

the free press

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NYC traveller's guide to Banksy

Observing this street art will require some street smarts

By **ALLISON DREXLER**
Free Press Contributor

Errybody in the city seein' Banksy. If you don't get that reference, I'm sorry that you never experienced J-Kwon. BANKSY! The Banksy. The Beyoncé of the art world is currently residing in New York City. The British man – which is all we know about him – is tagging the Big Apple for a month, bringing art lovers all over the country to the city streets in search of his artwork. He has set up an Instagram account, which now works like a treasure map: he reveals a picture of his latest work and the general location of it, making curious art aficionados go out in search for it. Of course, within five minutes someone finds it and it's all over social media. By the time you get there, there will already be hundreds of people taking selfies in front of the street art. So, if you're one of the thousands of people wishing to Instagram a Banksy, this is the guide for YOU.

1.) First things first, wherever there is a Banksy piece, there is someone ready to deface it or try to rip you off by covering it with cardboard and charging you \$20 to look at it, so don't waste any time. Beat them to it.

2.) No one knows what Banksy looks like. He's been around for a while and no one knows his true identity, so I can 100% pinky-promise-swear-to-god-guarantee you that YOU WILL, I REPEAT, YOU WILL NOT SEE HIM IN NEW YORK CITY. Don't be that guy walking around with a picture on your phone of some random dude in a hoodie and sunglasses and telling people that it's really him. NO ONE WILL BELIEVE YOU AND YOU WILL LOOK LIKE A MORON. Banksy is a smart guy and his cover has not yet been blown, so no one is going to think that you are the person to solve the mystery behind his identity. You couldn't look more like an idiot.

3.) Yes, it's true that Banksy had an art stand outside of Central Park selling his pieces, but no one knew, only a few people bought his work, and IT WILL NEVER HAPPEN AGAIN. If you see someone selling Banksy "art", then know that they're fakes,

and this person is trying to rip you off like crazy. So please don't be a fool. Please don't get ripped off.

4.) Banksy has tagged streets all over New York City, mostly in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx. If you want to see it all in one day, make sure to start your day super early and map it out because they're everywhere and they will take some time to travel to. Also, there will probably be crowds of selfie-takers at each one, so finding room to take your own instantly gratifying pic will take time as well.

5.) And finally, remember: It's street art. It isn't a museum. They're stencils spray-painted on the smelly streets of New York. Don't take it too seriously, but more importantly don't be pretentious about it. Just enjoy the fact that you're seeing a Banksy "exhibition." Have fun and DON'T BE THAT GUY. If there's one thing I want you to take from this, it's that.

Studying abroad: thrifting in Paris

Lory shares her surprising shopping experience
in Paris, France

By LORY MARTINEZ
Free Press Contributor

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After two weeks in Paris I've learned quite a bit about the Parisian lifestyle. Yes, baguettes are extremely important, as are the types of baguettes you get: soft, or crunchy. Also, there is a lot more smoking here than in the United States – especially in cafes – though the e-cig trend is big here too. Yay for lungs! And of course, there's the cheese, as smelly as it is delicious.

Anyway, after my first few days of sweet caffeinated, carb-filled bliss, I began to wander about the streets, stumbling upon perhaps the most prominent aspect of the Parisian lifestyle: a plethora of thrift/vintage shops. Of course, there are designer shops all throughout Paris that are very stylish, but for the poor college student, thrift shop finds were the closest to designer I was going to get. And so, my love affair with the Paris Thrift Scene began.

After getting lost in Marais, I spotted a gently used clothing store and breathed a sigh of relief. I said to myself, "Self, we're gonna be okay." The jetlag had been wearing me down, and amongst other feelings of distress was a fear that I had made a mistake in coming all the way to Paris for a semester. Homesick and sore-hearted, I looked at that thrift shop as a life-saving river in the middle of the Gobi desert.

I'm an avid thrifter back home in New York. I have spent many a day perusing the aisles of the color-coordinated Salvation Army in Broome County. Other thrifters will understand what I mean when I say that it is an addiction!

