



THE GRAIL

VOLUME V

APRIL 4, 2016

ISSUE IV

INSIDE

DREAM OF THE '90S

RENN FAYRE PART III

Find out what the cover's about and indulge in some Portland-style nostalgia; Renn Fayre replete with 90's signatures (blah blah blah) just to name a few.

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UNCOMMON RAMAN

MAJOR LASERS

Not just for Trekkies anymore! Lasers (apparently) have more uses than just pointing them at planes before being arrested by the police.

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FLASH FICTION

MOIETY

Transport yourself to a magical land where catalysts are plentiful and the O-Chem lab waste bucket is never full.

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FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Reader,

In this exclusive Monday edition of The Grail, we kick it off with the continuation of Renn Fayre's illustrious history (3). Next Guanani gives us an interview with Reed's very own Evan Peairs '16—talking lasers, personalized engravings, and extreme bike jousting (1). From there we take a look at the life of an alchemist elf in the fiction piece, *Moiety* (5). Alexa introduces us to the cutest cavies on the block in her interviews with Oatmeal and

Sparky (9). DeSastre takes a look product of one Reddie's personal style crossed with influences from the Dark Matter music duo (7). And in case you're having trouble figuring out which concert to go to this weekend, Cultural Column (10) gives you a four step guide that's sure to help you narrow down your choices.

Join us on Mondays in PAB 105 at 9 p.m.

Love,
Jordan, Lauren, and Vikram

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Front cover photograph of CHV NK tower courtesy of Reed College Archives and Special Collections.



Signs warn of entering lab with lasers on.

Guananí Gómez

Major Laser

By GUANANÍ GÓMEZ

“You can do a lot of cool shit with lasers,” said Evan Peairs ’16, a physics senior who is using a laser in his thesis. “Lots of science.”

In addition to being prevalent in Science Fiction, lasers have an astounding variety of real world practical and scientific applications. From laser pointers to CD readers, cataract surgery and measuring the distance between atoms in molecules, laser technology is used in all kinds of fields, including Reed’s physics, art, and chemistry departments. Physical chemistry professor Dan Gerrity said, “You can burn things, cut things, blow air up into plasma; all sorts of stuff. In physics they’re using lasers to cool molecules down and analyze their behavior at very low temperatures. There’s such a vast array of applications.”

But how does a laser work, any-

way? ‘Laser’ is an acronym for *light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation*. In other words, lasers are devices that take the energy stored in molecules that are excited by the laser and release it as a particular wavelength of light. The laser amplifies this light into a powerful, concentrated beam. The properties and color of the beam depend on the wavelength of light released by the molecules.

Gerrity’s enthusiasm for lasers and their various uses is contagious. Grinning in his office, he waves toward the laser lab next door, explaining how physical chemists use lasers. In Gerrity’s physical chemistry class, students use lasers to analyze chemical structures and measure incredibly tiny bond distances between atoms in different molecules. “It can get very technical — it’s even hard to explain to other chemists,” Gerrity said. “We

can vaporize things, separate specific light and wavelengths to figure out which atoms are inside. We can measure the plasma emissions from what we’ve zapped, using lasers as analytical tools.”

Lasers with extremely short pulses of light allow chemists to capture freeze-frames of molecules, not unlike taking pictures with a strobe light. Chemists use these freeze frames to investigate transition states, black boxes in chemical reactions that happen too quickly to learn about using other methods.

Inside a laser, mirrors are placed on either side of a gas chamber containing molecules whose electronic and vibrational properties store energy. The mirrors allow the released photons to bounce back and forth, triggering the release of even more light from these molecules that trav-

els on the same wavelength. One of the mirrors both reflects light and allows some to shine through, creating the laser beam.

In the past several decades, lasers have cropped up in almost every area of science and technology. Applications include clever new inventions like laser tweezers, tiny beams used to pick up and hold delicate specimens such as embryos and aerosol particles without disturbing their structure. A different kind of laser is being used to trap and cool molecules close to zero Kelvin, helping scientists working on confirming theories about how atoms behave when they're extremely cold.

When asked if there were any misconceptions about lasers that he wanted to clear up, Gerrity paused and shook his head. "Probably most of what people think about lasers in pop culture is true. They can blind you if they're strong enough, some can start fires. But there's a lot more a diversity than people think."

