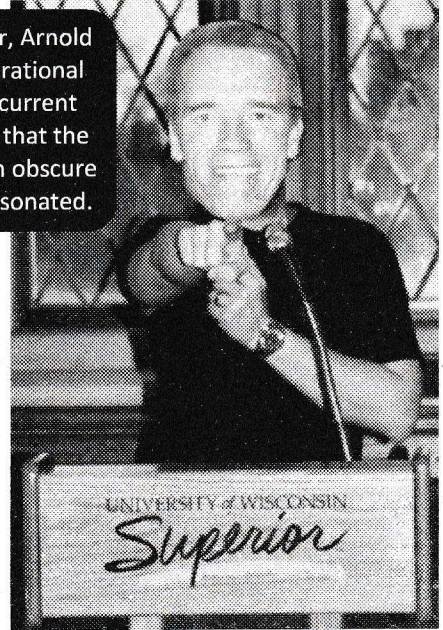
We called the "Governator's" office and sent Arnold a letter

asking about the unique events of his life. As for a response, we weren't holding our breath. However, much to our surprise, the Terminator himself paid us, and his alma mater, a visit to answer our questions in person! UW-Superior has changed in its construction since the 70's, so Arnold very much enjoyed seeing the new improvements. Here are a few photos from Arnold's recent tour of the updated campus.

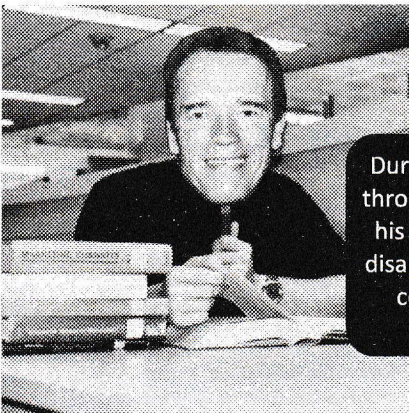


Arnold is a huge fan of *Word on the Street* magazine. He reads it almost as often as he's asked to say, "I'll be back."

In the multicultural center, Arnold gave an impromptu inspirational speech revealing to the current students of UW-Superior that the key to success is having an obscure accent that's easily impersonated.

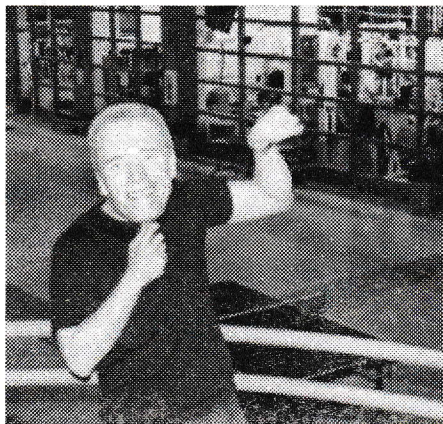


California's economy may be in trouble, but when Arnold called his wife, Maria, about his great visit to the campus, it was 35 cents well-spent.



During a stop at the library, Arnold skimmed through a few of the books he had to read for his business degree. However, he was sadly disappointed, remembering that they did not contain time traveling robots or sweaty barbarians.

Did you know that Arnold's favorite game is foosball? That competitive game face is so intimidating.



Arnold's tour of the campus would not be complete without a visit to the wellness center. Here, he flexes his bicep to encourage the young athletes that, with a few more reps, they too can achieve the title of Mr. Universe. Arnold declined to actually lift weights, but he assures us that he could totally curl 80 lbs with those bulging biceps.



# Alive Or Truly Living?

## Life: Beyond the Status Quo

**Status quo. Life as usual.** Keep things the way that they are. Don't question culture or challenge what appears to be the norm. In America, that requires something like a high school diploma, a college degree, a good job, a house in the suburbs, a spouse, a nice car, a dog and 2.5 children. You should be nice, flatter others, do random acts of kindness and try not to rock the boat. If this seems a bit stale, we agree. Here are the stories of three young Christians from around the world that traded the status quo for a different sort of life. They came to find that God's plan for their lives was better than settling for life as usual. Here are their stories.

There is a great difference between how India is portrayed in travel magazines and what it is really like. If you go through a travel magazine on India, this is probably what you would come across:

- India – land of the peacocks, elephants and the maharajas
- History — perfumed with spices and draped in silk
- Crowned with the Himalayas
- Streaked with sacred rivers and its feet immersed in the Indian Ocean
- The land of temples and of spirituality
- Second most populous country in the world
- Seventh largest country by land mass
- Largest democracy
- Largest constitution
- Largest film industry
- Most diverse in culture
- More than 1,000 languages-nearly 2,000 with all its sub-dialects

If you would watch a documentary on India, however, you would see images of:

- Poverty
- Hunger
- Illiteracy
- Slums and lack of facilities
- Religious unrest
- Underdevelopment
- Disease
- Lagging behind in technology and advancement
- Polluted living conditions

Truthfully, India is a rare mix of glamour, intrigue, poverty and injustice. Sometimes one masks or exposes the other. **Keep reading future issues of *Word on the Street* magazine and I will continue to take you along with me on a revealing journey of how being a 22-year-old girl is linked to and affected by the complexity and contradictions of this vast sub-continent.**



JENNIFER PETER - Bangalore, India

**Hey, I'm Jennifer Peter.** I'm just a fascinated young urbanite hailing from the most complex and diverse country in Asia, India. I reside in Bangalore, a fast moving city in south India, the capital of the state of Karnataka. I've lived in India for as long as I can remember. In fact, I was born in the city of Maharajas. I'm the first one in a family of three. I have a younger sister Jessica and my brother Jason is the youngest. My father, Rev. Hemanth Peter, is Zonal Director of Source of Light Ministries International, which also has a branch in India. He pastors an evangelical Baptist Church and is also a Bible teacher. My mother, Asha Peter, is freelance writer and editor of our magazine, *The Glorious Hope*.

As for my background, I am presently pursuing my Bachelor's degree in Social Work in one of the best universities in my state. I also volunteer in a non-governmental organization called Justice and Care that works towards rescuing and rehabilitating girls and children who are trafficked for commercial sex trade or labor.

I've always been intrigued by this society I have been placed in. I am not much of a writer, but I will try my best to get you as fascinated by the world around me as I am. I hope that what I write will get you thinking of and questioning the concepts, opinion and philosophy around us.

I've learned to live with a mixture of contradictions every day as a twenty-something in our city and a student at a college which supports Secularism and Liberalism. I also function as a part of a Christian society, which is a minority here in India. Youth around me are inspired and attracted to the West just as much as the westerners are drawn to the oriental East.



**MITTHIJS MEIJER - Amsterdam, Netherlands**

**The Netherlands is a small country** in Europe with 16.5 million inhabitants. My country consists of 30% Catholics and 12% Protestants. We have no hills or mountains, and the capital city is Amsterdam (the city where I live at the moment)! What brings me here to Amsterdam? A lot of people come here only for coffee shops or the red-light district (in other words, marijuana and prostitution). Both are still legal in the Netherlands, but why, why are people doing this?