I mean, after thrifting and getting tons of stuff for way below market price, who would ever want to pay full price for clothing anymore? The money you save (and the history, of course), always makes thrifting worth it. I will buy vintage earrings over dinner any day. It's a problem, I realize. But I own an extensive collection of found items, including a music box piano that plays Edelweiss and a charming 50's style winter coat, all for under 15 bucks. Can't beat that.

At first, I was apprehensive about thrifting in Paris, because the cost in Euros would be almost double in US dollars. Even so, I stepped into one of many FREEPSTAR thrift shops, prepared to browse those aisles like one does

in a Barnes & Noble, touching the spines, the covers, reading the preview of what's behind those pages, without actually buying anything. But then I saw a treasure trove, signs that read: Boots - 5 Euros,

"Homesick and sore-hearted, I looked at that thrift shop as a life-saving river in the middle of the Gobi desert."



Leather Shorts - 3 Euros, and a pile marked: Everything - 1 EURO. I was in heaven! It was a wonderful feeling, going through those bits of history, from the once very cool neon sweater vests to the ill-fitting pilgrim dresses you know someone in Brooklyn will alter and resell for 10 times the price.

So I went back to my old ways, digging through piles and bumping into others ("Excuse moi. Pardon me!") underneath neon lights with the sounds of French rap in the background.

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Continued from front cover



A Banksy on the Lower East Side of New York on October 9, 2013.



BINGHAMTON UNIVERSITY RUCHI JAIN/OPINION EDITOR

It's more than just an addiction: Bing-U Secrets Reconsidering the role of anonymous forums on a college campus

By EMILY D'EMIC
Copy Editor

February 2, 2013. For any other school, this date could have been inconsequential, even boring. This was not the case in Binghamton University, where thousands of students flocked to the newly founded Facebook page called Bing-U Secrets. In case you haven't heard of it, Bing-U Secrets is an Internet forum where students can anonymously post their opinions of their peers, the faculty, the university, and of themselves. Ranging from heartbreakingly relatable stories to downright creepy confessions, submissions to the page have changed the way many people look at the student body as a whole. Even I find myself walking down the spine, looking into the faces of students I've never met before and wondering whether they're one of the many who claims to have copulated in Bartle library, or to have masturbated while their roommate slept unwittingly in the next bed.

There is something addicting about Bing-U Secrets. You can find yourself scrolling endlessly through submissions (which have, as of October 21, reached 2,806), developing a voyeuristic fascination with the inner workings of strangers' minds. Oscar Wilde once said, "Man is least himself when he talks in his own person. Give a man a mask, and he will tell you the truth." Bing-U Secrets provides the mask under which members of the student body can conceal their identities and expose the world to their deepest fantasies and frustrations. The forum also provides an opportunity for students to relate to and debate with one another, as many posts have sprung active discussions on topics such as sexism and mental illness. Bing-U Secrets is more than just a forum for students to discuss their roommates' gross habits or brag about sexual escapades. It

has the potential to offer a supportive community to students in need. For example, one student posted about loneliness and anxiety over finding housemates for the coming year. The post was met with several replies from students who found themselves in the same boat, and offered an opportunity to solve this problem. Another post opened up about one student's fear of having a sex addiction, which was met with by a thoughtful response from

"Bing-U Secrets has the ability to bring out the best in the student body."



a fellow student, "...people in college suffer addiction too. It's not some mystical fun land where the consequences of your actions aren't real but a time for learning from those actions and becoming a better person. Whatever that means is for the individual to decide." Bing-U Secrets has the ability to bring out the best in the student body. While it allows some students to reveal their ignorance (i.e. one student responding to a post

about struggles with mental illness with "sounds pretty lucid for someone who is mentally ill"...wrong on so many levels!), it also provides an environment of support for other students who feel the need to reach out. Ignorance is called out and condemned, while open-mindedness and discussion is rewarded. Isn't this what college is all about?