Peairs is working on a thesis using lasers to investigate acoustics. "My thesis is about taking pictures of instruments vibrating, and hopefully designing my own instruments too," he said. Using the physics department laser and a special imaging program, Peairs has been analyzing the vibrations of instruments such as gongs and singing bowls by taking high-speed pictures that measure the

changes in the instruments' shapes as they make sound.

Peairs isn't the only student using lasers for thesis work; chemistry senior Joohee Bang '16, one of Gerrity's advisees, is using lasers to analyze chemical structures. Lore about past laser-related theses abounds. Peairs commented, "Last year Dan Herman '15 used a laser to do slow light. He built a beam through this wall into the lab next door through a ruby crystal. It slows the light down to about running speed. Trippy stuff."

Like Gerrity, Peairs was very enthused by the many possibilities offered by laser technology. "You can make boson condensate, something colder than a solid, out of beryllium. You phase-shift a laser so the electrons headed toward it will red shift, compress and trap the beryllium. I think that was someone's thesis. It basically makes an entirely new state of matter where the atoms pass through each other."

In addition to scientific research, lasers are also useful for applied technology and manufacturing purposes. Jay Ewing '97, supervisor of the physics department's machine shop, trains students in how to use Reed's laser cutter, located in the physics sub-basement.

"Our shop laser is a continuous cutting laser, for industrial engraving. It's for making things, not so much learning about them," Ewing ex-

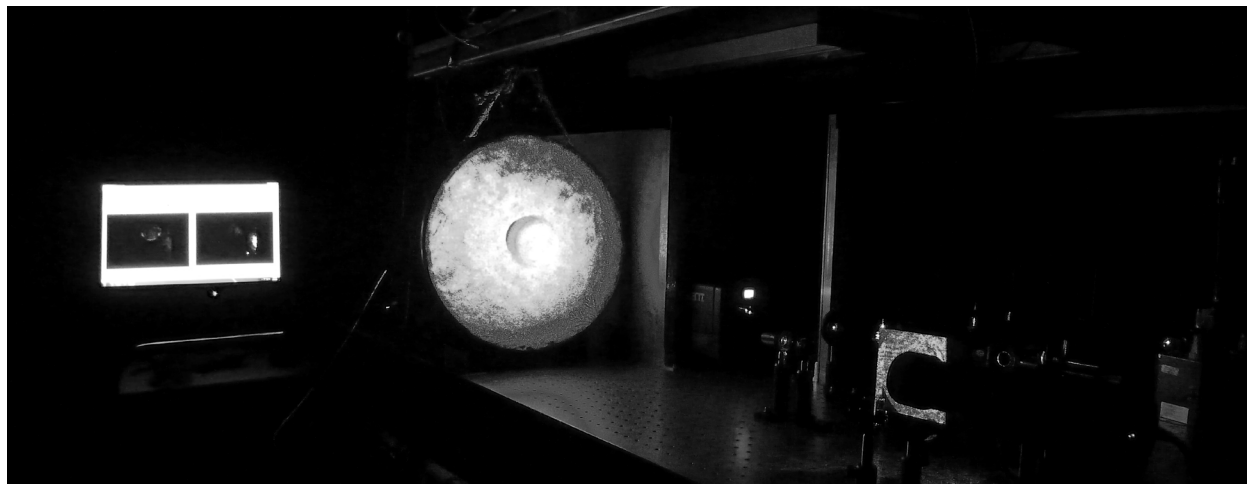
plained. He studied physics at Reed, graduating in 1997, and has been working with the laser cutter for the past three years. The shop laser is free, open to the Reed community, and requires minimal training. Ewing believes the resource is underutilized.

"People are missing out by not using the shop laser," he said. "You can make all kinds of things, and the materials here are free. You can engrave leather, wood, plastic... The only limits are two dimensions and creativity." The shop laser is funded by the Dean of the Faculty's Office, and is used by the art department, junior physics lab, and personal use among students and staff.

"There's a tension at Reed between making things and learning things," said Ewing. "It's a tricky balance."

Evan Peairs also emphasized laser technology's applications outside of scientific research.

