

OPINION and REVIEW

The Freshman Zone:

Freezing Your Shorts Off

By Mike Jamison

I thought it was a good idea at the time. OK, so it was twenty-nine degrees and flurrying, but everyone else was doing it, so I succumbed to peer pressure: I went to school, in the dead of winter, wearing shorts. When I finally regained consciousness and the effects of the frostbite had worn off, I concluded that I was right all along: people who wear shorts in the winter are either very warm-blooded or very crazy. As I crank up the thermostat here in the FRESHMAN ZONE, let me share with you my musings and thoughts on this chilling subject.

When I entered college last fall, I was mildly suprised by the fashion statements being presented around campus. I was not shocked to find that people in college, many who perhaps had lived under the Third-Reich dress codes of Catholic high schools, found a need to express themselves in wardrobe. Through the fall semester, never paying a second glance to the frayed bellbottoms or the plaid vests, wrapped up in my own euphoria of actually being able to wear different clothes to school everyday. (Of course, there are probably many public school grads who wear the same thing everyday, but that's a hygiene problem.)

Anyway, as the semester passed, so did the warm weather, and winter once again shuffled in. With the coming of winter, I noticed that the vast majority of people must have been in denial; they persisted in wearing shorts, even as the temperatures continued to drop.

Why do certain people feel the need to wear shorts in sub-zero

As Andy Sees It:

Challenges and Choices

By Andy McIntyre

Life can be very strange. One day you feel as though the entire world is destined for destruction. That is the kind of day where, for whatever reason, everyone seems to be living their lives for the sole sake of disturbing yours. Frankly, I find myself having these sorts of days all of the time.

Yet, just like that the following day can be as tranquil and serene as a quiet little brook, where the birds fly so ever flawless and squirrels scamper all about. This is the kind of day where your best friend could spit you in the face, and your only response would be "I love you, soooo very much." Sadly, these sorts of days are as rare as a politician who really knows what he or she is talking about.

So why is it that at times the good days seem so far away, while the bad ones remain as constant as the north star? This is the question I find myself pondering all the time. I suppose it ranks up there with the notorious question "What is the meaning of life?" However, I

temperatures?!? This question has probably been asked on many college campuses, where this phenomom usually is centered, thousands of times over. It obviously cannot be for comfort; walking from the Library to the Main Building with half my legs exposed is almost as comfortable as doggiepadding in Lake Bodynumb, Coldsore, Alaska. Maybe it's the convenience: You wake up late, all your jeans are in the wash, your jogging pants are ripped beyond recognition, so in a crisis you turn to your shorts to save the day.

Of course, I see this victory as being purely Pyrrhic. When you are reduced to wearing shorts in the middle of January, I think a little lifestyle evaluation is in order. Goosepimply flesh and pale white legs may turn some people on, but give me good old American jeans and sweatpants any chilly day.

Jeez, I didn't know I felt so strongly about the subject. I apologize if I blew too much steam arguing...WAIT A MINUTE! I renege that apology. My brain must be feeling the effects of the frostbite, numbing my perception and rational thinking. I must have been crazy, wearing shorts in the dead of winter. Man, I knew I was running out of column ideas, but this is ridiculous.

For all those who feel the need to wear shorts year round, I salute you and question your sanity. For the rest of you, well, I always question everyone's sanity. And as for me, I'm cranking up my electric blanket and preparing to enjoy some nice herbal tea. See you next time in the hopefully warm FRESHMAN ZONE.

believe I've found a real simple solution which I'm sure will make all of you extremely happy.

Friends, the answer to this puzzling question has been under my nose for so very long. The key is simply that there are no good or bad days, only days made up of human choices. Life is one big enormous choice, one right after the other, and the only bearing on bad and good is choice. It is up to us if we make the proper choices, our days shall be sculpted by our very own minds.

Of course, we are human and thus we shall not always succeed. But this isn't necessarily a bad thing. Think how boring life would be if all our choices and days were always good and proper. Human beings need to be challenged and from these challenges enlightenment can be reached.

So the next time you find yourself saying "Gosh, I really hate Monday" ask yourself just what it is about Monday which makes you hate it. Perhaps, then you will understand and learn that with a few simple changes Monday may become a good day.