I was able to chat with the founder of Bing-U Secrets, who understandably wished to remain anonymous. I'll use male pronouns in reference to him, but to be clear: no one knows the actual sex of this moderator, or his or her year of study. Being the moderator of such an active Facebook page is demanding – the founder receives at least 20 submissions a day. He won't post any secrets that blatantly insult a student, and if your secret is just downright dumb, it gets the axe. What I find commendable is the fact that our friendly moderator is aware of the identities of every person who posts (and has even read shocking submissions from close friends), yet will never disclose another's secret or judge someone for their confessions.

The moderator of Bing-U Secrets accurately describes the forum as "a platform to express whatever you want without fearing judgment."

Bing-U Secrets allows the Binghamton student body an outlet for every secret desire or shame so that students can relate to one another in a non-threatening environment. If you wish to make a submission, you may send it as a message on the Bing-U Secrets Facebook page, send an email to bingusecret@gmail.com or send an anonymous message through bingusecret.tumblr.com. Happy venting!

Social Media!



telling stories today

Can you really tell a story in 140 characters?

By **MALT WHITMAN**
Free Press Contributor

I've been fighting with my Facebook presence for almost the entirety of the eight years that I've had it. Sometimes I asked myself why I would allow a caricature of myself to exist on the Internet. But always, the reason has been that Facebook is where I have spent so many days, maybe even weeks, of my life. These past eight years have been spent, not working towards a career or excelling in any hobby, but rather scrolling through tens of thousands of posts with bored monotony and the occasional feigned interest ("I can't believe they're dating," or "Dang, someone got hot"). I'll find myself mechanically opening a new tab and typing "F- A- enter" whenever I am attempting to be productive, even though I don't care about the majority of the things that are posted on it. So instead of working towards straight A's or becoming a violin prodigy, why do I always return to Facebook?

Author Jonathan Gottschall shed light on my predicament when he visited campus recently to discuss his new book *The Storytelling Animal: How Stories Make Us Human*. Gottschall is an author and English professor and received his doctorate in English from Binghamton University under the guidance of Evolutionary Bioanthropologist David Sloan Wilson. His new book provides a funny and insightful look into humanity and our never-ceasing desire to tell stories and listen to them. Gottschall explains, through humorous and gripping anecdotes, the evolutionary theories behind why humans are historically story-lovers. Storytelling (that includes daydreaming) is a very taxing activity. Not only does it require energy for our brains to create and process stories, but it also takes time and

energy away from our evolutionary needs of eating, drinking, and reproducing, rendering us, as humans, quite inefficient. Evolutionary biologists, therefore, have been searching for the reason behind why evolution would possibly bestow unto us this curse of story-loving, a curse that keeps us from efficiently eating, having sex, and mastering violin.

Gottschall's book humorously describes some of the theories evolutionary biologists have come up with. One example, which has been sufficiently argued against, is that good story-telling aids in mate selection.



**"Good story-telling aids in
mate selection."**

My boyfriend is the funniest person I've met and tells stories better than anyone, but if we time travelled to 200,000 years ago, when *Homo sapiens* first emerged, we would be dead before I could even finish reading this sentence out loud. If my livelihood depended on that of my mate's, I would choose a strong boring man to a lanky funny one (love you, babe). Another theory Gottschall presents is that storytelling helps humans remember important facts much more easily. Hearing our neighbor caveman describe how he killed a mammoth can help us become better hunters. But

wouldn't other memorizing methods be more efficient at storing information than that?

Storytelling doesn't end at written work or spoken word stories; Gottschall states that daydreaming, television, movies, and even commercials allow modern-day humans to escape from reality – in some cases, for thirty seconds at a time – into a world where our mind is actively, or more and more passively, allowed to wander in another world.

"Well, what about Facebook or Twitter?" I asked him after his talk. "Isn't a status

why the hell not. What were once legendary tales told by mouth around a fire, from lengthy sagas that depicted heroes and gods, Shakespeare and Dostoevsky and Vonnegut and Poe, have now become tweets by Kim Kardashian or Vines from that guy in your math class. Modern social media feeds us thousands of stories a day without us having to expend any effort. But the quality of these stories may be decreasing.