Let's go back to my roots. I grew up in a big city of 25,000 inhabitants in the south part of the Netherlands, a 30-minute bike ride from the border of Belgium. As a kid, I always went to church because my parents are Christian, but the older I got, I also wanted to go out with my friends to different pubs and clubs. At that moment, I didn't like to go to church, but I still lived with my parents and so they pushed me to go to church with them every Sunday. On one Saturday night I was a victim of street violence. I was a little bit scared and decided not to go out anymore with my friends. Still, I was looking for an escape from church with my parents. I started looking for a weekend job, and I was hired in a hospital in logistics only for Sundays.

After three years of work, I felt some emptiness. I knew that Jesus could give me new life because I saw it with some friends. So one day, one of my friends came to me and invited me for a sailing holiday. It was organized by a Christian student group. I didn't know anybody when I arrived. During this time, I made contact with a lot of different faces. I really enjoyed that week of sailing, having conversations, and searching for God.

Now, I was in my last year of studying Electronics, and I decided to move to another city away from my parents, but connected with this student group. This changed my whole life because I attended Bible studies and the Alpha course (where I learned more about Jesus and how to have a relationship with him). I finished my Bachelors degree and tried for a Masters degree, but God told me not to do that during a Christian conference. He gave me the possibility to travel around the world for a year! I had those plans already many years, but I never made it never happen. Until that conference, I was asked to write some prayer points down for myself and pray about that during

that conference. I was a bit laconic about it because I wondered how God could answer a prayer like, "Shall I quit my study and travel around the world?" But I started praying about it. On one rainy day, the sky broke open on the end of the afternoon during a boring lecture, I went up a hill and started praying about my question. When I opened my eyes, I looked to the beautiful sunset and saw seven planes crossing each other in the blue sky. A few seconds later, they were all spread around the sky again. This was one of my answers from God.

A few months before I left, I did confession about my faith in Jesus Christ in front of the church. Now I could say that I really love Jesus and know that he loves me. I'm so thankful that God can forgive my sins because of His son, Jesus Christ.

In the Netherlands, a lot of young people like to travel after they finish their studies. Now it was time for me to discover the world! I packed my backpack, booked some plane tickets, and said goodbye to the Netherlands. When people asked me if I was traveling alone, most of the time I answered that God was traveling with me. This was an amazing year; I learned to understand God more and more and saw how beautiful his ways are. I saw a lot of coincidences not as coincidences anymore but as a wink from God. If you have the possibility to travel, pray about it! I learned a lot and experienced a lot. Many people I met encouraged me in my faith and I encouraged some people with my visit. It was an eye-opener to see how Christian brothers are living in other countries with different circumstances.

After this year, I wanted to work and make some money. One of my friends sent me an e-mail from an Christian organization (called Shelter) which worked with backpackers in Amsterdam. I knew I'd like it because I was a backpacker myself and I also loved Jesus. Because it was not a paid job, and on a voluntary basis, I decided not to apply for it.

Finally, I found a well-paid job. In the beginning, I didn't like it much because now my life was so structured. After a year, I heard that they couldn't lengthen my contract because of the crisis. At that moment, I started thinking again of the Shelter, and I knew that God wanted me to be there. So I applied for the full-time voluntary job. In the past, I always worried about my future, about income, about having a nice bike (for Americans, your concern is probably having a nice car). Of course, it's nice to have a well-paid job, and with the money you earn, you can buy a car. But keep in mind that God gives you the opportunity to study or to work in this company. So all the things we do, earn and learn are from God.

Of course we have our own wills, and have to make decisions, but don't forget to make these decisions with God, simply by prayer.



This brings me back where I am at the moment; I prayed a lot to see if God really wanted me to be here in Amsterdam and serve this backpack ministry. A lot of travelers from all over the world come to Amsterdam. It is a beautiful old city with gorgeous 17<sup>th</sup> century architecture. Most of them are here to visit a coffee-shop or see the red-light district. I am here to help the

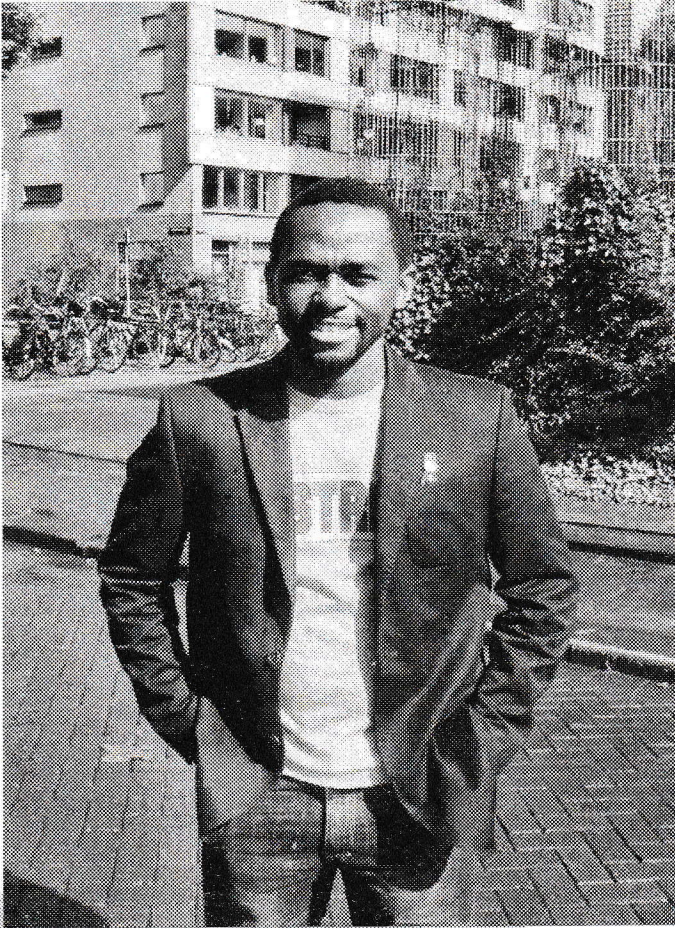
organization to run the hostel. What this means is that I have to check-in guests, do some cafe work and supervise the cleaners. Most of the cleaners aren't Christian, so we start every day with a devotion from the Bible and share testimonies with them. At the moment, I'm doing an Alpha course with some of them; one will be baptized, and the other one will do confession soon.

What a blessing that it is possible to run a Christian hostel in the middle of the dark area of Amsterdam, so we can shine God's light in the middle of these red lights.

I discovered that a lot of people who are visiting our hostel were using drugs. When I asked them why they are using it, they'll answer that it gives them a kick. Of course everybody wants to discover a kick, but we can tell them that our Lord can give you a fulfilled kick. It would be better to be Jesus-addicted than drug-addicted. What about you? What are your addictions? Think about that, but more importantly, PRAY about that!

