

North Avenue Review

[newest issue!](#)

[home](#)

[about nar](#)

[our mission](#)

[back issues](#)

[the staff](#)

[submissions](#)

[contacting us](#)

Winter 1998

NAR ON: Music

- [Music and Moods](#) -- *DeAnna Janecek*
- [Great Music Almighty](#) -- *Anonymous*
- [Review: Negativland's Sipsedi](#) -- *Kiefer*

NAR ON: Other

- [Information Overload 2](#) -- *Kiefer*
- [Engineering Management 250](#) -- *Bill Manofsky*
- [Figure Out "Why" And Live!](#) -- *Felix Bunke*
- [One Man Wondering And Hoping](#) -- *James McDuffie*
- [A Very Brady Christmas: The Quiet Beginnings](#) -- *Steve Lucky*
- [As I Lie Awake](#) -- *Lord Wingnut*
- [The Sport Of the Next Millennium: Trunking](#) -- *James McDuffie*
- [Time Displacement](#) -- *DeAnna Janecek*

Issues Currently On-Line

- [Spring 1997](#)
- [Spring 1996](#)
- [Winter 1996](#)
- [Fall 1995](#)
- [Spring 1995](#)
- [Winter 1995](#)
- [Fall 1994](#)

[The North Avenue Review](#) is a student publication of the [Georgia Institute of Technology](#). It is published four times a year by [our staff](#) composed of people who write for us, submit art, help with layout, show up to meetings, etc. for the students of Georgia Tech. It has become a (relatively) long-standing tradition as an alternative form of expression.

Mail suggestions, questions, or submissions to NAR at

dsadmp@prism.gatech.edu.

North Avenue Review

A Georgia Tech Publication.

Music and Moods

by DeAnna Janecek

No, it's not the title of one of those classical CD's with the thunderstorm in the background, yet it does have to do, partly, with one of those compact discs. Why is it that listening to the sounds of a rainforest off to the slow melody of Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata" has the ability to relax a person? Music tends to have that effect on people whether they realize it or not; the ability to create a mood swing in the listener. The three types of music discussed here can create the most basic moods: relaxation, hyperactivity, sadness, and happiness.

Music such as classical, some forms of "New Age", or even a really slow pop song, have the tendency to create a rather peaceful, sleepy mind frame in the listener. Perhaps it's the slow rhythm of the music, becoming a lullaby to the listener or maybe there isn't quite so much to pay attention to in the music, no guitar solos to startle one out of their near-sleep. This is not the best music to study to, especially considering that some subjects can create a feeling like this on their own.

Admit it: you've done it before. Cruising down the road, listening to the radio, when your favorite rock song hits the airwaves. Before you know it, you're no longer going a reasonable 45 MPH; your hitting 60 MPH with the radio blaring so loud, the only way you know you're being pulled over is from the blue lights flashing in the rear view since you can't hear the sirens. (Not that that's ever personally happened to the author of this ...well, the finding herself at 60 MPH, but not the blue lights.) A fast tempo and loud instruments makes a person feel rather reckless. Movies portray scenes of fights with a hard core rock soundtrack in the background (unless it's in a bar or western; then it's a hard core country soundtrack, which will be discussed later), while most any large, live rock performance (be it alternative, electronic, punk, etc.) will manage to create some form of physical movement, largely in the form of mosh pits, "head banging", or dancing.

The one type of music that can create the most diverse moods is that of country music. The first feeling that's possible when listening to country is that of depression. The artist's significant other has had an affair or has left the singer, while taking the car and leaving the artist with only the trailer (yes, the author has heard a country song that had to do with the trailer bit). The next form of emotion that can be felt is happiness; the song may have a quicker pace, enough to line dance to or the lyrics may be happier (the artist is now living in a mansion and has married the significant other who realized that they really were happier with the artist).

Of course, this is only a sampling of the ways that music can affect one's moods. And these are only the more common reactions; there are probably other reactions as well depending on the individual. And always be aware that there are whole areas of other

[newest issue!](#)

[home](#)

[about nar](#)

[our mission](#)

[back issues](#)

[the staff](#)

[submissions](#)

[contacting us](#)

types of music to be considered, so be wary of the music you choose to listen to.
'Cause who knows what you might decide to do. After all, disco could cause the urge
to wear 100% polyester

[Back to Winter 1998 Table of Contents](#)

[North Avenue Review](#)

A Georgia Tech Publication.

Great Music Almighty

by Anonymous

College students can usually be classified as either of two ways when it comes to finances. They are either broke or have money and are too tight to spend it. Of course there are the few who love to throw around money. But these are people are just what I said, few. Whenever there exists away to get something free we will by all means jump at it. It is human nature to prefer the free to the costly. Usually when the weather is not inclement there are credit card and/or other organizations with a table along the walkway to the student center offering free gifts. All you have to do to get, say a free T-shirt or Pez dispenser is to give away and insane amount of information about yourself. They then use this information to perform market analysis so that they can sell your name to businesses that will then either call you or send you tons of mail asking you to purchase crap you could care less about. My point is that most people know this and yet they continue to sign away so that they can get something free! Even though this author gets a kick out of annoying phone solicitors he does not engage in such intrusive techniques for the sole reason of something free. One reason that MP3 duplicates of copyrighted material is so popular is because they are free. Also many people would rather have just one song from a particular CD than buy the whole thing for a certain song. But since the material that is typically available in MP3 format is copyrighted, legal issues arise.

The recording industry is in an uproar against such distribution. Especially interested in such activities is the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) which represents nearly 90% of those involved with the recording industry in the United States. The RIAA is very adamant about protecting the interests of its members. As such, they very vigorously and consistently fight piracy. The RIAA represent artists and recording companies that see piracy as greatly affecting their profit margin. These groups have right for concern since music is they way they earn a living. Songs and CDs are the result of an artistes hard work and they feel cheated whenever they see their work pirated. I am sure most people would be angry if they found out they failed a class because their homework was stolen and then they were accused of cheating because of this fact. Intellectual property rights were created for the benefit of the artists so they would not get the burnt end of the deal. People are so angry at piracy because it hits them where it hurts, in the pocketbook.

