

Finals week is silly

by John Einolf

In a little over a week, it's finals week. This is a silly time. For the next handful of days we're all going to be frantically racing to write five or six papers, learn an entire semester's worth of a couple classes and basically realize how badly we've blown things off.

It's one of those times you pull out your calculator and sit down for some heavy rationalizing. "Hmmm... divide that...uhhh...all right! All I need on the final is a 98% and I've got the C! Life is good!" (Come to think of it, I don't think I've ever used my calculator since the beginning of the year for anything but grades.)

So suddenly it's time to set the curve on the final in a class that you haven't attended in two months, except for convenient exam dates. Life is Hell.

Last finals week I swear I've never seen my mind wander so far while I'm trying to study. I'd sit over a book, realize that I had 450 pages to read and being

overwhelmed, I'm suddenly daydreaming about everything from the existence of God to what I should do with that big white block of ice that used to be my freezer.

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another great way to avoid studying is napping. There's nothing like a nap to avoid studying, even if you've only woken up an hour before.

My roommate last semester had an interesting approach to finals week (speaking of my old roommate, I think the reason we wound up together

Learning doesn't have to be as hard as it is. It could be simple.

They should put all the information from all our classes into cartoon format. Let's face it, there isn't a Loony Tunes cartoon anywhere that we wouldn't watch instead of trudging

thermonuclear chemistry in the middle of the Smurf village while Sprite and Chim-Chim write out equations on Mr. Whoopee's 3-D Blackboard. Never again would anyone complain of a lifeless teacher's mumbling monotone or a textbook's phenomenal blandness.

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I'd suddenly want to organize the addresses of everyone I'd ever known. I'd start reading the sides of pop cans and articles in magazines that I wouldn't read if I was waiting in a doctor's office for three days. Oh, and

is because neither of us checked the "I would prefer a non-slob roommate" box on our green housing forms.). He started off a week and a half before by buying a few cases of Koch beer (the Spam of beers) and sat in front of a T.V. until his folks picked him up. Needless to say, Behrend wasn't begging him to come back this semester.

But, I've found a solution for these finals blues.

through the monotony of the average college textbook.

After a Simpsons episode, it seems everyone has memorized the entire thing, strolling around quoting their favorite bits from the night's show. When they toss up a cartoon before a movie in Reed, we still have it memorized from childhood.

Imagine everything we learn simplified by cartoons. Colorful little elves explaining

Well, that might take some stress off finals week.

But stress is one of the joys of college. Sleep deprivation, showerless days, living life completely devoid of any monetary wealth, and hoping I still have points on my magic Penn State ID that buys me food all the time; all simple pleasures of college life. This being fact, PSB could probably pay all the bills just by selling Vivarin and cigarettes for the next couple weeks. Just a thought. Good luck yahl.

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Iraqi citizens were losers in the war

by Mike Royko

"Jog my memory," Slats Grobnik said. "Didn't we say that we didn't have no beef with the Iraqi people, that it was Saddam Hussein and his muscle guys we were out to get?"

That's right. Our commander in chief made that perfectly clear. As a kinder and gentler nation, we recognized that the ordinary Iraqi was little more than a helpless victim of Saddam's tyranny.

"Why'd we say that?"

Because it is true. It was Saddam who made the decision to invade Kuwait, not some shopkeeper. It was Saddam who decided to set fire to Kuwait's oil wells, not some camel merchant. It was Saddam who fired those Scud missiles, not some street sweeper.

"Yeah, that's why I think we made a big mistake saying we were mad at Saddam and not his people."

Why? We weren't mad at his people.

"Then how come his people got all the lumps and Saddam is still alive and kicking?"

Look, you don't understand the pragmatism of geopolitics. If you did, you wouldn't ask so silly a question. You have no appreciation of the need for stability in the volatile Mideast.

"I guess not. But we're

saying we won the war, right?"

Of course. And there can be no arguing with that fact. We fulfilled the U.N. mandate to get Saddam out of Kuwait. And we protected American interests.

"OK, what about those dead kids."

What dead kids?

"The ones I'm seeing on my TV set every night."

You mean the Kurdish refugees? Yes, very unfortunate.

"What'y a mean, unfortunate? You sound like one of those State Department guys."

All right, tragic, then.

"Yeah, tragic. I read where about 1,000 of those Kurds are dying every day. And that's just from not enough food, the cold weather, getting sick, not having any docs. That don't include the ones that Saddam's storm troopers bumped off before they could get away."

Well, we are trying to help. We've been air-dropping blankets, food, medicine and other essentials to help ease their plight.

"We really eased a few of them right out of their plight for good. I read where about a dozen Kurds got squashed by falling bundles."

Accidents happen. That would be considered collateral damage.

"That's it. That's what this

whole war was about, when you start adding everything up. Collateral damage. That means innocent bystanders get killed, right?"

More or less, yes. But remember, we did kill Iraqi soldiers.

"Right. But were they his real army? What are they called, the Republican Guards?"

No, he kept them in



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reserve. Unfortunately, they escaped unscathed.

"So the soldiers we killed were the ones who got drafted and shipped out as dog meat?"

I suppose they couldn't be mistaken for one of Field Marshall Rommel's Panzer divisions.

"So in a way, aren't mopes like that innocent bystanders,

too? Remember the one who surrendered and it turned out he was from Chicago and got drafted when he went to visit his ma? Talk about a bystander."

Yes, they weren't the most ferocious of potential combatants.

"And how many regular Iraqi civilians got killed. About 100,000 maybe?"

I doubt if we'll ever have any accurate figures. But as a military historian once said: That's the breaks.

"Now we got the Kurds dying or having to run away to Iran or Turkey, where they aren't going to be wanted and will probably live in miserable camps."

It's sad, but being a Kurd has never been easy. Besides, they made the decision to have an uprising. One can argue that they should have weighed the risks more carefully.

"Hey, we told them they ought to throw Saddam out. They thought we'd give 'em some help."

Wait a minute. We didn't put anything in writing. The Kurds have absolutely nothing that will hold up in court.

"No, all we did was get them all pumped up. It's the old story: 'Let's you and him fight.'"

All right, I'll concede the war didn't turn out perfectly. Wars seldom do. In 1946, who

would have thought Japan would some day be buying our best golf courses?

"Yeah, but at least we got to string up General Tojo. But there's Saddam, still in charge of Iraq. Not only that, we got the Kurds stirred up and now he's getting rid of them, which is something he's always wanted to do anyway. And he's still got his Republican Guard army, so he can keep any other troublemakers in line. He's eating three squares a day, and he's got his billions of bucks stashed around the world in case he ever has to blow town."

Ah, but many of our European allies are saying he should be tried as a war criminal.

"Oh, yeah, a war criminal trial. When it's over, they can send him a letter."

What kind of letter? "It can say: 'You have been found guilty of being a war criminal. Please hang yourself immediately, or this account will be turned over to a collection agency.'"

You don't have the right mental attitude.

"Just write it off to collateral brain damage."

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