If you want to know more about the work in the Shelter, check out the website: [www.youthhostelministry.org](http://www.youthhostelministry.org)

*continued on next page...*



**GEORGE MEBUNE EPIE - Cameroon, Africa**

My name is George Mebune Epie and I was born and grew up in the southwest province of Cameroon, Africa, in a little village called Tomble. Growing up as a little boy, my mother always took us to church every Sunday. I am thankful for the godly character my parents displayed. I was sent to a Christian school where I learned a lot about Jesus as the Son of God and how He came to die for my sins so that I can be saved. A lot was taught in school about the cross of Calvary, how victory was won and all my sickness was taken away. That really blew my mind. From those moments, I was convicted that Jesus was really the Son of God and that He loves me. My mother always gathered us (my brothers, cousins and I) every night to pray and thank God for His goodness and mercies to us even though life was tough. Those were the times my mother would rejoice and sing praises to God. My mother really loved the Lord and was devoted to the things of God, which taught me a lot to this day. She walked in the counsel of God, and whether life was good or bad, she praised God.

My dad lost everything he owned in business and sometimes it was a hustle to get food, but life was still beautiful and my trust in God was the only thing I had even through the difficulties and hardship. During that time, there was a lot of struggle in the family since I could no longer further my university education because of lack of finances. Jesus was the only thing I had left and through and in Him I gained a lot of strength and assurance of a good future, life without end through eternity. I love the Lord and my only goal in life was to be with Him. I attended many Christian gatherings and was involved in youth activities around my township that

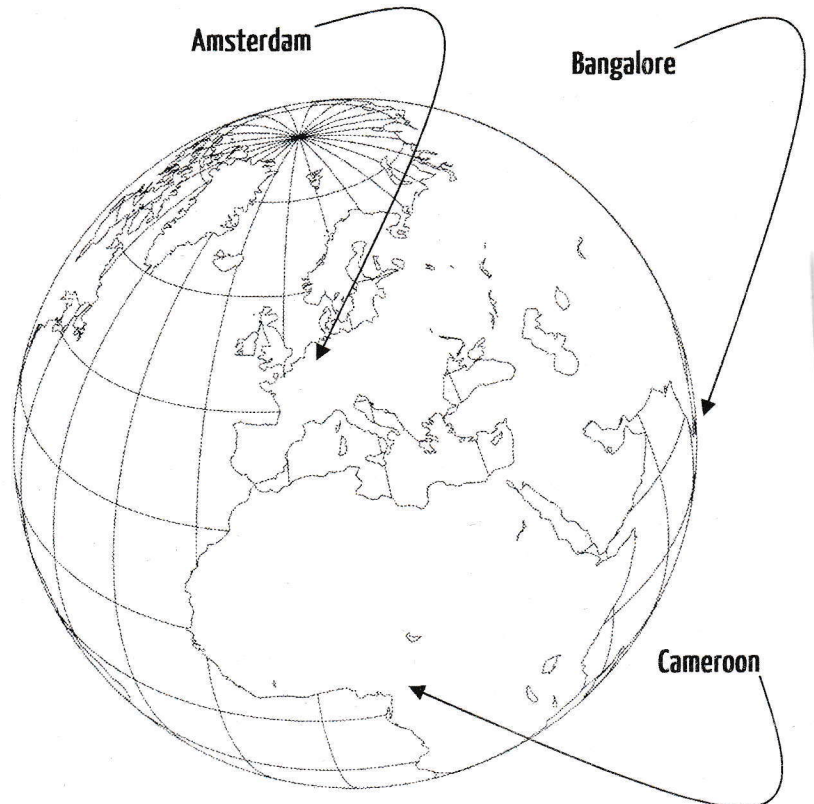
promoted the Kingdom of God. I grew up loving Jesus and knowing who He was and why God the Father sent Him into the world. I trusted in His character, but that intimate relationship with him was not there. At the age of 19, I was attending a three-day Christian convention, and that day I was touched and I decided to welcome Christ into my heart by faith and the power of the Holy Spirit fell on me.

The turning point of my life as a Christian was when I moved from Cameroon to Cape Town, South Africa, to attend a discipleship training school with Youth with a Mission international in Worcester. My faith was stretched out a lot, and I learned new things like the father heart of God, His nature and character, and His ultimate plan for mankind. My worldview about Christianity changed, and God really touched my heart a lot. From then on, my life as a Christian has changed forever and my walk with God is something I consider of greater priority than anything. My life is different; the way I view other people, God and myself is different. My ultimate goal in life is not to focus on the things that are seen, but on the things that are unseen, for the things seen are temporary, but the things unseen are eternal. Life with our Lord Jesus is the best thing ever and gradually I have begun to see the plans God has for my life.

Currently, I am a missionary serving with Youth with a Mission in Amsterdam. My ministry is to spread the Gospel of Jesus and His love for the lost like a virus across the nations of the world. I do this by training young people from different nationalities for their God-given destiny and sending them into the missions field to tell and show people the love of God that so passes all human knowledge.

Jesus is my treasure. Our security should be on Jesus and not on the things we see such as our cars, houses, or even our ministries. All these things will fade away one day and only Jesus stands forever. Seek the Lord while He is near.

Christianity in my home country is something that people believe with all their hearts. Lots of African people have been through so much pain and hardship, loss of hope, and dictators all over, but they have one thing they hold onto: Jesus. I believe that Christianity in my home country is something

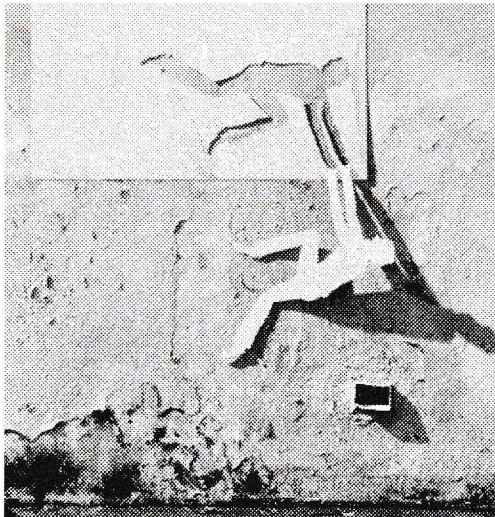


# SUICIDE: THE FACTS, THE HOPE, & THE HELP

## THE FACTS

Located at the base of Mount Fuji is the intriguing Aokigahara Forest. This woodland formed over dried lava after Mount Fuji erupted in 864 A.D. As a result, the forest floor is covered with tangled tree roots protruding from its jagged ground. Geologist Azusa Hayano had been studying the volcanic activity at Mount Fuji for the past 30 years, but recently his focus has changed. He now searches the rough terrain to find people who have come to the forest with the intention of taking their own lives. The name of this locale has changed as well; now it's known as Suicide Forest. Since the 1950s, there have been around 500 suicides in these woods<sup>1</sup>, and a record high of 78 souls took their lives there in 2002<sup>2</sup>.