There are those who argue that the recording industry and the artist have enough money already. People are angry that it costs \$18 to purchase a CD of their favorite artists. College students especially are very interested in music and are the main purchasers of CDs. But college students are also usually the most in need of money. They have tuition to pay and books for classes and there is rarely any money left over for leisure. Also when it comes to concerts, it is usually the lower priced shows that are favored by college students. I repeatedly here people tell me that \$15 to go to a concert

[newest issue!](#)

[home](#)

[about nar](#)

[our mission](#)

[back issues](#)

[the staff](#)

[submissions](#)

[contacting us](#)

is a rip off. Big name commercial artists are also guilty of overcharging in the range of \$20 - \$30 for a performance. These big name performers are usually millionaires and still overcharge because they know people will pay it. Lesser know artists hold lower priced concerts for the sole reason of attracting people to get interested in their music. Many people feel that the artists owe something to their listeners. They feel that the artist would be nowhere without the audience and as such should try to make it easier for the audience to listen to their music. These economic pressures cause many people to start up the task of copyright infringement.

The MP3 audio format is significant because of the amount of compression that it offers for audio information while maintaining superior quality. Before it was in wide spread use, as it is today, high quality audio recordings took up obscene amounts of space. Using the WAV format popular on Windows computers, 1 minute of audio at CD quality sound (44.1 kHz) takes of ten megabytes of disk space. Such a file converted to MP3 format would take up 10-12 times less space. The sound quality of MP3 files is not in the least affected; they sound true to the original. This is because the format utilizes stereo effects and limits the bandwidth of the sound information. It does so in such a way that the human ear can not tell the difference, only a computer could "hear" the difference. Such compression allows files to be sent faster over the Internet. Modem users who would have not wasted their time on fifty megabytes sound files now gladly trade MP3s with others. In fact modem users make up the majority of users and distributors of copyrighted songs. The fact that their connection is only temporary makes it hard to track them and prosecute.

On the other hand college students usually have high speed connections to the Internet that are usually left on. Usually the students that download MP3s set up servers on their own computers to allow others to download from their collections. And then other people download from these computers and set up sites of their own. It seems that it is fashionable to have an MP3 site.

Downloading from the computers of others on the local network in the dorms is not the only way in which MP3s are acquired. When most people visit MP3 sites they go looking for a specific song. Because of this fact search engines that search many different MP3 sites were set up. Most likely those who wanted an easier way to get their favorite songs set up these search engines. There are many available and new ones spring up everyday while others are either shut down or voluntarily closed. The most reliable sites are those that are located in other countries that typically do not care about U.S. copyrights. A funny thing to note is that some of these search engines contained links to computers on Georgia Tech. Another less popular method is the transfer of files on Internet Relay Chat (IRC). There exist entire channels set up for the illegal transfer of MP3 music files. All one has to do is go into the channel and then type a special code to ask the different scripts running in the channel if they have a certain file. The scripts then respond to the user and tell them the result of their search. All the person has to do then is request the file to be sent and wait on it to be downloaded. Such methods that make it so easy to obtain MP3s are one reason that they are so distributed. The solution to what to be done about MP3s is clear-cut to groups like

RIAA. To them stiff criminal penalties for people who have MP3s of copyrighted material is the only answer. The actually MP3 format itself is not the problem to them, just the use of it for the distribution of copyrighted material. On the other side of the matter are the people who have MP3s. Many of them claim that it is only a trial before they buy the actual CD. Many simply listen to the song for a little while then delete it. Others get really interested in an artist through such means and then go on to purchase the actual CD. In this manner such MP3s can be viewed as favorable. But the laws being passed are not so kind. Recently a law was passed that makes the distribution of copyrighted material with out gaining profit punishable by up to five year in federal prison. The anti-piracy groups are steadily using their influence to make it legally hard to get songs in digital format. But there is no way that they will ever stop it. It is too widespread and easy to be controlled; the computer industry knows this first hand in their battles against piracy. The next millennium will see a battle for control of intellectual property, which side will eventually win is a hard question to answer, but my bet is on the pirates.

[Back to Winter 1998 Table of Contents](#)

[North Avenue Review](#)

A Georgia Tech Publication.

Review: Negativland's Ipidessp

by Kiefer

"Hopefully, uh, what you're compiling is going to be, a, uh, positive, uh, reflection of what Pepsi's all about, and the makers of their advertising, so I think it's fair to say, if that's all the case, uh yeah, this is part of the, uh, marketing spin of Pepsi-Cola." - "The Smile You Can't Hide"

Negativland, the San Francisco based group previously known for getting sued by U2 and for playing mind games with the media, have taken on a new target with their latest release Pissidpe: the "Cola Wars". Released late last year, Issidepp is 43 minutes of media collage making a point about the absurdity of the continual, constant advertising of Pepsi and Coke. (For those wondering why the name of the CD is changing every time I write it, it's because trademark law made the group unable to put the actual title of the CD on the package, so instead anagrams of the title are used throughout. Calling a phone number given in the booklet would inform those not so proficient at word puzzles that the "correct" name is DisPepsi.) While this was a difficult release to find (I went to about 10 stores before I finally found it at Criminal Records), I truly believe that the hunt was worth the prize.

For those unfamiliar with Negativland, a brief description of their style is in order. Negativland (www.negativland.com) is a "music" group who have been using a cut-and-paste technique for their art for over 17 years, on both their weekly radio show "Over the Edge" on KPFA in Berkley, CA, and their albums. This technique consists of taking hundreds of hours of sound, from home movies/tapes, recordings of themselves, recordings of other artists, television, radio, bootlegs, telephone calls, and anything else imaginable, and combining them into a commentary on all of the above.

Believe it or not, this method can result in a melodic piece, as illustrated many times on this new CD. While many previous efforts have been attacked by several critics for having no harmonic focus, and coming off as pure noise, Issidepp is definitely a marking point of the growth of Negativland as a musical force, where not only the "straight songs" have a clear melody, but so do the media barrages.