"People can use lasers to do a lot of fun projects for themselves. You can take the lasers out of Blu-Ray players, those are powerful enough to pop balloons. Or even make your own laser-tag." Peairs pulled out a piece of scrap paper and started drawing a diagram. "I've been thinking about taking a tall bike and mounting a laser onto the handlebars with sensors and a pin to make you fall off if you get hit." He looked up from his drawing and grinned. "Yeah. Lasers are great." ❖



Guanani Gómez

THE COMPLETE HISTORY OF RENN FAYRE

PART III: 1990–2000s

By BRIAN CLICK & ALEJANDRO CHÁVEZ

“One of our concerns is that by heeding Reed’s concerns of protecting itself from liability, we may be in fact endangering the safety of its students.”

— Vanessa Cameron ’97, Torri Eubanks ’97, Julie Graves ’99 and Zoe Tsavdarides ’12 on behalf of Renn Fayre and Beer Nation, in a letter to Student Services, March 12, 1997

“Our magical weekend of joyous mayhem and drug-induced glory is only the beginning. The forces of Good and Evil are upon us [...] There is only one answer. SUPERHEROES.”

— Mistress of Costumery, *The Quest*, April 4, 2000

The Fayre came under fire in its third decade. During the 1990s, Policy and Liability first came to Reed in a big way, mostly due to increased federal scrutiny. The administration of George Bush Sr. took a deep, intrusive interest in what was going on at universities across the nation. Bush’s “drug czar,” William Bennett, publicly referred to Reed’s Student Body Handbook as an example of the “decadence and decay of American colleges.” Like all schools receiving federal funding, Reed had to pass a Drug and Alcohol Policy for the first time, and over the course of the 90s the administration even took occasional steps to enforce it.

Yet the Reed community, as always, rose to the occasion. We kept on keeping on, inventing bigger and better additions to the eternal Fayre.

The biggest danger yet reared its head in 2000. What is often referred to (incorrectly but accurately) as the “Apocalypse” of RF2K left behind unprecedented property damage, and there were rumblings of an end to the festivities. At the dawn of the new millennium, the future looked grim.

Fayre, Walk With Me

Our pop culture obsessions come and go at this school — is vaporwave “over” already? Yet even a quarter-century after it aired, Reedies still love *Twin Peaks*, and the names of the show’s spirit planes have attached

themselves permanently to the spirit planes to which we ascend every year.

The first Black Lodge, set up in Winch for RF1994 by Jemiah Jefferson ’94 and Celeste Ramsay ’94, featured the familiar black lights, lasers and fog. Yet it wasn’t quite the rave pit that today’s Black Lodge has become. Indeed, it was a bit more like the White Lodge in function. Black Lodge was, then, a place to lie and relax with fluorescent finger paint and glowing Play-Doh. Indeed, a “place of great goodness” where “sounds of innocence and joy filled the air.”

Jefferson and Ramsay’s Black Lodge was a reworking of a project that had existed since 1992 called the Sunny Delight room. Sunny Delight was a similar concept, featuring “black light, light ropes, vibro-tronic oscillations, video displays, quadrophonic color sound” and so on. The name Black Lodge, however, gave it that perfect otherworldly edge. Sure, Sunny Delight means acid, but it also means a prosaic bottle of budget orange juice. An extradimensional labyrinth is a far better mental image to work with. Reedies have gone beyond the curtain at Glastonbury Grove every year since.

Cumulative Capers

The Bug Eating Contest was founded in the mid-90s by Alexa Green ’96 and Rose Revolo Campbell ’96. Originally entitled “Eat Bugs for Money,”

the event started off as a reverse auction: people would bid down to see who would eat bugs for as cheaply as possible. “And little did we know how little, little money people would eat large amounts of bugs for,” Campbell recalls, noting that their idea took off immediately and that bugs have been a staple of the Reed diet ever since — although the reverse auction aspect disappeared immediately. There was, Jeffrey “Moose” Price ’03 recalls, a bit of a snafu one year when the organizers ordered poisonous centipedes and forgot which end was poisonous, but by and large, eating bugs is probably one of the healthier things you can do during the Fayre.

As well as Black Lodge, 1994 marked the birth of picting. It was started by Lynn Rosskamp ’94, who was completely surprised by *The Grail’s* investigation when she found out that it was still happening.