The journal *Science* recently found that on tests measuring empathy, social perception, and emotional intelligence, people who read popular fiction scored lower than those who read literary fiction. However, as bad as *Are You There Vodka, It's Me, Chelsea* is for my emotional intelligence, it is nothing compared to the things I've read in Facebook statuses from the frat guys who lived on my floor freshman year. One of Gottschall's theories is that stories act as a social glue; not only do they give us a chance to spend time together as social creatures, but it also strengthens our empathy and sociality. The constant stream of low quality stories that we are continuously being fed by social media, however, may negatively impact our relationships with other humans.

So, after learning all of that, why, why would I still have a Facebook? Because, how else am I supposed to keep up with the latest stories? (How else am I supposed to figure out dang, who got hot?)

And also to like the Free Press! You can like The Binghamton Free Press on Facebook at /BUFreePress, and can read the first three chapters of Gottschall's book *The Storytelling Animal: How Stories Make Us Human* for free on Google Books and the rest of the book at your local bookstore!

phoenix





The Blob TONI NASTASI

KARL BERTRAND
Royal Provalone

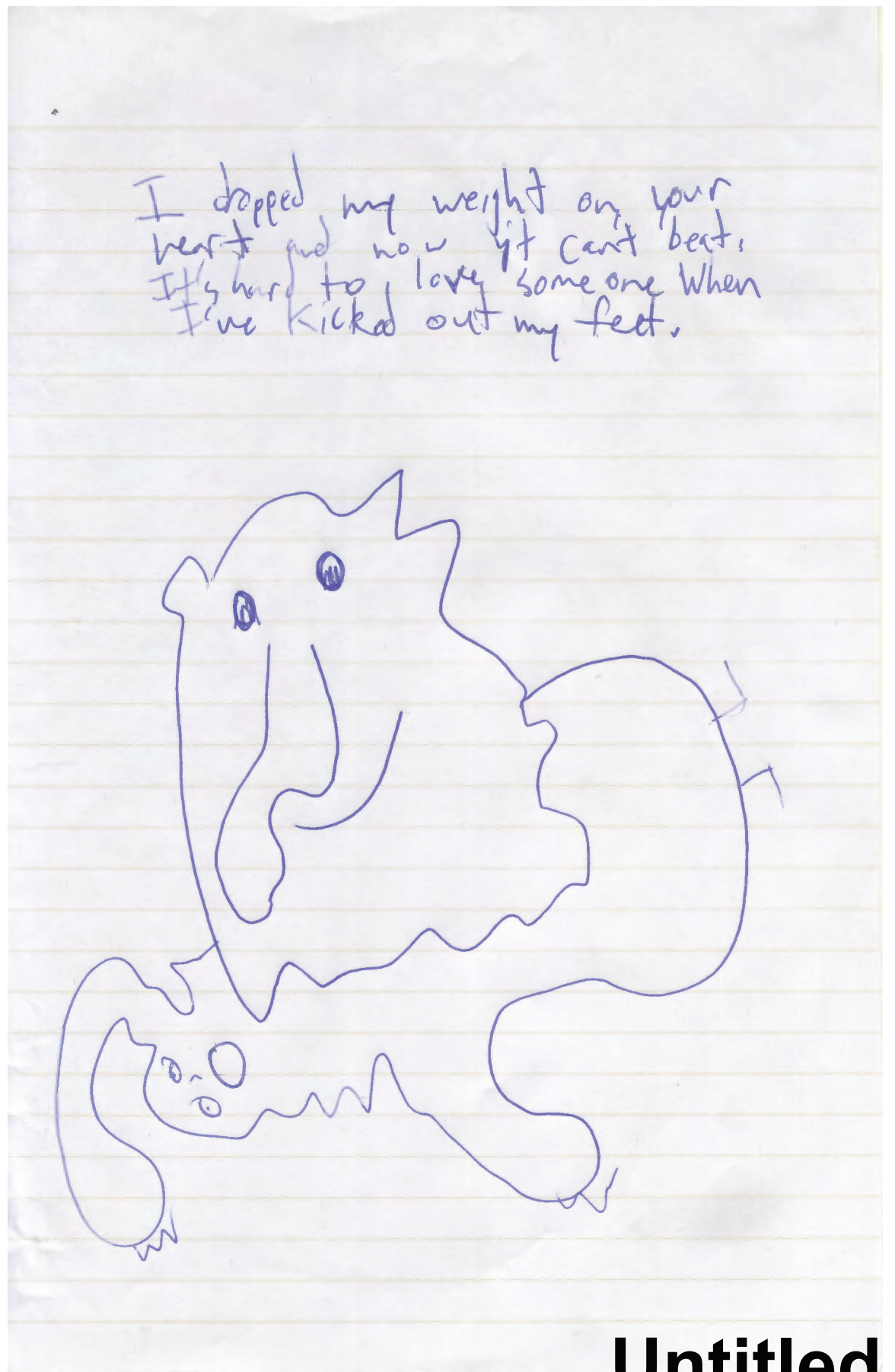
A crown of mold
sunken on his head
indenting.