As stated above, Pisideps is a look at the foolishness that is the advertising schemes for Coke and Pepsi. As suggested by One World Advertising, a group which monitors advertising strategies that helped with the production of this recording, both of the colas are so well known across the world by now, future advertising is beyond pointless. While we might like watching the Coke bears, or trying to figure out how the heck the Spice Girls are supposed to make us want to be part of Generation Next, they really aren't effecting market share anymore. Idseppsi looks back upon the golden age of the Cola Wars, and reminds us what a silly, silly trip it's been.

With tracks like "Why Is This Commercial?" and "A Most Successful Formula" reflecting

[newest issue!](#)

[home](#)

[about nar](#)

[our mission](#)

[back issues](#)

[the staff](#)

[submissions](#)

[contacting us](#)

on the oddness of having celebrities hawk products (with everyone from Ricardo Montalban to Michael J. Fox to Vanna White to William Christopher (from M*A*S*H and after M*A*S*H) making guest appearances), "Happy Hero" singing on the cult of celebrity (and someone who seems to bear a striking resemblance to Michael Jackson), Negativland is able to slowly weave together a longer narrative about not only advertising, but our society's obsession with fame. And "All She Called About", "I Believe It's L", and "Humanitarian Effort" remind us of Coke's darkest hour, New Coke. Finally, we get a disturbing look into the minds of the advertising executives' minds with "Aluminum or Glass: The Memo."

After all is said and done, you might not be dancing to most of the CD (not that you couldn't, but it just would seem right), but you will find yourself playing it over again, not only to hear what you missed the first time, but also to hear what you didn't miss again. And you will find yourself singing "Drink It Up" to yourself the next time you're in the soft drink aisle at Publix.

"I did not know this when I paid Eleanor Roosevelt \$35,000 to make a commercial for margarine. She reported that her mail was equally divided: "One half was sad because I had damaged my reputation; the other half was happy, because I had damaged my reputation." - "A Most Successful Formula"

[Back to Winter 1998 Table of Contents](#)

[North Avenue Review](#)

A Georgia Tech Publication.

Information Overload 2: Electric Boogaloo

by Kiefer

(It was noted that my first column seemed to be less a summary of the news and the newsworthy, and more a series of ideas for NARticles that I was too lazy to flesh out completely. Maybe so, but every thought doesn't require a couple/two/three pages dedicated to it, and it's impossible to write a breaking news column on a quarterly basis, with a two/three week lag time between deadline and distribution. This is what it is, so deal with it, Pink Boy.)

[newest issue!](#)

[home](#)

[about nar](#)

[our mission](#)

[back issues](#)

[the staff](#)

[submissions](#)

[contacting us](#)

Septuplets: Should we be encouraging couples to use fertility drugs to promote the possibilities of multiple births? Multiple births that endanger the lives of the children it helps to create? Especially when these multiple births cost the already overburdened health care community over \$1 Million, billed to the public?...I'm sorry, but you cannot blame everything on El Nino...Attention Dilbert fans: You're playing right into management's hands. By venting your righteous anger at inefficient corporate policies and idiot supervisors through the placement of comic strips on the wall, you merely gain the illusion of control, while doing nothing to remedy the situation. A Dilbert-ized cubicle is a complacent cubicle...<http://www.suck.com>...This is a gratuitous plug for the NAR's screening of Craig Baldwin's "Sonic Outlaws" February 26th at 8 PM in the Student Center Theater...I just saw "Scream 2" (opening weekend). I was very impressed by the movie, which was smart in a MST-3000 kind of way (which is to say that it had nothing to say, but it said it in a very witty, informed manner). In the light of morning, however, I'm not sure if the trend this movie is part of is a good or bad thing. Either this trend is that of the mass media becoming more self-aware and knowing, which in my book is a positive; or it's a vapidization of intelligence, in which self-aware smugness has replaced actually saying anything. Is this a case of middlebrow art aiming high, or highbrow art sinking low?...When promoting "Diversity" in the workplace (or anywhere else, for that matter), please keep in mind that to gain the benefits of differing viewpoints, ideas, and opinions often touted by those flying the Diversity banner, one must incorporate people of different backgrounds, cultures, and understandings. All too often I have seen a group of middle-class, all-American, college-educated, Judeo-Christian, free-market economist employees considered a hallmark of Diversity, just because they represent a "good mix" of racial and sexual genetic makeup. Remember: there is less difference between a white American male and a African-American female than between a Japanese-American male and a Japanese male...As can be seen by all the yellow signs around campus, it is now against the law to go rummaging through garbage dumpsters. What does it say about our society that the only way we can think of to fix the homeless problem is by making homelessness illegal? (And as a side thought: In what manner are they going to enforce this law? I have a feeling that it will be ignored by the police except for right before big alumni drawing football games, parents' weekends, new student recruitment weekends, and other high profile events, when the law will be used to "beautify" campus.)

(The opinions expressed above are not those of the North Avenue Review, which has no opinion, nor even necessarily those of the author, who has all too many opinions. They are merely a collection of various thoughts, beliefs, and ideas collected over the

previous three months. However, feel free to write to the paper at the addresses in the front on any or all of the above.)

[Back to Winter 1998 Table of Contents](#)

[North Avenue Review](#)

A Georgia Tech Publication.

Engineering Management 250

by **Bill Manofsky**

I am a Georgia Tech Alumni of the ME class of 82. I spent several years in the aerospace industry where I designed flight hardware for the Space Shuttle and the Atlas II missile, was on the Tomahawk and Advance Stealth cruise missiles. My brother graduated from the University of Tennessee and later became a flight instructor on the Space Shuttle.

We both left the aerospace industry in dismay.

I recently wrote a paper for a graduate management class I took last quarter. This paper has caused considerable stir among those who have read it. The paper contains insight that I wish I had been exposed to when I was at TECH. Consider it a voice from someone who is 20 years further down the road.

I am bothered to see young people being aligned to go into engineering simply because they are good at Math and Science. This is propaganda. You can make a better living doing other things.

The message the paper presents will really sink home when basic needs such as paying a mortgage or raising a family overcome any technical zeal you may currently have. I hope it helps.

Engineering Leadership, a Dilemma

FORWARD

Dr. Richardson,

You made several statements in class on the 20th of November that really struck a nerve.

You mentioned that tacking on a fifth year to engineering curriculum is a solution to the dilemma of why engineers don't stay in engineering. I'm an engineer who has made the move into marketing, and I have no plans to move back.

