

## Numb and Number

By Jesse Gutierrez  
Capital Times Staff Writer

Last night, watching television, I was confronted with the image of a young child in Sierra Leone whose arm was intentionally shot off by soldiers. It didn't bother me at all.

I have a strange feeling that if I laid down in Dr. Fixerhead's comfortable soft leather couch and let him start picking my brain apart, just as the boys at Harvard taught him, he would find that I, just a common shmuck, belong in a padded cell.

He would tell his colleagues stories about me that could send chills down William Blatty's spine.

I can just see it now: the doc would retrieve his trusty ink blots and furiously press them up against my nose, frustrated, "What do you see here? How about this one, huh? How does it make you feel? Tell me! Tell me now! You freak!"

He would throw his cards across the room, put his knee on my chest and shake me by the collar of my shirt; then he would slap me.

Then, knowing that it goes against everything he's ever studied and practiced, he reaches into his coat pocket and retrieves a small vial of Holy water.

He frantically douses me as he chants in Latin scripture. As the water hits my face it sizzles and steams. I laugh. My forked tongue

quickly flaps in and out of my mouth.

Laying on my back, I vomit. It comes out with such fury it splatters against the ceiling and walls, ruining his Monet posters.

The doctor lifts my shirt up and on my chest there's a message. It looks as if the demons inside of me are trying to communicate. The scratches spell something: they spell, T-E-L-E-V-I-S-I-O-N!

I've seen the baby pictures. When I was small I was innocent and gentle, and I cared about people all over the world. At school we swayed and sang "We Are the World." I meant it.

Now, as a young adult, I'm singing a different tune. I've gone numb. I can't help it.

Every day I see so much blood and suffering and starvation and rape and sex on television that if I didn't go numb towards it I would go crazy.

Think about it; if every time you saw something graphic and it had the same effect on you as it did the first time you saw it, you would spend the rest of your life covering your eyes, cringing, and/or crying.

The numbness and jaded attitude is a blessing. During the crisis in Kosovo, there were thousands of people starving and children dying.

People were being flushed out and exterminated like cockroaches because of their ethnicity. I saw the children of Kosovo every day.

I always see this stuff when I'm eating dinner. I'm eating a steak, a huge baked potato, salad, and nice cold mug of beer.

Why is my appetite so good? I've seen these kids before. I've seen the close up on the tears. I've heard the reporters warm voice-over translating the child's cries: "this young man says he hasn't seen his mother for blah, blah, blah."

I could swear that I heard the starving child's stomach growling as I tossed another sloppy spoon full of sour cream on my baked potato.

If I didn't tune it out, I would be a blubbing, quivering bowl of Jell-O. If I'm going to get through my day, my brain must develop an immunity to the media just as a touch of the flu in a vaccination can bring you healthily through the winter.

Sometimes, being the conspiracy theorist that I am, I feel that the media gods know that I have the gift of guilt free feasting.

I grow more and more numb as they hit me harder and harder, trying to get to me. It's a waste of time. I just become less and less compassionate.

You shouldn't think that I'm a cold hearted, carefree, self-centered glutton. You should be proud of me. I know that if my muscles weren't so weak from lack of activity I would pat myself on the back.

## From the Editor's Desk

Hello Cap Times readers. This is the first opportunity I had this semester to write a few words about the newspaper.

I have considered writing editorials or at least an opinion piece from time to time, but by the time I got an idea, something would come up and the moment would be lost.

Topics that I thought to write about, but didn't, include the PA law that prohibits a business from advertising alcohol in a college newspaper (as if any of you who really want beer don't already know where to get it).

Another topic, sure to anger a few readers, is my opinion of some students' complaints that they have to pay a parking fee here. For about a buck a week, anyone can get a parking spot in front of the building they need to be in without hovering around the lot like a vulture waiting for someone to leave.

But, like I said, I chose not to write about those topics. Now that the semester is just about up, I felt the need to say a few words to our loyal (and not so loyal) readers. I wanted to say thanks for reading our little production. Getting eight issues together and into your hands was no easy task.

I'm sitting here the day after Thanksgiving writing this: no long holiday weekend for the

editor. Instead, it's just another day of dedication to produce the best newspaper that I and the entire CapTimes staff, can.

Speaking of the CapTimes staff, I want to publish a huge thank you to everyone who contributed to this endeavor.

Thanks especially to Alice Potteiger Wilkes for creating many of the ads you've read, for fixing up the photos (as best she could) and for showing me how to run all the computer programs to make this newspaper.

Thanks also to Kristy Pipher and Barb Roy who continued their work from last year. I needed stability when I took over the helm and they provided it willingly.

And speaking of stability, it was that very word I thought of when I asked Cathie McCormick Musser to join the staff. She's been extremely helpful, too, so thanks Cathie.

And thanks to everyone else who helped me make the idea I envisioned for the CapTimes become a reality. This praise certainly extends to our advisor, Crispin Sartwell, who gave us direction but also our independence.

Matthew McKeown  
Editor

## Paradox of Our Time

The paradox of our time in history is that we have taller buildings, but shorter tempers; wider freeways, but narrower viewpoints.

We spend more, but have less; we buy more, but enjoy it less. We have bigger houses and smaller families; more conveniences, but less time; we have more degrees, but less sense; more knowledge, but less judgment; more experts, but more problems; more medicine, but less wellness.

We drink too much, smoke too much, spend too recklessly, laugh too little, drive too fast, get too angry too quickly, stay up too late, get up too tired, read too seldom, watch TV too much, and pray too seldom.

We have multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values.

We talk too much, love too seldom, and hate too often. We've learned how to make a living, but not a life; we've added years to life, not life to years.

We've been all the way to the moon and back, but have trouble crossing the street to meet the new neighbor. We've conquered outer space, but not inner space. We've done larger things, but not better things.

We've cleaned up the air, but polluted the soul. We've split the atom, but not our prejudice. We write more, but learn less. We plan more, but accomplish less. We've learned to rush, but not to wait.

We build more computers to hold more information to produce more copies than ever, but have less communication. These are the times of fast foods and

slow digestion; tall men, and short character; steep profits, and shallow relationships.

These are the times of world peace, but domestic warfare; more leisure, but less fun; more kinds of food, but less nutrition. These are days of two incomes, but more divorce; of fancier houses, but broken homes.

These are days of quick trips, disposable diapers, throwaway morality, one-night stands, overweight bodies, and pills that do everything from cheer to quiet, to kill. It is a time when there is much in the show window and nothing in the stockroom; a time when technology can bring this letter to you, and a time when you can choose either to share this insight, or to just hit delete.

George Carlin

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