Other popular 90s traditions, not all of which have survived consistently, include an Iliad Toss and the classic 40-oz. Dash. The 1999 Renn Fayre *Quest* contains an entire schedule of such Olympic events, ranging from Capture the Flag to shopping cart chariot races to an “Oatmeal Eating and Sculpture Contest.”

The Last Beer Parade

As mentioned in the last article, beer for the masses has been part of Renn Fayre since the beginning. In

the '80s, it typically manifested itself in the form of the beer truck: imagine an enormous refrigerated trailer with taps sticking out of the side. It was brought onto campus in the midst of a cheering parade and a motorcycle escort each year and parked by Commons, where anyone, of any age, could wander up and fill up the receptacle of their choice. The only rule: no containers a gallon or larger.

Yet the suds reserved for reveling Reedies began attracting local high schoolers too. Enter Beer Security. The purpose of Beer Security was not to run a garden in compliance with the law; it was purely to stop non-Reedies from coming to campus to drink. Unlike today's Beer Nation volunteers, Beer Security was paid, and for considerably less work. Volunteers earned \$2.25 an hour (about \$5 in today's money) to simply sit by the truck and ensure that everyone filling up had a Renn Fayre Button.

An unfortunate sequence of events put an end to the free-flowing beer in the early '90s and necessitated the legally compliant gardens we have today. In April 1986, the Oregon Liquor Control Commission (OLCC) received an anonymous tip-off that Renn Fayre featured beer for minors. "Attention: Enforcement Division. OLCC Field Agents are cordially invited to attend an 'all-campus party' sponsored by Reed College [. . .] Formal attire optional," the letter sneers. According to former Beer Czar Bill Ecker '89, it was the beginning of the end.

By 1990, Reed had come under enough scrutiny that a team of administrators and students had to meet with the OLCC. They were informed that beer paid for and distributed through Student Body funds counted as a "sale of alcohol," even if it was being poured for free, and that what was going on was thus illegal. From RF1990 on, we had gated gardens. When the truck drove onto campus for the very last time before the restrictions came into effect, all the taps were flowing and crowds

filled up as it rolled.

Liability, Liability, Liability

In the years 1989-1991, Policy came to campus in a big way, prompted by a raft of conservative federal legislation such as the Drug-Free Workplace Act. The first Drug and Alcohol Policy, the first Smoking Policy, and a new Community Constitution all established rules and guidelines in what had previously been the realms of honor discussions and case-by-case negotiation. It was a tense moment, but the new policies initially had no effect on Renn Fayre apart from the fenced beer gardens. Bear Wilner-Nugent '95, who ran the Fayre in 1993, claims that "there was no infrastructure set up to monitor student activities" and that the still-tiny Student Services did not interfere with his work.

That began to change later in the decade. The activities of CHVNK 666 drew particular ire, even from the faculty, who generally stay out of Renn Fayre happenings except for the beer and the softball. The bike club's dramatic performance at RF1998, featuring "a mock battle between volcano-dwelling Neanderthal mutants and chopper-riding, high-flying defenders of Science, Learning, and Gender Equality," resulted in several fireworks injuries and a great deal of high blood pressure in Eliot Hall.

The beer gardens, though now legally compliant, were a further bone of contention. Skeptical administrators did not trust students and alumni to run the gardens safely, and thus thought something would go wrong and they would be held liable. Instead, Dean Jim Tederman embarked upon a crusade to have the gardens catered. Despite students pointing out that a less convivial and more official catered bar would prompt more drinking elsewhere in unmonitored, unsafe environments, the administration won. The 1999 garden was run by (expensive) contractors, and Tederman confidently proclaimed that there would "never be another student run beer garden."

Stuporheroes: The Y2K Problem

For about the first fifteen years of its existence, the Renn Fayre theme was "Renaissance Faire." Once that dissipated, there was no framing device for the festivities apart from the sudden year-end recollection that hey — we're done, and we love each other. It took until 2000 for someone to resurrect the idea of a party aesthetic that tied everything together. That theme was not, as you may have heard, "The Apocalypse." The theme was "Superheroes." As far as we can tell, it began simply as one Renn Fayre project among others: a "Mistress of Costumery" wanted to clothe the masses so that everyone could let their "true powers shine through in a fantasmigorical display of shiny spandex and fluttering capes." It was a success and ended up defining the party — and the photo evidence shows that every year since, everyone's clothes and everyone's projects have been more and more on theme.