You may be shocked to hear that many people wander into this forest to commit suicide, but even more shocking is the fact that, worldwide, one person takes their life every 40 seconds. At this rate, it is predicted that by 2020, one suicide will occur every 20 seconds.<sup>3</sup> Suicide isn't exclusive to the Aokigahara forest. It is wreaking havoc on the lives of hundreds of thousands all over the world.



## THE HOPE

Desperation, depression, and despair are real, but life doesn't have to end there. Hope is also real and is readily available. This hope is more than a mere wish; it is a confident expectation. God creates each person with a mind, body, and soul. Like an artist creating a masterpiece or a poet writing a poem, He sculpts our personality and defines the color of our eyes. He creates each individual for a purpose and He desires to lead us to what it is. God gives us a hope that no one else can offer, and He desires every person to turn to

Him. The Bible states that God is "...not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9<sup>7</sup>). He offers the only true way of escape, but we must see the truth of this world and the truth about ourselves before we can receive His hope.

We live in world full of pain, tears, deception, and death. On top of all that, within our heart lies our most dangerous foe. God created humans to be in a perfect relationship with Him. The destructive result of sin was the breaking of that relationship and alienation between God and people. Our problems are not rooted in our life circumstances; they are rooted within ourselves and that broken relationship with God. Jeremiah 17:9<sup>7</sup> reads, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" No one needs to be persuaded to feel depression, hatred, loneliness, shame, or worthlessness; these come from within our own heart. We can deceive and distract our own minds from reality to make us feel better for the moment. When that distraction fades, we quickly look for something else to fool us into thinking we are okay. Eventually, we come to a crossroads where we must decide if we will continue fooling ourselves into thinking we are good, or accept the reality that we are not.

When we give up and can't do it anymore—can't live with the guilt inside, can't get out of bed, can't fool our hearts for one more day, can't fake a smile one more time—is when Jesus says, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle, and you will find rest for your souls." (Matt 11:28-29<sup>8</sup>) Jesus frees us from the trap we have set for ourselves. God knows we are not good, yet He loves us anyway. Now we can ask God to transform our thoughts into His thoughts and our dreams into His dreams. He allows us to trade our pain for His comfort and our old, wasted life for the life He intended us to live. No longer do we need to be consumed with our weaknesses and failures or how much the world fails us; God is bigger than the world.

Jesus said in John 16:33<sup>7</sup>, "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

## THE HELP

No one is an island; therefore, help from other people who have struggled with similar issues can bring healing. If you are looking for help close to home, stop by New Creations



every Thursday night at 7:00 pm. New Creations is an addictions recovery program that meets in the Blind Munchies Coffeehouse located at 621 Wilson Avenue (a block away from Burger King) and can be reached at 715-235-4977.

Online resources are also available to those who need help. To Write Love on Her Arms ([www.twloha.com](http://www.twloha.com) or call 1-800-SUICIDE) was established in honor of a girl who used to cut herself. The name comes from the idea that God wrote love on her arms to cover her scars. This website is a resource for those who are battling with depression, addiction, self injury, and suicide. A section of their vision reads: "You were created to love and be loved. You were meant to live life in a relationship with other people, to know and be known. You need to know that your life matters." Another

## Statistics

### Wisconsin Statistics<sup>6</sup>

- An average of 629 Wisconsin residents die as a result of suicide each year, which is equivalent to 1.7 suicides every day.
- An average of 5,228 hospitalized suicide attempts are recorded each year, which is equivalent to 14.3 suicides attempts every day.

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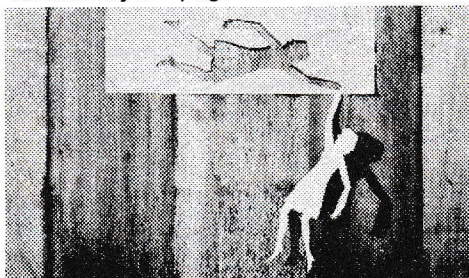


On a regular trip over to a local fast food joint, I won't say the name because I still want to eat there, I noticed a cup of some kind of something on a poster. Anyway I got to thinkin, what in the wurl, it say's coffee on the sign but looks kinda like a cup of coffee got some makeup on and then gave itself a swirly. Speaking of swirly's I remember the time I gave cousin Kenny one but he come out lookin halfway decent. Actually looked just like Johnny Knoxville. But anyway I figured I'd try one of these things but I just had a few things to inquire about. The lady who took my order was kinda funny. Turns out she don't want to be called waitress anymore. She wanted to be referred to as, "Barista". The drink read "Latte" on the sign which im still not sure if it's pronounced "late", or "lay-tay" or "la tay". The ba-rista insisted it was pronounced the third way but I really do

almost got me in the trap, then I took a step back and kept my distance before I would be caught up on the fruity coffee lingo train. I did some thinking and thought, well you know it don't always hurt to try something new. So I placed my order tryin to say all the words right. When the cup got to my hands I took a sip and that's when to whole world seemed to sing right to me. I was happier then a dog with a parking lot full of tires. After the cup was gone and I was floating on the clouds, I felt a pillow come across my face and woke me right up. My wife said "wake up your havin one of them fruity nightmares again." I thanked her for the wake up slap and also for takin me out of a land of fancy coffee, funky hair and skinny jeans. Don't know what that was about but got my Foldgers brewin and now back to bed. Well that's enough for now, gotta get back to sleep, kinda want to find out what a "Italian Soda" is.

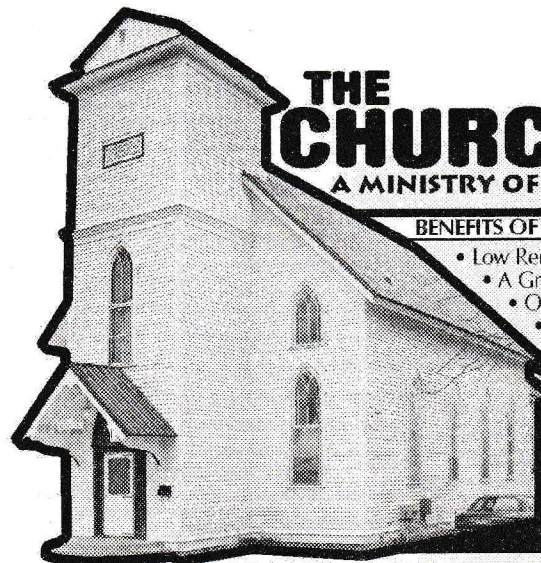
not trust her. Then ou t of my curiosity, because im also a professional and like to know things, I asked the young lady, I said "eh, young lady, what is in that funny looking thing on that poster." She said, and I quote. "Thee elegant hot latte is a smooth drink that is brewed to taste with the finest espresso beans in all of the world, blended with the delightful flavor of cara-mel and topped with the freshest whip cream from the cleanest dairy." I was dumbfounded, I stood in total shock. I almost fell for it, she

continued from page 15 ...



place to visit is the Christian Suicide Prevention website, [www.christiansuicideprevention.com](http://www.christiansuicideprevention.com) or call them at 773-690-9048.