I would like to use a case study format for this paper using my background as the reference to describe my perception of what I consider the engineering leadership dilemma we experience today.

Personally, if I had to go through a five-year degree, I would have gone broke at the end of the fourth year and would not have finished. I actually paid for my last quarter's tuition with the insurance proceeds from a car wreck I had gotten into.

[newest issue!](#)

[home](#)

[about nar](#)

[our mission](#)

[back issues](#)

[the staff](#)

[submissions](#)

[contacting us](#)

As a co-op student, it already took me five and a half years to get my degree anyway, and I was \$15,000 in debt when I graduated in 1982. Adding another year would just add to the misery and another year of lost income that would take probably a decade of 5% pay raises and promotions to make up.

BACKGROUND

My Father graduated with a degree in Industrial Design from the Cleveland Institute of Art. He was a highly skilled artist but realized that in order to feed his family, he had to find a **Real** job. He said that most artists only make money on their works after they are dead. Few rarely become Andy Wharhols or Pablo Picassos.

I emulated my Dad. I thought of him as a creative genius and an inventor. He is very talented and is always coming up with unique design solutions to complex problems.

He took a job in the industrial design department at a leading manufacturer who supplied large retailers with bicycles and lawnmowers. The company had been founded by a mechanical engineer who married into a wealthy family in Ohio. He used his wife's endowment to fund the startup. My father and a small handful of other designers developed inventions that generated considerable income for his employer. After twenty years with the company, he got "his place in the sun," as he calls it, by being promoted to the corporate Director of Design. My family benefited financially from this position but strangely enough, we were in no way affluent. What struck me odd was that for his position, he was not considered an executive nor did he receive stock options until much later in his employment. Yet, he and his staff had sole responsibility for designing the entire product line upon which this corporation was able to survive and prosper.

The "rich guys" in the company were in sales, marketing and the executive VP ranks. They got the perks, the bonuses, and lived affluently. The design group found itself much lower in the food chain. The engineering group- the group responsible for placing every nut and bolt in as financially efficient a way possible for large scale manufacturing- was at a level lower than the design group.

Since he was my dad, though I thought the world of what he did and was greatly influenced by his creative abilities. I grew up in a home that had a full woodshop at my disposal in which I spent a great deal of time. At the age of thirteen, I demonstrated my early engineering design skills by building the runner up entry in the All-American SoapBox Derby in the State of Tennessee.

At that age, though, I just did not make the connection that creativity in American industry does not always equate to personal wealth. I was just a kid having fun on a summer project.

My dad lasted three years in his new Director position. He was defeated by nepotism within the company. The benevolent CEO passed on, and a son who lacked the leadership skills and foresight to run the company assumed the top post. The son

refused to listen to the design suggestions of the retailers and began to dictate design from the top office. My father was fired when he was the first to challenge the unprofitable direction in which this steered the company. He also found himself in the position of scapegoat for all the failures the new CEO brought about.

The company showed poor earnings for the subsequent decade after my father left. It was later sold to a holding company in Sweden. Though, he was not entirely responsible for the company's profitability while he was there, his design skills did have a profound influence.

Losing his job meant economic disaster for my family and was the reason I ended up paying most of my way through college. It was several years before my dad would get a comparable position at another company.

I graduated in the top third of my class from a private college prep school in Tennessee. My SAT scores were in the top 90 percentile. Since I excelled in math and sciences, the guidance counselor and others- even the printed SAT Result Form- suggested I look to pursue an engineering career. The only career advice I ever received from Dad was to NOT to go into engineering. He recommended that I study economics and business. I should have listened to him.

I attended the Georgia Institute of Technology where I settled into the Mechanical Engineering program. I was quickly disillusioned by teacher to student ratios of 200:1 and instructors who did not have a command of the English language. Despite numerous setbacks and detours over five-and-a-half years, I persisted through the program and graduated with a whopping C average.

On several occasions at Tech we were fed the line of propaganda: "More corporate CEO's came from Tech engineering than any other school". I realize now that this was just another selling point to justify their existence and generate pride within the Tech organization. What they did not say was that these CEO's were no longer engineers and had gone to other schools for their advance degrees in either finance or marketing. No one ever made mention that they did not make the CEO level up through the engineering ranks. It took years of observation for me to realize that they had left this important point out.

After graduation, I entered the aerospace industry where I designed flight hardware for the space shuttle, was part of the Tomahawk cruise missile design team, and was heavily involved in stealth technology. I used to take pride in telling people what I did. Now, I could not buy a cup of coffee with a dime plus my background. I really thought I was making a contribution and that someday I would get a big payoff for my efforts.

I also quickly learned that I was to use little of what I had studied. From this did I feel like I had wasted my time in school? Yes. I learned more practical real-life engineering at the auto racetrack where I worked as a part-time racing mechanic while going to school. That was a real world laboratory. While my class mates were working on nebulous senior design projects like: "The Design of a Box that will Prevent an Egg

from Breaking when Thrown from the Roof of a Tall Building", I was working on high performance racing engines.

I am astounded at what I was paid as an aerospace engineer in the mid eighties compared to what I see what new grads are getting in the semiconductor equipment industry today. Other professions start out low too, but there are significant opportunities to make more depending on how aggressive a person is. Yet still in engineering, salaries are inherently flat no matter how talented one is.

At General Dynamics, engineering management promoted mediocrity. There were no such things as "hot young engineers" who rapidly promoted up the ranks in the company. Unfortunately, I see the same mentality in the semiconductor equipment industry.

LEADERSHIP POSITIONS AREN'T IN ENGINEERING ANY MORE - OR MONEY TALKS, BS WALKS

Six years ago, I was working to get a job through a headhunter that only placed junior military officers recently freed from military service. I and a handful of other former junior officers were exposed to two days of intensive resume writing and interviewing seminars before they would let us interview with their corporate clients. In one of the discussions, we were presented with some very enlightening career direction information that had a profound impact on me. They told us that all corporations are structured the same way. In most cases, corporations are broken up into three groups as follows:

1. Sales/Marketing
2. Engineering/Manufacturing
3. Staff (Human Resources, Finance, Public Relations, Legal, etc.)

As former military officers, most of us had engineering degrees. Strangely enough, the headhunter's goal was to convince us to go into sales/marketing and not engineering/manufacturing. In fact, we were being looked at for our ability to promote into senior management through sales and marketing. Those whom they thought did not have promotion potential via this route were asked to interview elsewhere.