Unfortunately, the superheroes were met by their share of supervillains. It's unclear exactly why, but once the dust cleared on Sunday, campus had been torn up to a degree surpassing all previous Renn Fayres. Over \$2000 worth of broken windows, graffiti on every building, roof tiles and gutters torn off all around the SU and GCC, a urinal ripped out of the wall. The total bill came to \$15,517.77. And that, some trustees and administrators began to suggest, was that. The Reed community was going to have to do some hard thinking if they wanted to keep Renn Fayre going.

But there was a light of hope in the dark of Y2K: a sign that if there was a future, it was bright. That year, someone had the idea to give each graduating senior a set of golden laurels. ♣

Stay tuned for next issue: Renn Fayre gets Renovated, the beer battle continues, and we begin to Stop Making Sense.

Moiety

By A.G.

Moiety could not work without a lab partner. It's not that she lacked the skills—her five years in the Alkenia Academy of Alchemy and subsequent apprenticeships had brought out her talents and left her as one of the finest alchemists in the Kingdom—but it was negligence and frivolous errors that kept her fume hood fuming. Moiety knew this fact all too well. After too many charges to count for broken vials and spilt potions, she always made sure to schedule her work hours with the other alchemists'. She wasn't even sure why it helped her; her partners never reached a hand into her bubbling setups. Maybe it was their positive presence. Moiety never knew. She didn't need to know. All she needed was someone to work in her vicinity so she could actually get something done.

This morning, Moiety skipped breakfast. The sun was just beginning to filter cold light through the leaves of her redwood, but she was already out the door. Every other elf in Alkenia was sleeping, getting a good night's rest before the Carbenic Festival later that evening. But Moiety was slinking away into the cold, vacant laboratory for a day of hard work. For whatever reason, the secrecy of her project gave her a sense of distilled composure that kept her from her usual experimental flukes. This pensive clarity and ability to actually complete what she loved was perhaps what she valued most in her world, so, missing the Carbenic Festival was a worthy price to pay.

Not to mention, of course, the magnitude of what Moiety was about to achieve. As she opened the door and slid into her lab coat, stained

with photoluminescent streaks of stereoambrosia and amyl oils that could have just as easily destroyed the delicate skin on her forearms, she remembered her former Academy lab partner who went off to serve the General. A mighty archer, he was nonetheless claimed, like many other honored Elven warriors, by the war with the Salmoneus Dwarves which was now entering its 192nd year. The legend goes that the war started when an Elven trader dropped a vial of iso-

Maybe it was their positive presence. Moiety never knew. She didn't need to know. All she needed was someone to work in her vicinity so she could actually get something done.

amyl extract into the Salmoneus River estuary, causing the dwarves' fish to taste mildly of banana ever since. Moiety cleared her thoughts. She was nearing a breakthrough. Seven years of incognito lab work had brought her to this point, and now, to finish the potion that would neutralize the isoamyl extract, all she needed was some peace and quiet.

Moiety fished her notebook from her coat's concealed pocket. Six vials of effervescent color clinked tastefully as she took them out of an unmarked

wooden drawer and placed them on the polished stone countertop. Taking a focused breath, Moiety opened her notebook. She remembered her next steps clearly, but reminding herself anyway eased the tension that her project built. She wiped away the beads of sweat that caused her hairline to glisten.

Precisely at this moment, Moiety's fly-wire trilled, active with energy, jolting her and nearly knocking down two of the precious distillates. Was solitude on the day of the Carbenic Festival too much to ask for?

"Good morning?"

"Awake already? Appropriate." It was the General.

"Yes, sir, how can I serve today?"

The military was the most prestigious institution in the Kingdom. It was only natural that they should wire Moiety first for an alchemic challenge.

"What you are about to hear is classified."

"Understood."

"Good. Tonight, we will perform an ambush at Salmoneus River, as the dwarves feast and drink behind lowered defenses. We need you to craft six flasks of enantiomer potion."

Six flasks. Already an unrealistic goal, but on the day of the Carbenic Festival? The General felt the silence and heard the logistic fear coursing through Moiety. The General continued,

"I understand the difficulties. But I am calling you for a reason. Nobody can work with enantiomer extract better than you can, and understand: your work will allow us to mirror the Dwarven resonance potions' effects and put this war down once and for

all. I am putting my trust in you.”