The Blue King
shipping off his subjects
one by one.

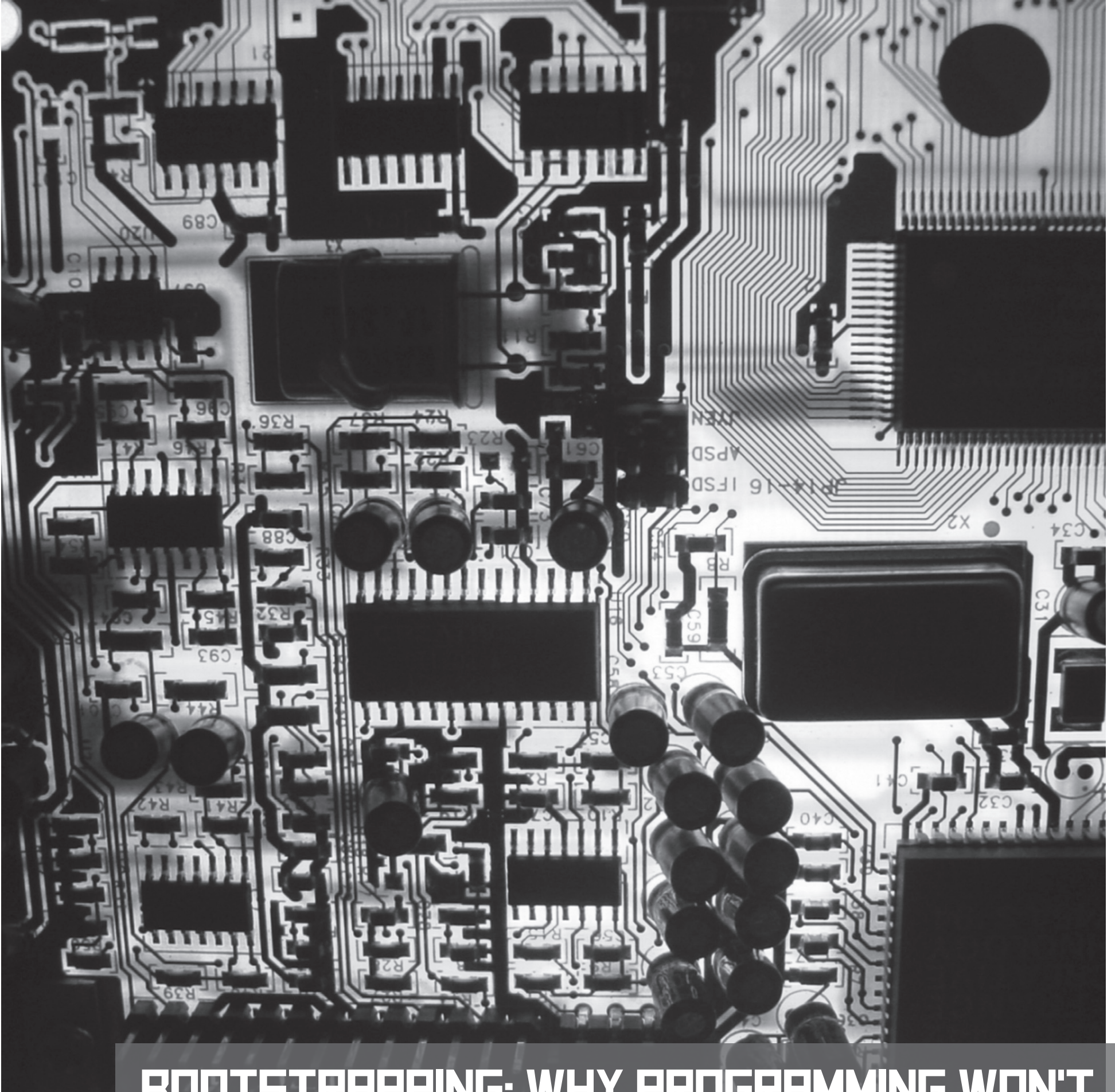
To crackers.
To salads.
To Buffalo Wings.