We were told that 90% of senior executives come from sales/marketing, that this is THE fast track. We should not fear sales since it is just the entry level to this fast track and that we should expect to promote into sales management WITHIN TWO YEARS. It was also suggested that during our careers we get MBA's from name universities to improve our chances for the highest level of promotion.

We were strongly encouraged to avoid engineering positions, since fewer than 10% promote out of engineering/manufacturing into the executive level. An entry level engineer should expect it to take at least ten years before his next promotion. (My

aerospace experience held this to be all too true).

Lastly, we were told that a small minority of senior executives come from staff positions and that this area should also be avoided also.

I was dumbfounded at hearing this. They had hit the nail on the head. After fumbling through 8 years in the aerospace industry, which resulted in dejection and non-opportunities, a light had finally come on. I just wish someone had told me this when I graduated from college. I should have immediately tried for sales after graduation, but since I was the typical introverted and impressionable engineer, I was convinced I would go off and be the next Werner Von Braun at NASA. It took a long while for me to realize that you don't pay the mortgage designing parts of spacecraft.

I can understand the headhunter's tact from a financial standpoint also. Who would you rather have in your back pocket as a conduit for corporate placement fees: engineering managers who place low-paid engineers, or executive vice presidents who hire highly-paid general managers?

Ask yourself why the rest of the 75 people taking your class are going for the Masters in Engineering Management instead of off getting advanced engineering degrees. I think their main motivation is for the opportunity for a better income and the opportunity to move up out of the dregs of lower level engineering without having to get an advanced engineering degree. Those who hold tight to their engineering ideals are doomed to a life of low-paying jobs.

I think that they, like me, have figured out the "system". One can't advance into management without an advanced degree, to make more money, to improve the family's financial situation, to afford a mortgage, etc. Why would a person go through the struggle of working on a Masters in Mechanical Engineering when one can get their "check in the block" with a much simpler master's program in finance or management that will eventually produce more free time to enjoy the family and home? This is basic needs kind of stuff.

I know the president of a small supplier of filtration components for the semiconductor industry with annual revenues in excess of several hundred million dollars. He used to be a bodyguard for the CEO of a large aerospace company. When the aerospace company sold out, the CEO made him an executive in this spin-off. He eventually was promoted to President Funny thing. From body guard to president. He doesn't have an engineering degree which, would technically qualify him for the position, but the boss liked him. He does have two master's degrees. One is in Industrial Psychology and the other is in an educational discipline.

Does he use the information he learned from these advanced degrees? No, but when the company puts out the prospectus, they certainly mention these two degrees to give him and the company more credibility. Without these masters' degrees, I think the board would have to explain too many times why they have some fellow with only a Bachelor of Arts Degree sitting at the head of the company.

He has his "check in the block". He is also a multi - millionaire from stock options. He is not an engineer.

DYSFUNCTIONAL PROFESSION, DYSFUNCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Engineering is inherently a dysfunctional profession. There are many, many more "Ted Kazinskis" out there that people think. Yet with all their technical training, which is in most cases socially stunting, engineers are asked to lead projects and manage people as they advance up the corporate ranks.

Something has to be amiss when more often than not, I see new grads with 4.0 grad point averages come in new to the job and fall flat on their face. From what I have seen, a 4.0 grade point average indicates mastery at taking tests and doing homework. It gives no indication of the person's creativity or ability to put that knowledge to good use.

All too often I do see non-technical or even non-degreed individuals excel when they hit sales. This is an area where they use all their faculties to make significant accomplishments for the corporation. The world of sales is a much larger arena that they bring the engineers into only when its is technically necessary, only to put the engineers back into their respective boxes before they can place themselves in awkward situations.

I saw a movie several years ago that made the bleak situation in the aerospace industry really sink home.

Two fighter jocks crashed their F-14 out in the desert. After parachuting to safety, they set out looking for help. They ran across this old man living in a beat up trailer in the middle of the desert. In his trailer were pictures of old jet fighters from the 60's and 70's. The old man noticed the F -14 patches on their flight suits and immediately started boasting about how he was part of the F-14 design team and all the nebulous components he had designed for it. He also said that he was now living off his "retirement" from the company. I found this scene quite ironic and so very true. It was also ironic that Hollywood had written this character true-to-life. Are all engineers so easily stereotyped???

I got to experience this same type of situation in real life while working at General Dynamics as an aerospace engineer. One of the senior design engineers I worked with, on his retirement from 30 years with General Dynamics Convair in San Diego, had gone to a jeweler to have his 5, 10, 15, 25, and 30 year gold anniversary year pins melted down to make into a ring. The latter three had quarter-carat diamonds that he was going to have set into the ring. He was astounded when the jeweler called him a couple of days later to let him know that there was not enough real gold in all of the pins to make a complete ring, and that two of the three diamonds were fake. The company had cheated him and he didn't know it until after he had retired. This was a guy who had played a role in the design of the Atlas missile and the Tomahawk cruise

missile. He was important to the survival of the company. He now lives off his meager life savings and a very meager pension in a trailer on the beach in Baja.

My last assignment before I quit the aerospace industry was to design an advanced stealth cruise missile with the top missile design engineer at General Dynamics. I though I had reached the top of the engineering pyramid. Here I was, working side by side with another engineer who had contributed much to the company and the industry. I was quite surprised and dejected when he told me that after 20 years with the company, he only made \$50,000 per year. In 1988, this definitely put him in the lower economic class of the west coast. I saw the financial handwriting on the wall. Twenty years of 5% pay raises (the standard raise that all engineers get) rubber-stamped by engineering management really doesn't amount to much, especially when one lives in Southern California.