If only the General knew.

Moiety contemplated her predicament. Letting out a helpless sigh at being held back from completing her research, she flipped back in her notebook. Enantiomer potion. It was a jungle of side notes and crossed out lines, but she could do it. She just had to maintain full composure, not ruin any step of the process, and maybe then she could finish her isoamyl neutralizer. *Good luck.*

Silver dust was in the scintillation cabinet. Cyclic alder root she always kept in a special box above the desert chamber, so it wouldn't sprout. Nine other ingredients assembled themselves in the center of Moiety's hood. The lab miraculously had exactly the 4 vials of enantiomer extract Moiety needed as the key ingredient for the concoction. These she handled like spirit's eggs as she extracted them from the back of the dusty top shelf in the rare compounds tree.

For each distillation, Moiety checked the temperature thrice. Every stopcock was doubly greased, and not one tube carried frothy ethers without first getting secured to the root web at the back. Moiety's hood turned into a war of attrition: a superposition of uniformity and frazzled hair as she constantly battled against her tendency to make the inevitable stupid mistake and spoil her procedure. Her arms were time and focus. One painfully slow and triple-verified transfer of chemical after another, Moiety fought her battles. The morning turned into the afternoon, and the afternoon into evening, as she conquered the mistakes looming above. She came to the final battle.

Adding the enantiomer extract was the final step. Highly reactive, the extract must be added in small aliquots while stirring in a motion that was the mirror image of the addition pattern. Many alchemists have tried, and failed, with violent reactions that have left them seeing inverted for the remainder of their lives. But Moiety, with her transpose ambidexterity,

was particularly good at the motion.

Moiety prepared the vessel and ivy glass stirrer. She lifted her arms in synchronous, poising the extract vial above her vessel, ready to begin. Her mind distilled into a single-file progression of thought, her quavering heart dropped to a slow metronomic beat, her shaking hands stilled, as a calming excitement diffused through her arteries. Her forearm rotated into place, and a crescendo of broken glass and spilt extract emanated from the hard stone floor, resonated through the still air, through her recognition of failure where there could be none, through her deepest fears and insecurities

*Her forearm rotated
into place, and a
crescendo of broken
glass and spilt extract
emanated from the
hard stone floor*

about her own alchemy.

The Enantiomer Woods lay northeast of the Elven Kingdom in Alkenia, so called because they were the only place known to the Alkenic kingdoms where enantiomer plants grew. The woods were not dense, but were prowled by the racemizers, black scaly creatures with yellow eyes and mirror image pupils. The racemizers did not take well to the enantiomers getting rearranged. Alkenians passed through the forest often and with ease—some of the richest pike estuaries lay through the woods—but any soul unfortunate enough to brush up against an enantiomer plant awaited fight, flight, or fate. Moiety was not ready for this challenge.

The General's orders were what they were, however. The sun had just set and elves were milling, populating long tables in the trees with pungent roasts and drinks from the farthest corners of Alkenia. Unnoticed, Moiety slunk out through the city gates.

The moon was rising, and the Elves in the Kingdom halls celebrated, expressing their merriment with rounds of drink. Smells of the fruit and gravy filled their nostrils, sonorous conversation and song filled their ears, and everyone was so engulfed in their own cacophonies that not one eye drifted to the empty chair awaiting Moiety.

All except, of course, the General, who marched the armies through the night, without one potion, each soldier knowing.

In another two days, the working cycle resumed. What before were mysteries elucidated when Moiety's notebook was discovered open at her bench, the glass arranged for the final operation, the extracts evaporated into the now-etherial laboratory air. The lab held its breath as search parties investigated the Enantiomer Woods, but as the days drew to a close and the parties returned with nothing but empty heads and somber hearts, the only thing left to do was remember. The light and cool air in the lab no longer brought joy as Moiety's hood stood idle with its sash closed, empty but for her notebook: a memory immortalized in loops of neatly winding black ink on treated parchment.