Always left in solitude.

The Knife Queen
having left him
for a Muenster.



Untitled Matt Griffin



BOOTSTRAPPING: WHY PROGRAMMING WON'T MAGICALLY SOLVE HOMELESSNESS

By **STEPHEN BROWER**
Free Press Contributor

It's incredibly easy to be enticed by the big numbers of programming: introductory salaries that can reach up to the six digits fresh out of college, incredibly varied disciplines to get invested in, and hundreds upon hundreds of new jobs popping up every day across the globe. Even in the shadow of the recession, computer science seems like an attractive discipline to invest time in, and for some entrepreneurial and Libertarian minds, programming appears to be a goldmine capable of saving not only the market, but humanity itself.

This summer, New York City "programmer" Patrick McConlogue channeled this very inspiration into a project he calls "Journeyman." With the stated purpose of "Finding the unjustly homeless, and teaching them to code," the young entrepreneur found a homeless man named Leo and offered him a choice: one hundred dollars cash, or a laptop with a few months of coding lessons. Shockingly, Leo accepted the technology over the money, and he began learning Javascript and making an app. There was an immediate uproar from critics across the internet. The very mission statement raised eyebrows; if coding may save the unjustly homeless, then we must accept that some are justly homeless?

This concept is repeated throughout his statements, where he relayed his vision of homelessness in New York City: "Every day walking to work in New York City you will see the homeless. Some mentally gone, some drunk, some just making a wage begging... However, I like to think I can see the few times when it's a wayward puzzle piece." Many, like Gawker's Sam Biddle and Tech Crunch's Alexia Tsotsis attacked the young social media marketer and entrepreneur for the rather guileless attempt at getting startup funding. Others took issue with the generally dismissive attitude to homelessness that the Rockstar Energy Drink sponsored 23 year old presented in his series. The reality of homelessness is incredibly complex, incredibly frustrating, and bootstraps are a stunningly ineffective instrument for the problem.

If that wasn't enough, the "Journeyman Hacker" was recently arrested by the NYPD for trespassing, sleeping on a different bench than usual, because he is homeless. McConlogue campaigned heavily and had the community lobby the department for his release, which was successful. Yet, many homeless are not this fortunate; Tim Maly of Medium points out that "it's unlikely that Leo was the only homeless person arrested in the early hours of October 14th." Indeed,

Leo was incredibly fortunate having people with the ability to lobby for his release. Most homeless will never have this fortune.

It's easy to fault self-described entrepreneurs not understanding the nuances of mental illness, addiction, and poverty; but a cultural obsession with the "teach a man to fish" idiom is not the province of McConlogue alone. Maly notes, sadly, that "the dark moral is that this only happens if you are lucky enough have a Fairy Godparent." For every one homeless man McConlogue is helping learn to program, there is literally every other homeless person in the entire world that receives no such luck.

Many have touched on this issue, and tackled the rather glaring issues at hand; most have not addressed the subtlest, yet most fundamental error in this vision, in any vision that sees programming as a panacea. The realities of what programming is and how it relates to programming is not as simple or as glamorous as what most make it out to be.

While the sector is relatively healthy, it is not necessarily perfect, or even simple to find employment within it.