To me, this represented a lack of engineering leadership at General Dynamics. Engineering management did not have any leverage to improve the livelihoods of the engineering professionals in their organization. This had a rebound affect that hit these engineering managers as well- Since the pay scales of the engineering ranks were set low, there was no reason for the company to set the pay scales of engineering management very high - a double whammy. There would be too much of an imbalance if engineering management was compensated out of proportion to their subordinates. Engineers are not good at negotiating themselves into higher pay brackets and this is a sad fact.

In engineering, upward mobility is too flat, but accepted as the status quo. The correct course of action would be to quit at the point you found out it would take ten years to promote to a significantly more lucrative position. Well, it does take ten years to promote to the next position as an engineer, but like lemmings we follow the next guy up the ladder over the cliff into the abyss.

Human resources departments do a wonderful job to hold down the compensation paid to upper level engineering managers. They are paid far less than their financially-trained counterparts elsewhere in the company. I was enlightened to this pay disparity by one of the human resource managers at work recently. Admittedly, my company holds salaries low to inhibit people from leaving to form their own companies. It purposely denies future competition the seed money to start. This is an admission by my company that it considers its own in-house engineers to be a valid threat, and the holders of the basic knowledge necessary to successfully compete.

The guys at General Dynamics who got the perks and the rewards were the marketing and sales guys who were all former fighter jocks. Deja-vu to what my father had experienced. I now make more in middle level marketing in the semiconductor industry than a Center Director at NASA.

ENGINEERING LEADERS

I consider Kelly Johnson of Lockheed, the originator of the Skunk Works and the head

of the SR-71 project, the last of the great notable aerospace engineers. I don't think that anyone in this day and time either in an industry or out is able from an engineering standpoint to attain the notoriety that he has. Maybe Andy Grove of Intel can be considered at the same level, but I don't think his reputation extends far enough out of Silicon Valley.

The way Mr. Johnson portrayed himself in his biography, you would think he designed the U-2 and the SR-71 himself. But behind the scenes he had a very talented had picked team of engineers that designed and invented the widgets that came together to form the assemblies that made it all happen. The SR71 was completed in a phenomenal 11 months, from the placing of the original set of requirements, to the rollout of the first aircraft. He had total control of the product and would not involve the customer until he was ready to show it to them. The Air Force and Navy programs I worked on took years to develop.

In his spare time, Kelly would practice solving differential equations related to thermodynamics, heat transfer, and aerodynamics. He was an engineer's engineer. At that time, the larger aerospace companies paid very handsome salaries and bonus packages to keep and motivate their key people. This was a very large carrot for up-and-coming engineers to chase after.

This carrot was taken away from the aerospace industry when the "bean counters" from the government Defense Contracts Agency came in and set engineering pay scales to equal civil servant pay scales. I guess the civil servants working within the aerospace industry saw the disparity in the pay scales and complained. So, as usual, instead of giving the civil servants a pay raise, they went into all the government contractors and drove down civilian pay scales.

Engineering management had no leverage to counter this. It was not like all the aerospace engineers were members of a labor organization that would negotiate for them otherwise, they would have gone on strike. This action by the government cast in concrete that aerospace engineers were slave wagger earners equal to civil servants and had absolutely no leverage as professionals. This condemned them and their families to substandard living conditions for the duration.

Most Aerospace companies are located in large metropolitan areas with high living costs. A whole army of contract aerospace engineers exists (aka: "job shoppers") that feeds talented designers and engineers to the industry. On most of the projects I have worked on, these were the most talented and senior engineers, yet they were not full time employees of the companies. In most cases they got tired of waiting for a management position and opted for a nomadic lifestyle that allowed them to double their income. They are paid by the hour and have learned to negotiate very well as opposed to their "direct" counterparts. They are despised by engineering magement who has to hire them out of necessity. In the long run, they earn incomes substantially higher than their non-contract counterparts but are responsible for their own insurance, Social Security payments and taxes. They usually enjoy the same longevity, and only

get laid off only a couple of weeks before the direct employees do. They are a product of the engineering environment that exists.

I recently had the opportunity to read Lee Iacocca's autobiography. In it, he described how Ford Motor Co. paid for most of his schooling. He got a Master's Degree in Mechanical Engineering. His first assignment was to design a widget for one of the new models. When he realized he would be doing this type of work, he immediately left to go into marketing much to the chagrin of the engineering management who had footed his way.

Mr. Iacocca represents today's engineering leader where Kelly Johnson is a remnant of the past. In marketing, not engineering, Mr. Iacocca was able to become the "father" of the Mustang. In this he used customer demand to drive "his" design. In today's world he was able to be a more successful engineer in the Marketing Department of Ford Motor Company than in the Engineering Department.

My life took an unusual turn as I left the aerospace industry. What I saw in 1987 was that we were badly beating the Soviets at a financial war. They were literally going broke trying to counter all the new weaponry the U.S. was putting up against them. I figured that with the fall of the Soviet Union, I would be out of a job. I was correct. A year after the Berlin wall fell, General Dynamics in San Diego was sold to Hughes Aircraft. Hughes laid off 30,000 of my former co-workers.

By that time, I had safely escaped to Navy Flight School.

By the way, the president of General Dynamics got a 2 million-dollar severance package in that same deal.

LEADERSHIP AND LEVERAGE

Life is a continuous negotiation. Whether you are changing jobs or looking to buy a new car. How well you do is directly related to the negotiating position you put yourself into. Leverage is the key. Even a guy with multiple graduate degrees from Harvard can be out-gunned by an uneducated real estate banker if he doesn't have the leverage to talk down the price of a mortgage. I can't even leverage myself into any reputable MBA program with my whopping "C" average from Georgia Tech.

Ask yourself this question: If there an oversupply of lawyers and a shortage of engineers, why can lawyers on a whole make a lot more money than engineers? It's because engineers have their salaries set by non-engineer led corporate compensation committees.

Additionally, partners in law firms set their own compensation and pay themselves very handsomely. Kind of like the "fox running the henhouse". They are their own compensation committees. They don't have people from outside their profession setting their compensation as we do in engineering. The overinflation of their salaries has a trickle-down effect that enhances the compensation possibilities of their

subordinates. Additionally, lawyers can leverage high fees since their clients are looking at jail time if they are not successful.