No alchemist could follow her process for another four years, so fine was the work she carried out in her clear solitary moments. But on the 196th year, the General carried, solemnly and alone, the vial which neutralized the isoamyl extract. The war between the kingdoms ended, and Moiety's memory lived on in both kingdoms. The forest is now called Moiety Woods in her name, and, to this day, calling a lab partner a moiety is the greatest show of respect and admiration. ♣

De Sastre

DarkMatter Darling



DarkMatter is a trans South Asian performance art duo comprised of Alok Vaid-Menon and Janani Balasubramanian that blessed Reed with their cool vibes and talent two weeks ago. Here at Reed, this duo has had a significant influence on one Reedié's style—junior Sidra Morgan-Montoya! Sidra appreciates how the duo incorporates clothing in a playful and constructive way. They are also inspired by how DarkMatter uses style as social capital and subverts it. Sidra enjoys complexity in dress, sometimes using clothes to express their various identities. They say they'll come across as a "straight white woman, [or a] racially ambiguous queer boy." Both DarkMatter and Sidra toy with society's expectations by introducing a fun and refreshing approach to fashion.



Until next time, our final feature!

xoxo,
aa & muk

Cute Cavies

By ALEXA HARRIS

New week, new furry creature to appreciate. Today we will be paying homage to one of the most popular and beloved pets in modern America: guinea pigs! They're small, they're fat, they've got tiny stumpy legs—what's not to love?

In this issue we meet Oatmeal and Sparky! These little fluff logs are the children of Foster HA Aysha Pettigrew. Aysha brings the piggies out for office hours every week so dormies can come and bask in their cuteness. These little creatures are friendly fellows, running around, squeaking at you, sniffing you, or playing tug-of-war with you if you've got a parsley stem. The larger, older one is Oatmeal. He's a two and a half year old rescue that Aysha got in October. The smaller little guy, a five months old named Sparky, came from a small pet store in January. Oatmeal and Sparky have bonded pretty well in the time they've been together (they can be seen huddling or playing together). Sparky has helped Oatmeal come out of his shell too, and he's been more friendly since

Sparky arrived.

This makes sense, as guinea pigs are herd animals, and do best with a friend or two. Sparky, although pretty new, has already acclimated pretty well to dorm life, seeming very comfortable with people around. Being herbivores, these guinea pigs eat veggies, fruit, and a whole lot of hay. While they are small creatures, they eat a lot — around one-tenth of their body weight each day! Guinea pigs are fun and weird little creatures that are pretty low maintenance and pretty high in greatness. Also, in my research on guinea pigs I've found all sorts of weird factoids on them that I feel everyone should know. So, here are some fun things about guinea pigs: guinea pigs have four toes on their front feet and only three toes on their back feet. Baby guinea pigs are called pups (pups!!!). These pups can full on run at only three hours old. Guinea pigs don't sleep for long periods, but take short naps throughout the day (which I'll be honest sounds a lot like me). Guinea pigs can't sweat,

so they need to be kept out of the sun and hot places. Also, if you've ever wondered what it'd look like if Disney made a short film about guinea pigs multiplying exponentially and overtaking a railway station, then 'Pigs is Pigs' is for you! This is very real, it's a Walt Disney film from 1945 that's based on a book. It's eight minutes of white guys arguing over the prices and guinea pigs multiplying at alarming rates.

Perhaps the most strange things about guinea pigs is the name 'Guinea Pig' itself. This is strange because first, they're not from Guinea and second, they're clearly not pigs. The pig part seems to come from their high-pitched squeal. The Guinea part is a bit of a mystery, but there's a few theories on it. One possible theory is that in England the animals used to cost a guinea (a fancy gold coin used in seventeenth and eighteenth century). In the end though, all that really matters is that guinea pigs are sweet and playful and make awesome pets (especially in the dorms). ▼



Sparky and Oatmeal eat peppers.

Alexa Harris

Cultural Column

By CHARLIE C. WILCOX



The World is a Beautiful Place & I am no Longer Afraid to Die.

How do you prioritize? Always an important question to a Reed student, and there are many resources available to us that give us insight into how we can prioritize our academic demands (for many of us over spring break, that insight may have been: DROP EVERYTHING YOU HAVE A THESIS DRAFT DUE IN THREE DAAAAAAAAYS). What we aren't given a whole lotta insight on is how we can prioritize our cultural consumption. For that, I'm here to help.