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Moving beyond the 2013 debt crisis

By **NICHOLAS SCHAFFRAN**
Editor-in-Chief

This is not what I came here to learn

Looking back on the real meaning of college education

By **RUCHI JAIN**
Opinion Editor

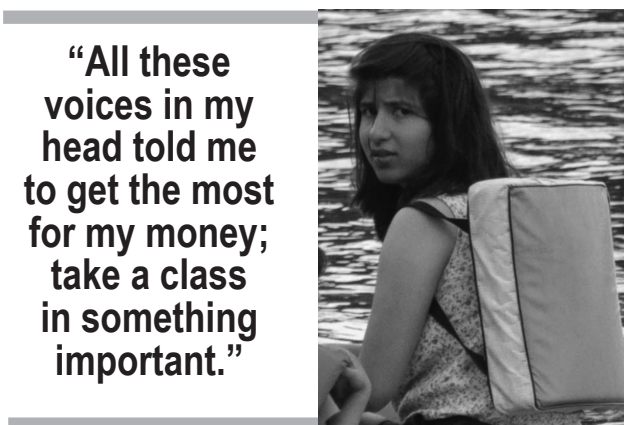
This senior column is unique in that I'm not going to complain to you about sparse job prospects, State Street, Long Island, or how everything else in college sucks right now. However, this senior column is not unique in that it calls itself unique.

I guess all of my distress began when I first got to this place. I told everyone that I'm undeclared my first semester. Next semester I said I'm thinking about transferring into Watson for "some type of engineering." Math is important to me but I don't know why or how. So I shoved it aside and tried the whole Pre-Med thing for a year – that was a bust. So it was back to just Math and maybe I could also get a little CS action in there. Happy ending, right?

I'm not saying that the curriculum was difficult for me. I was on top of most of my course work, at least more than the next person in my programs. The only difference was that I just never wanted to do any of it. Ever. Before, I was able to force myself through it. But now that I'm a senior, I just can't seem to motivate myself any further. This is procrastination on a whole other level. I guess it's starting to dawn on me that at this point in life I should know what it is that I'm pushing myself towards anyway. Why is having a Wonder Years marathon more alluring than getting done what I need to do? I know I made a mistake somewhere; I'm not actually this lazy.

Let's go back again, this time to orientation. We had to assemble in the Appalachian Dining hall to meet with each department and decide what classes we wanted to take. All I ever really wanted to do was to take a video production class. Unfortunately, there were two cinema analysis prerequisites for that. And that's where I gave up on college. Right there, in the Appalachian Dining Hall, I told myself it was not worth it. I prioritized. All these voices in my head told me to get the most for my money; take a class in something important. Cinema, writing, literature – you don't need to take a class for that. Just make a movie by yourself, write a screenplay, or read a book.

If the voices were right, then why did I come to college in the first place? What was I hoping to achieve? Did I just do it because that's what was expected of me, because everyone else was doing it? Maybe I was better off not wasting four years of my youth, thousands of dollars (camera equipment, acting classes, HEAD SHOTS, etc.). Not everyone is meant to go to college, right? I didn't come to college to learn anything. I haven't really learned anything. And I also haven't accomplished anything. Not yet.



"All these voices in my head told me to get the most for my money; take a class in something important."

So senior year will be a journey of redefining priorities. Instead of hours of coding, it's going to be writing this column. Instead of statistics processors, it's going to be judging the relationships of my peers and trying to grasp at the meaning of life. Instead of fulfilling my Wellness Gen-Ed, it's going to be reading the biographies of every new SNL cast-member. Check back here at the end of the year to see if I learn my lesson.

In the midst of mass panic, demagoguery, political stubbornness, and general lack of Congressional order, a bill to re open the government and push back the debt ceiling was finally passed on October 16th. The agreement, which averts the government possibly defaulting on its loans, has the caveat of only pushing back the deadlines for re-negotiation a few short weeks. Some met the news with relief, while others view this measure as a simple kicking of the can down the road. However you feel about the outcome, it is clear that a degree of uncertainty exists as we loom toward the new deadlines. Any number of outcomes could play out, as Congressional Republicans re-evaluate their strategy in cutting the budget, and delaying and defunding Obamacare.