If you need help, know that people are there for you. Start with a website, a phone call, or reach out to a friend; start somewhere. Jesus offers freedom from grief, guilt, loneliness, confusion, and chaos to any asking soul. He *personally* forgives. He also gives real peace, rest, joy, love, and a relationship with Him that cannot be broken. Jesus waits so patiently for us to realize that He is the answer. At the very moment we accept His payment for us and give Him what little life we have left, that is when we begin to *truly* live.



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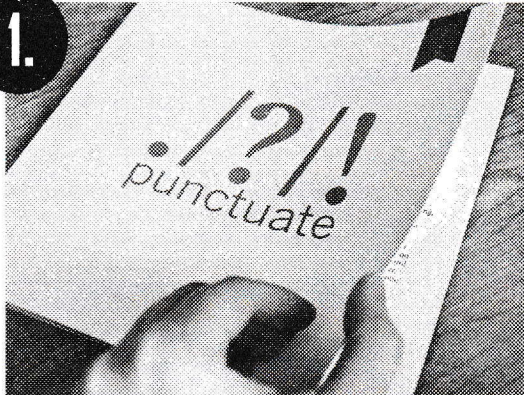
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**1.** *Prometheus*, UW-Stout's creative arts journal, is publishing its annual journal in April featuring student work that has been

juried by faculty in the English and Art & Design departments. The deadlines for submissions in the visual arts are coming up February 10 -11. Work submitted can fall into any of four categories, including 2-D, 3-D, photography, and video/installation.

Pieces should be dropped off in the Furlong Gallery on those dates with the entry form available at the Furlong Gallery or at <http://prometheus.clearlydesign.com>.

Submissions are open for any undergraduate student currently enrolled at UW-Stout. Prizes are \$100/1st place, \$50/2nd place and are awarded per category.

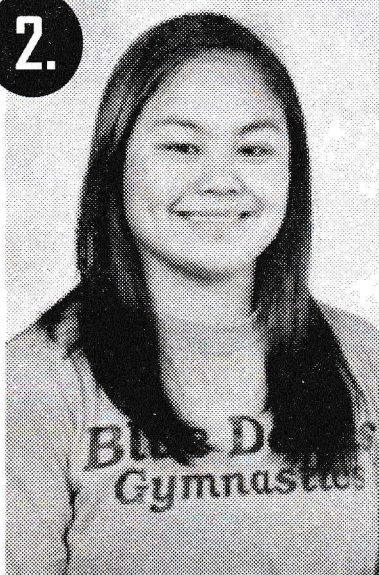
Its primary purpose is to provide a showcase for talented writers and artists in the undergraduate student community. It's also an opportunity for the whole campus to participate in the creation or enjoyment of the arts.

The *Prometheus* team also hosts an awards reception in partnership with the Furlong Gallery during Family Weekend on campus every year. At this time, students with writing selected for the journal are invited to read their work. (The deadline for literature submissions has unfortunately already passed.) Students with artwork in the journal have a gallery show in the Furlong that runs through the beginning of May.

The journal is designed by members of *Prometheus* and then printed by students in the Graphic Communications Management Practicum course. Members of *Prometheus* have an excellent opportunity to gain experience with editing, marketing, and publishing. Leadership and project management skills are also developed.

If you have any questions or you are interested in submitting or joining *Prometheus*, please email [prometheus@uwstout.edu](mailto:prometheus@uwstout.edu)

Copies will be available at the Furlong Gallery, Harvey Hall, dorms, and a few businesses downtown.



**2.**

Naomi DeLara was named the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC) gymnastics specialist of the week this January for the sixth time in her college career at UW-Stout. She is also a two-time national champion. A senior at Stout, DeLara hails all the way from Kahului, Maui, which was the result of a series of events that began from the time she was 3 years old, the youngest age Maui allowed a child to enter gymnastics.

"I really looked up to my sister as a gymnast and wanted to be just like her," DeLara said. "My older sister was in gymnastics already, and being a 'gym brat,' my parents saw no harm in putting me in the same sport." During her sophomore and junior year of high school, one of the bones in her wrist was collapsing due to overuse from gymnastics, so she had to undergo surgery. Her doctor informed her that she would never be able to do gymnastics again. "I couldn't even walk into a gym without being so frustrated and mad at myself for not being able to flip or do any of it," DeLara said. Forced to put gymnastics on the back burner, she swam on the high school team her senior year. Had it not been for her coach, she most likely would have wound up at a school in Colorado because of a close friend who was going to school near there, as well as family in the area. Coach Becky had been one of her coaches in Maui, but had moved back to Wisconsin to take up a coaching position at UW-Stout. "If it was something that was meant to happen, she'd get in touch with me. If not then well, that door wasn't going to open up again no matter how long I stared at it," DeLara said. Fortunately, Coach Becky contacted her mother about the gymnastics program and the school. Weighing out her pros and cons on a sheet of computer paper she still has, she discovered that a chance to join a collegiate gymnastics team with a coach who knew her past as well as all her strengths and weaknesses as an athlete pretty much trumped every other option.

"Honestly, I love every minute of college gymnastics. Some days I'll forget and be moody and crabby and just downright frustrated with everything, but when it really comes down to it all, I love the sport and I love my teammates and coaches. I try to remember to thank my coach every day or apologize when I've had a bad attitude because if it weren't for her I wouldn't be here; I wouldn't have had this opportunity." So says an athlete truly humbled in the wake of all her accomplishments and the journey she underwent to get there.

# Student Poll: What is the difference between being alive and truly living?

We were curious about what Stout students see as the difference between being alive and truly living. Some answers were surprisingly similar, and others brought an interesting perspective to the question.

Alyssa



"Personally, being alive is going through the everyday experiences: you wake up, you get dressed, you eat... you know, the steps to your day. Whereas, truly living is living in the moment; you could do something fun or help someone out that day. Being alive is doing what you need to do to survive, such as go to class, do homework, and then sleep, but truly living is saying something

like, 'I'm going to go on a hike today because I really *enjoy* it.'"