This, of course, stems from a specific situation that I had to deal with. See, on March 29th, there are about four concerts happening in Portland that I would like to go to. How am I to pick just one? This predicament got me thinking about how one would in general make the tough decision between two or three (or, heaven forbid, four) interesting events happening at the same time. For the sake of the specifics of this occurrence, I'll focus on concerts, but feel free to apply these guidelines to any cultural happening.

Okay, so for reference, here are the concerts that are happening: At the Star Theater: it's Into It. Over It. with The

World is a Beautiful Place and I Am No Longer Afraid to Die, the Sidekicks, and Pinegrove. At Mississippi Studios: we have All Dogs, Mothers, and Haley Heynderickx. At Analog Theater: there's Citizen, Turnover, Sorority Noise, and Milk Teeth. Finally, at the Know: there's Sioux Falls, Hay-baby, and Deathlist. All pretty great shows! Blame Treefort Fest over in Boise, most of these bands played there over the weekend, so their tours all naturally land in Portland around this time.

A. Have you seen the band before? My dad has a rule that he sticks to pretty strictly: "Never see a band more than once, because it'll never be as good as the first time around." Now, I'm not quite as stringent as my father on this, but he does have a point. Seeing a band multiple times does have the effect of diminishing returns. Of course, if your favorite band ever is coming to town again, chances are you'll probably want to see them, I understand that. I've seen some of my faves several times. But even with bands I really care for, I generally haven't seen them more than three or four times. I think a more lenient version of this rule would be: prioritize the concert you

haven't seen before. There are certain things to consider, though. If you haven't seen this band for a while, you may want to see their new material; that's fair. That's the situation I'm in; I've seen *The World is a Beautiful Place* before, but that was a couple years ago, before their latest album *Harmlessness* came out, so their live set would be pretty novel to me. Ergo, I can't eliminate them quite yet.

B. Who has the best top-to-bottom roster? I've never been one to diss the openers. When considering which concert to go to, consider not just the band you want to see but the bands that are playing with them. People like to complain about how bad opening bands can be, but I generally find that opening bands can actually surprise you. Yeah, yeah, you can show up for the set you want and avoid the rest, but where's the fun in that? Okay, so this eliminates one of my choices. The Analog Theater show actually has only one band I care about (Sorority Noise, and they are actually third listed!), and the others I couldn't care less about. The others here are pretty stacked. The *World is a Beautiful Place* show has Pinegrove, which is a pretty exciting new band that I'd like to see, as well as The Sidekicks, who are good and I've never seen, and Into It. Over It. . . who I could honestly give or take. The Sioux Falls show has Haybaby, who lowkey made the best Pixies album of this millennium, and I would love to see that. And although I care more about All Dogs, them playing a show with Mothers only sweetens the deal; I haven't completely latched on to the Mothers album but would be intrigued to see it played live.

C. Who are you likely to have a chance to see again soon? Okay, so there's another show this night that I didn't mention: Iggy Pop at the Keller Auditorium. I'm as big of a

fan of Iggy as any other guy, but I'm not at the stage of my life where I'm gonna shell out 50+ bucks to see him live with Josh Homme (yawn). If I was really, really a fanboy for the Stoooge man, this show would be a must-attend; he might not ever tour again (how he survived both Lou and David is beyond me). Put your priorities in the act that won't play here as often, perhaps because they are from overseas, just don't tour that often, are playing a unique set in some way, or you just have a feeling might not be around much longer. As such, if you have conflicting events you would like to attend, perhaps put the local band on the backburner. I know it's important to support your local scene, duh, but you can also support it on a night when you are bored and nothing else is going on. Sorry to say, but that means that Sioux Falls is getting eliminated. Their album is great everyone! Listen to it! Pay them money!

D. On a related note, who have you not financially supported? This kinda goes hand in hand with my first point, but it remains worth saying: it is important to chip in to the music scene, and when doing so, spread the wealth. I've seen *The World Is a Beautiful Place*, I've bought their shirt, I've gotten their album. I have not, however, given any money to either Mothers or All Dogs, so I think I should go with them (Plus, it's important to support bands that aren't just a bunch of dudes [not that TWIABP is]). Plus, both All Dogs and Mothers are huge up-and-comers in the indie scene, coming off tremendous runs at SXSW, so their moment just seems right.

Hopefully these tips have helped cut through the haze of the sweaty concert floor and will help you resolve some tough decisions in your concert-going lives. ♣

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