Doctors have a similar leverage. "Pay a lot of money to me, or walk away to die". They usually get what they demand. They are recently losing their "fox running the henhouse" advantage as their rates are now being set by non-medically trained HMO beancounters. This is happening because HMO's got smart. They shipped in thousands of foreign-trained MD's who line up for the opportunity to work in the U.S no matter what the salary. This has forced physician compensation down and is breaking the back of the "medical giant" in this country.

Engineers will never enjoy this "fox running the henhouse" leverage as long as their salaries are set by people outside their profession and as long as they are managed by engineers who are weak negotiators. Engineering Directors don't define the pay scales and find it politically incorrect to challenge or alter them. An engineer who is an employee of a corporation should never be considered a professional along the same lines as a lawyer or a doctor.

Even at Georgia Tech, this disparity in compensation occurred. Mechanical Engineering was one of the top degrees one could get. Yet MY professors only were paid only \$30,000 per year. They had to supplement their income with consulting fees. This should have been a big red flag to me, but I ignored it.

The degree that all the football players went for was Industrial Management. At that time, a finance professor in Industrial Management was hired in at \$80,000 per year. They justified this salary because it was hard to get people to come in from the private sector and that this was a salary competitive with the private sector. That is when I should have changed over to Industrial Management.

Another far-reaching example of how engineers give away their talents is in the assignment of patent rights to the company they work for. Who would sign away the rights to potentially millions of dollars worth of intellectual property to their employer? I did. I had no negotiating leverage. I needed a job.

It would be nice if the engineering leadership of this country would lobby for at least a 50-50 split of this revenue. It would affect the engineer- negotiators as much as it would affect the line engineers.

Lawyers who win liability suits command at least 40% of their client's judgment. Engineers should get at least a portion of the profit realized from any idea they originate even if they used company assets. The company \$B!G!) (B portion should only be justified because they supplied the resources. They should not get the whole thing.

This would be nice, but it will never happen. It is more than an issue of supply and demand. It is an issue of long-established, strongly-entrenched, introverted professional culture that doesn't take care of its own.

The medical profession that we see today is the result of at least a 200-year evolution that has greatly defined the compensation. They have evolved from a largely academic organization centralized in the larger universities in large cities. The legal profession has had a similar evolution resulting in a national bar association for standardization. Engineering does have its professional accreditations for civil engineering etc. but for the vast majority whose creativity have given us the 747, the Corvette, and the Space shuttle, the PE license is meaningless.

SOLUTIONS FOR BETTER ENGINEERING LEADERSHIP

The solution may lie in having a regulating body for design engineers similar to the AMA and the BAR association who could leverage its assets to lobby for legislation. This would enhance engineering compensation levels and grant employed engineers a significant stake of any patent that an engineer generates. At the same time, this organization would partner with universities to provide strict guidelines for the certification of design related engineering disciplines and provide avenues for continuing education. This is necessary because there are too many "cowboys". Engineers lack a common identity and are used to acting as mavericks.

Case in point: The head of the structural analysis group at General Dynamics hired a contract engineer to help with a temporary overload of work on one of the current projects. He was assigned to help with the structural analysis on one of the parts to the Atlas missile redesign that I was working on. In this case, the part was a main spar that supported a strap on solid rocket booster. After about a month working with this guy, I realized he was way over his head. The questions he was asking about analysis were just too basic. I approached his manager who immediately went into denial and touted this guy's academic credentials. As it turned out, his telephone bill gave him away. He was calling a mentor in Los Angeles who was giving him free advice over the phone on how to analyze the parts he was assigned. His master's degree was bogus also, yet the company was paying him \$40 per hour with overtime (approximately \$30,000) in the 3 months it took to discover him. He was so bold to think he would not get caught that he purchased a new car.

This is a classic case for the need for a certification body for engineering disciplines that not only provide standardization for training but also track key individuals in the profession and certify them as "genuine" to perform as advertised. This standardization can only lead to an uplifting of financial compensation for engineers and a greater retention within the ranks. Ideally, this body would have licensing authority over engineers and the political and organizational clout of the Teamsters Union.

Additionally, American engineering courses need a complete facelift. A hands-on journeyman program similar to those in European industry should be adopted for those entering engineering fields. U.S. co-op programs have been a good start, but are not enough when at the same time engineering curriculums are displaced into irrelevance by academia. Industry should take a greater role. Exposure to customer interaction should be mandatory to at least give engineers a taste of social awareness as a part of

the path to success.

Entry into professional trade associations should be encouraged as the next step beyond the journeyman level, with sights set at certification and higher earning potential driven by advanced engineering studies.

This would be a cradle to grave approach, with the main goal of keeping good engineers in the profession instead of driving them from it.

[Back to Winter 1998 Table of Contents](#)

[North Avenue Review](#)

A Georgia Tech Publication.

Figure Out "Why" AND Live!

by [Felix Bunke](#)

This is in response to the article "Why?" which appeared in NAR 37 (the subliminal binary issue).

I was struck by the term "non-philosopher" that the author used. There's no such thing. The "non-philosophical" views that the author espoused are themselves part of a philosophy of how life ought to be lived and what a person's goals should be. There are many, many people who feel that such things as philosophy and religion are "impractical," but I feel that the term "practical" out of necessity carries with it ideas concerning what is useful and what are good goals to strive towards. These ideas are based on an underlying bed of philosophical ideas, even if they may be philosophical ideas that have become so entrenched in society that most people don't even recognize them as such anymore -- they just conform to them like sheep and assume that they're merely "obvious." Deciding what is "practical" requires serious thought (philosophizing!) concerning where you place your values, as well as your program disk! In other words, you must ask yourself, "Is having a girlfriend really worth the hassle? So what if I have a beer belly? What difference does smelly feet make?" Et cetera, et cetera.

Now, before you consider this a boldface attack, let me inform you that I, too, have had psychological problems similar to those that the author admitted to. I had an extremely thick "shell" for most of my life. (Growing up as someone who's a little "different" in a very conservative small Midwestern town will do that to a guy!) I suffered severe depression only a couple of years ago, and I am still amazed that I escaped out of that ordeal without doing myself in.

By the way, I, too, am a big [South Park](#) fan!

Also, I am not trying to promote any particular belief system. I myself am still "searching," trying to find my own answers. To that end, I must offer the following conciliatory notes.