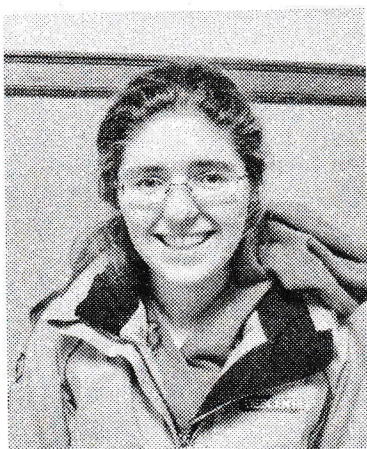
April



"Being alive means you can breathe and see, you're human, whereas truly living, you have a purpose; you're not just living because, and you know what you want. It's definitely different from just being alive. Living is knowing where you came from and what is going to happen; not necessarily *exactly* what is going to happen, but you know where you are going and have a purpose in life."

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Cara



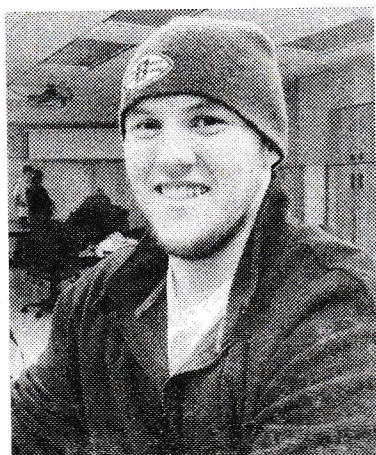
"Being alive is living every day, but truly living is actually doing what you want and are interested in. You're always alive until you die, so doing what you want is being truly alive; living up to what you want to do, and not getting in trouble."

Kent



"I feel that being alive is just living the experience and going through the motions of what life has to offer on a day-to-day basis. I think truly living is experiencing things that help you out in life and make you happy, actually enjoying your life."

Jordan



"Being alive is doing stuff just to get by every day, and truly living is going out and doing the things you put your mind to and not leaving any regrets behind."

Aram



"Being alive is being able to eat, breathe, talk, and move. Truly living, from a Christian point of view, is giving yourself up and being born-again."

Steffanie



“Truly living is doing something you really like to do, and not just because you have to do it. It is doing something you really enjoy and having new experiences instead of just going through the motions.”

So often we think that truly living is doing the things we love personally or focusing solely on ourselves. The Bible says that our heart needs to be set on living for others and pleasing God by fulfilling the calling He has placed in our lives. “He died for everyone so that those who receive His new life will no longer live to please themselves. Instead, they will live to please Christ, who died and was raised for them” (2 Corinthians 5:15). Jesus died so that we may have new life in Him and be enabled by the Holy Spirit to carry out the plan God has created for each one of us individually.

Take a minute to ask *yourself* this question. Are you getting through life simply by existing, or are you truly living life the way God intended it to be?

# WHY IS MY LIFE SO EMPTY?

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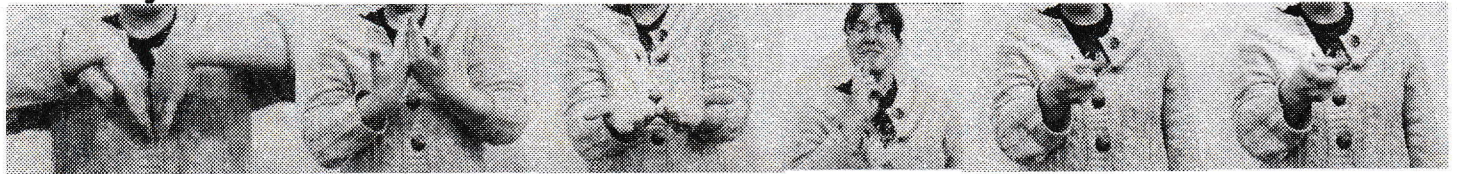
[www.streetlevelministry.com](http://www.streetlevelministry.com)

# Signing 101: Just like Spanish, everyone knows a few words from American Sign Language. Here's a guide to bring it all into focus:

See you later.



20 How are you?



Say what?



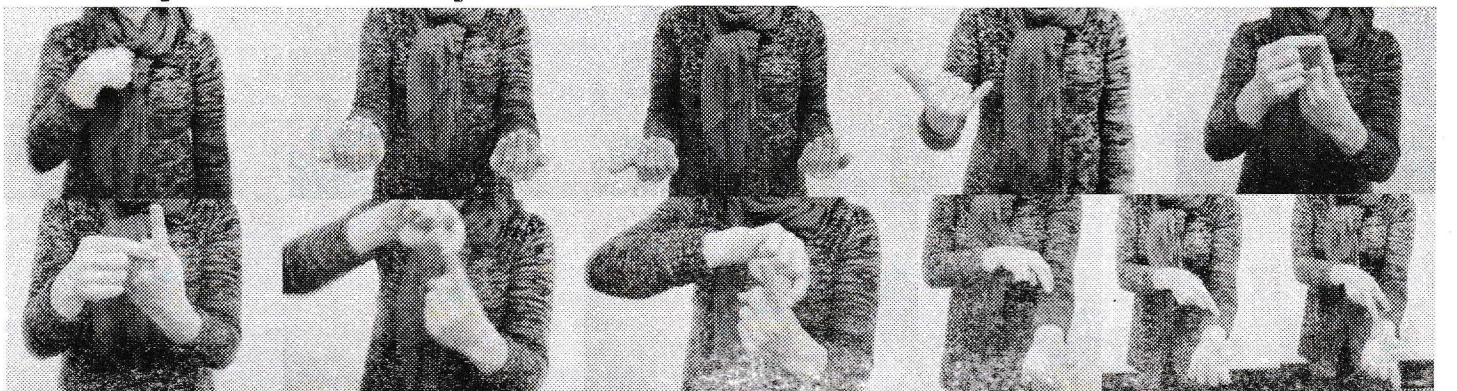
More please.



Thank you.



I want a yellow banana, hurry!



# Signing 201

Let's build a robot snowman.



I'm not a procrastinator, I'm challenging myself.



NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_



**Graphics Sources:**

Winter Car Care 101  
[redirect.nelincs.gov.uk](http://redirect.nelincs.gov.uk)  
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**Snowman Exposed**

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**Suicide Facts and Hope**

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<sup>1</sup>The Suicide Forest:  
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<sup>2</sup>The Japan Times Online:

<http://search.japantimes.co.jp/member/member.html?nn20030207b1.htm>

<sup>3</sup>To Write Love On Her Arms:

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

<sup>4</sup>American Foundation for Suicide Prevention:

<http://www.afsp.org/>

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[www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention)

<sup>6</sup>Suicide Prevention Resource Center:

[www.sprc.org](http://www.sprc.org)

[http://www.sprc.org/stateinformation/PDF/statedatasheets/wi\\_datasheet.pdf](http://www.sprc.org/stateinformation/PDF/statedatasheets/wi_datasheet.pdf)

<sup>7</sup>NKJV- New King James Version Bible

<sup>8</sup>NLT- New Living Translation Bible

# Letter to the Editor: Free To Believe in One Truth?

## Letter:

Dear "Street Level Ministries,"

I was unfortunate enough to pick up your 'magazine' today and I was deeply offended by the content of the main article, "What is Truth?" on page 12 of your publication.