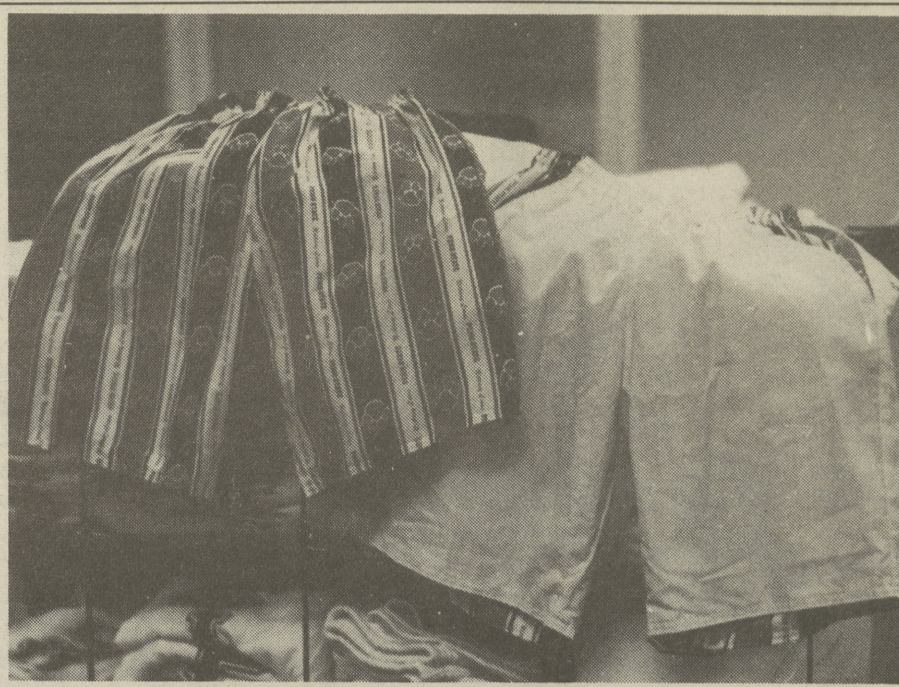


Photo by: DIANA MICERI

The Happy Valley Diary:

Roommates: Jack Tripper, Saccharin Fiends, and Microwaveable Cats

By Damion Strommer

Two summers ago, I was digging for worms in cow manure with a couple of good old boys in upstate Pennsylvania. I was on a fishing trip with a friend from school: taking it easy away from summer session at University Park. These guys started asking questions about college life and eventually they asked about my roommates. When I told them I shared a house with four girls, all hell broke loose. They started beating on each other like monkeys and slopping in dung, they were so excited. "Damnation! We got us a real-life Jack Tripper!" one crooned. He punched the other in his shoulder so hard the guy nearly went ass-over-teakettle. The worms in my bucket were squirming. I was nearly a celebrity...

I moved in with my new roommates after being kicked off campus. It was a blessing in disguise. I was dying to get out of the dorms and here was my chance. I knew four girls who needed a roommate and they said it might as well be me.

My friends and I had lived in a house next door to the girls during the Summer Session after my freshman year. They were terrified of my housemates and me at the start of that summer, probably because we spent most of our time staggering around, as college boys will, half out of our minds on whiskey, calling over to their porch and inviting them to our place. At first they politely declined, content to roast shrimp kabobs and drink sea-breezes among themselves. But soon they realized just how harmless we were, and by July we were throwing massive parties.

Bridget, Brenda, Melanie, and Rhonda. Melanie and Brenda were from Pittsburgh; Rhonda was from Erie, Bridget from Philadelphia. For the next two years I was privy to the

social procedures and bathroom etiquette so crucial to the successful cohabitation of college women. For example, don't leave the shower curtain pushed to one side because it won't dry and will grow mildew. Keep the door closed or the cat will get out. Don't fart when others are in the room. Be careful not to eat food in the refrigerator that's not yours, but if you do, well... that's O.K. too. It was all very simple and in no time became routine.

My roommates were each of a different breed, and that's probably why our situation worked out so well. They were diverse. Bridget, the social activist; Brenda, the unmotivated, dubious student; Melanie, wealthy, dainty, a cat lover; Rhonda from a small town, a long-legged, reluctant Venus. They never fought, and life at 515 East Beaver Avenue was quite placid, a fact that to this day I appreciate but cannot explain. It should have been chaos.

My neighbor for three college years and good friend used to say, "So Damion, what are your sugar-cravin' roommates up to?" *My sugar-cravin' roommates.* While this is not altogether true, it is probably the best, most succinct description of them. Their energy was inexplicable. It was as if they lived on Hershey bars, cappuccino, and cocaine. In fact, they ate mostly health food, ate like rabbits really, all week long, but then on Friday they would come back from the liquor store with something like six bottles of booze and damn near drink it all in two days.

Two of them worked at the Women's Resource Center, a shelter for battered women, but the way they battered themselves was nearly criminal. Whether it was aerobics until they puked, shredded knees from blacktop basketball, or running into thorn bushes chasing a frisbee, they punished themselves

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