The bill passing through both chambers of Congress earlier this month effectively produced two main outcomes: ending the government shutdown and extending the debt ceiling. Republicans, who were largely using the shutdown as a principled stand against government spending, and President Obama's new health

care laws, were largely viewed as defeated. "We fought the good fight, we just didn't win," said House Speaker John Boehner of the shutdown on a hometown talk show. Concessions given by the Republicans include almost no changes to Obamacare, save for increased checks on income levels of those receiving subsidized care. Government will remain open with full funding through to January

of funding to the government, and the end of the shutdown, Republicans remain devoted to sequestration, and controversial underfunding will continue. Additionally, Congressional Republicans continue to be committed to the fight against the Affordable Care Act, with Mitch McConnell calling it "front and center" in the 2014 elections in a piece for the National Review. Clearly, despite the

momentary end of the debt crisis, Republicans are not giving up in the fight against Obamacare.

So, what happens now? Going forward, Congress has decided to meet in committee by December 13th to renegotiate the debt ceiling. This bi-partisan super committee is modeled after the one which emerged in the wake of the 2011 debt

crisis. Congressional Democrats and Republicans will attempt to provide a more permanent solution than the 2011 panel did, or else face another crisis. While only time can tell what will happen going forward, it appears that, without significant changes in approach from both Democrats and Republicans, we could wind up back where we were in October very soon.

"However you feel about the outcome, it is clear that a degree of uncertainty exists as we loom toward the new deadlines."



Bootstrapping: why programming won't magically solve homelessness

From page 7

The most recent labor statistics reveals that there are roughly 192,000 unemployed in the "Information" sector. This is not even the most exhaustive number of people using the fundamentals of computer science, as programmers and IT professionals can also be included in other sectors like Financial, Professional Services, and even Health Services. It is worth noting that, while not as suffering as many sectors, programming does not surpass even construction, a far more manual profession, in sheer lack of unemployment.

Beyond the numbers, the employment process for programming jobs is much more complex than other many others, with phone and in-person technical interviews that can span weeks or even months, requiring rather serious knowledge on far-reaching topics. Many companies

and firms look for self-started projects, multiple employment or internship experiences, and extensive classroom studies that go and above and beyond even rigorous Computer Science department standards. Entry-level positions can often require multiple years of previous experience in addition to a diploma, and many use obscure or proprietary systems that few schools teach.

Even the most general tools for a job search are complicated and expensive: suits, phones, uninterrupted connection to the internet, and the ability to travel do not come free. Even if it was just freelancing or dividends from an app, the homeless coder would still need a bank account, a government-issued ID, and other accounts and verifications simply to have and then use the proceeds.

McConlogue's "Journeyman Hacker" experiment raises

even more questions: how pedagogically rigorous can the instruction by "entrepreneurs" and "startups" be? Private industry and Silicon Valley constantly champ at the bit to "disrupt" the educational workspace, but what will be taught, and how? Students often have no love lost professors, but there is something to be said about the rigors of interviews and hiring processes simply to teach, and the meaning of tenure in theory, if not in practice. That McConlogue, the current example of this concept, is a 23-year-old with a degree in Economics and Asian Studies and familiarity only in JavaScript and HTML truly does not help the case.

Nobody is immune to the strange and arbitrary whims of the programming sector. I graduated with a Computer Science degree with honors in May, and have yet to find employment as of writing this piece. Now, imagine that instead of being young and

financially solvent as I have the fortune to be, the men and women seeking jobs were significantly older with no prior experience, knowing only simple technologies like Javascript while still having little money and no privacy. The expectations of the field are outrageous and often seem arbitrary, and the catered lunches and ping pong tables of Google are the luxuries of the very fortunate and eager few.

In September, McConlogue suggested that Leo had reached the halfway point, but there are many more months of uncertainty, fear, and questioning ahead for Leo, even if he completes an impressive application.

America can solve homelessness through compassion, effort, and funding; however, bootstrapping should be reserved for operating systems, not actual human beings that have been discarded by society for issues frequently far out of their control.