In it you say: "Even if you reject god completely, there is still the nagging feeling that says there has to be something more that makes sense of this life and brings purpose to it. Fulfillment can never come from living life apart from god and his revealed truth. Denying or ignoring the existence of truth will leave you equally empty."

22 The absolute hubris of such a statement made me re-read it over and over. I'm positive that you didn't intent this article to be offensive, considering the normal audience would be other Christians, but you must realize that other people will regard your magazine as propaganda.

The first point I would like to make is about your credibility. I currently work for a newspaper, and one of the parts of writing for publication is that you have to be credible. Meaning you have to prove that you are an educated person on all sorts of disciplines and you are utilizing different sources to provide insight. By annotating this article with two sources (one of which is the bible) you come-off as a ludicrous source of information. Why should I believe what you have written? The article doesn't even list an author. This is why it is propaganda; articles published without a shred of actual evidence that propels a person in the direction of a particular belief.

The second point I'm going to make is about the use of the word 'truth.' As you have probably gathered by this point, I have never believed in a monotheistic deity and will never accept the existence of one, unless logical reasoning convinces me of doing so or evidence proves me wrong. This is why I can accept that miniscule atoms not visible by the human eye are around me and verily exist, while imaginary friends do not.

You said, "By studying god's word (the bible) and then comparing it to opposing theories, you can find that the truth is right in front of your face." In this statement, you obviously mean that the truth is in the bible, and that is the only real, certain, 100% truth. But I don't see how your truth is above any other religions truth, because it is based on faith, and on a holy book. This is a pivotal point to understand. Your truth is subjective by religion, making it inherently false for the majority who do not adhere to your religion. This is why your additional arguments are laughable.

Hitler was straightforward with his reasoning to kill Jews? Why? Because Christianity teaches that the Jews killed Jesus, and this gave Hitler a target that everyone else already didn't like.

(And no, Hitler was not an atheist. He was a Catholic and still is, seeing as how the Catholic church never excommunicated him for his crimes against humanity.) And that crap about slow-motion proof and authority completely without bias? Explain to me how every minuscule piece of your truth is unbiased, while you supersede that your god is the one and only god?

Therefore, to me, your 'truth' is null and void. By saying that it isn't, and stating that "the truth is like a text message that you read over and over again from the same person," you are being the truly ignorant one.

You say that different religious thinking is like oil and water, and that scientific truth is really only perception. Perhaps you also mean that while "mad" scientists can discover insulin, analyze the chemicals that make up the sun, and create nuclear weapons, they can be SO wrong about everything that has to do with Evolution, and everything that is written in the Bible or Quran. How then, can you with not a shred of evidence (besides the Bible) say that the word of YOUR religion is the Truth with a capitol T? Again, absolute blind ignorance. Oh, I meant faith.

I agree with your statement that, "believe it or not, truth both exists and is knowable." Truth is knowable. It's knowable in the way we know that the Earth revolves around the sun. It's knowable in the way we can decode our human genome and isolate particular strains of proteins that point to evidence of evolution (And just another

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**"How then, can you with not a shred of evidence (besides the Bible) say that the word of YOUR religion is the Truth with a capitol T? Again, absolute blind ignorance. Oh, I meant faith."**

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note on this: you seriously do not understand what the word 'theory' means in scientific discourse. By your opinion, the 'theory' of gravity is just as debatable as the 'theory' of evolution.) And FYI, nobody knows what's going to happen after we die. Not you, not me. So your guess is as good as mine, and if you pretend otherwise....

Maybe it's because most of us are rude and condescending that you don't want to listen to agnostic/atheist/nonbelievers when they talk. But in my meager heathen uninformed defense; it's hard not to be condescending when every time you debate theories with a religious person, they listen for a moment before throwing out allegorical scripture that they call evidence... so this is my third and final point.

I don't believe that your holy book was written by an omnipotent and omniscient creator, but by man. You may think that I'm picking on Christianity right now, but no, I believe that man created all religions in our entire recordable

history of civilization. By throwing out a couple versus in the Bible, you are not going to convince an educated freethinker that your book is the true, pure, unalterable word of YOUR god (which happens to be the only god kthxbai).

And therefore you will never convince them that you have the "TRUTH." Not that you would even want to convince them, but your god tells you to spread the good news...

So for reference, you are not going to convince anyone (besides children or uneducated peoples) that (name a deity) wrote (name a holy book) because (name a deity) said in (name a holy book) that he did so. That's crap. Complete and utter crap.

This is the exact reason why you throwing out the word 'truth' offends me so deeply. I love truth. It's very similar to the idea of freedom. Very idealistic, very proud. If I could, I would want to worship freedom! Do you find that silly? Well don't. Because, you know, you mustn't ridicule or doubt someone's deeply held beliefs... even if it's a belief in nothing!

Does this shock you? You must be thinking: This women must have never heard the story of Jesus and what he's done for us, how he has saved all us undeserving sinners from eternal torture! This poor soul must be in absolute despair over the lack of meaning in her life! And she will never know the truth.... because the Bible is the only truth.

However, there are plenty of people who believe in deities outside of yours, or none at all, and find just as much fulfillment in their lives as you. Are you going to look down on their fulfillment because it doesn't match up with what your holy book says is true? Are you going to shake your head and say, "I will pray for them," which makes you look like such a great person? Well if I could, I would pray for you. Only I don't waste my time praying, because I would much rather actually go and achieve something for myself, by myself, giving myself full 100% credit.

One last slightly condescending question: where are nonbelievers in your personal brand of heathen truth? Am I below homosexuals in not accepting you're true-truth? Which layer of a hell am I consciously going to suffer in after my death for not accepting your true-truth? I hope its with all the Native Americans, because I think their religion is so much nicer than yours and if we are going to be disbelievers in hell forever, you should tell your god I want to be put with them.

Pray for me, okay?

## Street Level's Response:

The dictionary defines the word "propaganda" as "any systematic, widespread dissemination or promotion of particular ideas, doctrines, practices, etc. to further

one's own cause." So, within that definition, that is exactly what our publication is, as is the publication that you work for and any press that gives opinion and/or biased editorial. The negative connotation of that word came only later by modern culture.

Your letter essentially does what many organizations do today: demand tolerance and acceptance in every area and facet of society except religion. We are not granted our opinions and viewpoint without overt criticism. In other words, we are supposed to let you believe and speak your view points (and we do), but are we not gracefully allowed the same courtesy? Your assumption that our publication is not backed by "credible" people is insulting and offensive, not to mention extremely juvenile and unprofessional. Since we advertise in "your" publication, is it the practice of your writers to criticize its paying advertisers, especially without the facts?

You mentioned that "one of the parts of writing is that you have to be credible", to which you went on to describe a credible writer as someone who is "educated in all sorts of disciplines and uses different sources to provide insight." Really? Since when? Do you READ what's out there? Today, anyone with computer access is a blogger/expert now. The last time I checked, freedom of speech has yet to be stripped from the constitution. I remind you that this article was published in a college 'zine, not in some scholarly journal. Referring to our main source, may I say that the Bible is indeed a credible source, given that it has withstood hundreds of years of criticism and speculation? (See: [www.answersingenesis.org/get-answers#/topic/bible](http://www.answersingenesis.org/get-answers#/topic/bible)<<http://www.answersingenesis.org/get-answers#/topic/bible>>) It's true that we don't list authors for our articles, but it is apparent that you do not understand our publication at all. Our 'zine is a group effort, and our writers make every attempt to not write for their own glory, but for God.

You have stated that you do not believe in "one God." No problem. You are free to do that. But again, you are approaching our beliefs with the preconceived stance that we are basing our faith on what you deem as "imaginary friends", void of any science at all. That is presumptuous, insulting, and flat-out wrong. If you had taken the time to explore the science behind biblical creation and the Intelligent Design movement, you would know that. Your argument in this case would be against some of the greatest scientific minds in the world. Is it a debate? Certainly. But to assume our position is based on a childish and uneducated faith just expresses your lack of knowledge on the issue.

We DO know both sides of the argument; we make it our business to do so! Can you say the same? To say the Bible is a "ludicrous source of information," again is insulting beyond belief and naive. It further substantiates that kicking Christians around is not only a popular practice but most acceptable in a society that brags

about its abundant "tolerance." Would you speak as bluntly about the Quran? You criticize our "faith" but then say "I don't see how your truth... (etc.)", insinuating your position is somehow immediately and ultimately of more value than ours. Why? By saying this, are you not therein practicing the very thing you are criticizing us for, claiming your view of the world as more valid than ours? Can you empirically prove there is no God? Is this not a clear case of the "pot calling the kettle black?"

You have taken the position that truth is subjective. But isn't truth, by its very innate nature, static in any situation? Isn't that what makes truth truth? I take the position that "my religion", biblical Christianity, is truth. If it is, then it is truth for you and even all those who "do not adhere to my religion." The truth is, if you jump off a 30 story building without a parachute, you're dead. That's the truth. I believe it, but my belief doesn't affect the outcome one way or the other. But if I believed that such would kill you and I did nothing to warn you, would I not be without compassion and ultimately at least partially guilty for your death when you leaped off the building, believing you could fly? And if you COULD fly, and you did NOT die, how has my warning hurt you except to express that I care about your well-being? Why then would you be offended?

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**"The truth is, if you jump off a 30 story building without a parachute, you're dead. That's the truth. I believe it, but my belief doesn't affect the outcome one way or the other."**

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You have said our arguments are "laughable" and "complete and utter crap." How unprofessional coming from someone who claims journalistic credibility. Why do you find us such a threat to you?

Christianity does NOT teach, "Jews killed Jesus." Again, you only show your ignorance of the Christian beliefs (if not history). GOD HIMSELF sent His Son to die. ("This is real love. It is not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins." 1 John 4:10) No Jew nailed Jesus to the Cross, but rather the occupying nation of Rome. According to solid Bible theology, the sins of mankind killed Jesus. Mine, yours... everyone's.

Speaking of the Jews, you said "...everyone else already didn't like (the Jews)..." That's incredibly presumptuous, historically inaccurate, and borderline anti-Semitic. You repeatedly criticize us for our opinion, yet again and again throughout your letter you say, "I don't believe..." repeatedly expressing YOUR opinion! Somehow it seems that YOUR opinion is supposed to be infinitely more valuable than ours. You keep saying you have all the facts to dispute our positions, but you give none of them. Instead you resort to childish name-

calling and say we have "blind ignorance" all the while feigning that you are a "professional journalist". Really?

You claim to be a "freethinker." That's great. Is it alright if we get that same freedom? Can I explore the world, science and religion freely without a member of the "freethinkers" criticizing me for thinking as a free person? Or are there limits to how free I can think?

You have called my beliefs "crap." Hmmm, that's fine, professional and factual journalism! Do you honestly believe that "we aren't going to convince anyone that Jehovah God wrote the Bible because He said in it that He did so?" (your words) You really need to get out more. Billions of people believe just that (uneducated AND highly educated), and they didn't check their brain at the door while looking into the issue! As the line in the Shakespeare play goes, "The lady doth protest too much me thinks..."

Learn to realize that you and your beliefs are not the only ones out there. If you want to try to convince me yours are accurate, you have the freedom in America to do so. Maybe you could print a 'zine too? But sending emails to rant, rave and name-call only convinces me that all of this has really hit a nerve with you. And thus my belief is strengthened. So your letter simply emboldens the believer in Christ!

Jesus said about Himself that He is the "rock of offense" and that "anyone who believes in Him would not be brought to shame." (Romans 9:33) So, if our 'zine raises your blood pressure so much, don't read it. Or, if you want to read it, challenge us with real facts, yes, even science, then "bring it on." If you just want to be mean and insulting towards people who think different than you, maybe you are in the wrong profession. I guess you could always go into blogging...

You state that you are fond of freedom—so are we. John 8:36 says, "Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed." Can we be free to believe what we want? I won't chase you down to criticize your sports writing, and if I disagree with your perspective, I try to remember that I live in America where we both get to do that. It's too bad you resorted to belligerent name-calling to voice your opinion. That's how wars get started, I guess.

Would I find your worship of freedom "silly"? Perhaps. But disagreement and "ridicule", as you put it, are two different things. You are free to "go and achieve something for yourself, by yourself, giving yourself full 100% credit." (your words) Can we go and achieve something for others, with others, and give full 100% credit to our God?

Is that ok with you?

And yes, I will indeed pray for you.

Pastor Tim Dodson  
Jesus Fellowship of Believers Church  
Street Level Ministries and Word on the Street

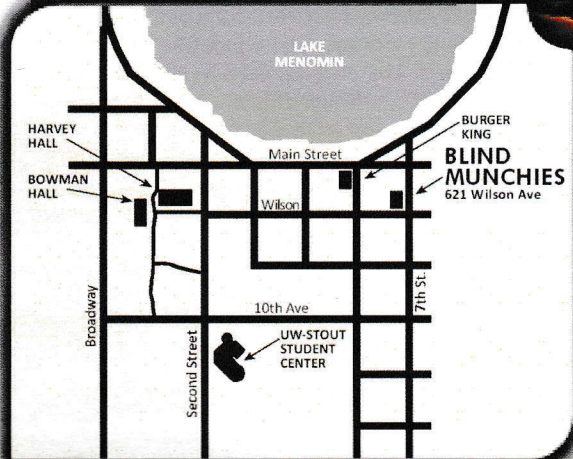
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