Cloistering, as the author points out, is not an option -- well, at least not a very good one! However, it is not because you shouldn't "philosophize," it's because wisdom requires experience. In order to learn about life, you must first "get a life!" Americans tend to shun old age, but peoples of the East tend to put their senior citizens on a pedestal, and for good reason -- these people recognize that, since older people have more life experience, they are likely to have more wisdom, as well. Another trend in Eastern thought is to find "enlightenment" in the moment, i.e., from living, and that all forms of life experience can be used as part of the path to enlightenment. Taoism, for instance, often scorns scholars for their useless dependence on "book learning" and praises the simple farmer for learning from real experience. The process of gaining

[newest issue!](#)

[home](#)

[about nar](#)

[our mission](#)

[back issues](#)

[the staff](#)

[submissions](#)

[contacting us](#)

wisdom is often more important than the wisdom itself.

Okay, so you want an analogy to something more "practical" than Eastern philosophy, such as, oh, say, computer programming? I'm sure, this being a technical university in a computer-savvy age, that most of you are familiar with the acronym GIGO (i.e., "Garbage in, garbage out"). Cloistering yourself to do your philosophizing would be like mental incest. Your observations (data) would become very narrow and distorted, and so the end result would also be garbage.

To conclude, let me go back to Eastern philosophy, in particular the concept of Yin-Yang, i.e., the balance of seeming opposites and their dependence on each other. Life is meaningless without a personal philosophy, but true life wisdom cannot be gained without "living." Like almost everything else in life, these "opposites," thinking and living, must be kept in balance in order to achieve satisfactory results. This is why I find many things of value in Eastern thought. While Western philosophy is often fractured, narrow and dysfunctional, many Eastern philosophies strive, instead, to consider experience as a whole and not, as Westerners tend to do, seek to put discrete labels on things or think that you can only go to one extreme or another extreme instead of striving for harmony. A good cook must always remember to keep the ingredients in proportion, or else the customers will vomit! Now that's practical!

[Back to Winter 1998 Table of Contents](#)

[North Avenue Review](#)

A Georgia Tech Publication.

One Man Wondering and Hoping

by James McDuffie, Shamus Complexus, Ian Fringe, Mr. Yuk and the other voices screaming in my head.

It always happens like this, doesn't it? Why am I doomed with this remarkable foresight into someone's heart? Poe was correct about the insane having hyper-senses, but I have something much more, the ability to know the human heart. Oh, it is not as dandy as it may seem. You can deny what you think you see all you want, but it is no good, what you see is the truth. An attempt I made, gave a lot, saw the end in her face. No matter how I try I always destroy it. Maybe I am just too pushy when it comes to emotions. I push, they fall back. And I am left standing there after they have fled. I sometimes wonder what it is about me that is so vile to cause a human's stomach to overturn. I see in myself a lot of good and some bad. This is how we all are, is it not, a remarkable blend of the intricacies of human nature, some leaning one way or another. I try to lean towards that which is good. I admit that I have many flaws but when I look inside I see a noble person. Maybe, just maybe my mirror is curved.

I love too easily. There, I have finally admitted it to myself. I gather up all my latently suppressed emotions and focus them on one person. I have many friends but just like a beggar, I ask for more. I want to love and be loved. I know I am loved by many but this is not the love I long for. It is the indescribable love. The kind of feeling where you want to merge your soul with another person. I want a girl that I can spend all my time with and have her enjoy my company as much as I enjoy hers. I may never find this kind of ability in a person. Such is my life a dreary need gone unfulfilled. Often I think I have found her but end up learning my presence is intolerable. Such is this world.

What I have now is not what I want. I do not want to spend my life as another number. I do not want to punch numbers and extend my hand and smile every month. No, I want to live on my own accord. I want to wander from place to place learning about people and the world around me. I do not want to be pressured by time constraints. I have my own pace and I do not want anybody to hurry me up. Instead of living a life of dread, I want to live learning, exploring and searching for that unobtainable never-ending love.

I see it in the movies, a love beyond words, beyond understanding. Does it really exist? I do not know but I will try and find it, no matter what the case. I will try because even a glimpse of this object can fill your world for eternity. I have tried to find this love with them, but they share not my vision. Unfortunately no one understands. Let me try and explain it further. This love exists more than on a physical level, it goes to the spiritual realm and then transcends even that. It is total understanding. It is unrefutable trust. It is endless communication and openness. The best way to describe it is as if you and the other person form one person, an entity from two bodies, one soul formed from a mixing of spirits. Hard to explain unless you feel and know that which you seek.

[newest issue!](#)

[home](#)

[about nar](#)

[our mission](#)

[back issues](#)

[the staff](#)

[submissions](#)

[contacting us](#)

It is always easy to feel these things when you are an outsider. I grew up alone, I do not resent that fact, what was is what was. But in this type of way I saw things from a perspective unshared by my peers. I was considered different and could not understand why they taunted me. I thought on different things and in different manners. We all have the same basic feelings, goals and ideas. I am no different than anyone else, as set in biology as you. On top of these I developed other thoughts and manners. My world was fully of information from the Internet, books, television and movies. I learned about the world at an early age, about what it is and was. I had always thought about the supposed her and what it would be like to have one who had undying love. Love needs no reasons, it exists without them, and it does not conform to popular notions. This is what I grew to believe, an idea formulated and discovered on my own.

But there is no joy in Mudville, might James has struck out. You step up to the plate expecting a home run but then your arrogance kills you. After awhile you feel like giving up, retiring from the game. But I am a life time player. I do not care how low my batting average gets. I am going to go up to the plate and try, oh God I will try to send that little white ball flying, flying so hard that Lady Liberty herself will have to catch it. And when I do hit it there is going to be happiness, never ending happiness. The game will not be televised and will be witnessed by few, but it will be the best game of eternity. God himself will have my rookie card. But until then fate, chaos or whatever is not allowing my to hit.

[Back to Winter 1998 Table of Contents](#)

[North Avenue Review](#)

A Georgia Tech Publication.

A Very Brady Christmas: The Quiet Beginnings

by [Steve Lucky](#)

Before becoming involved with A Very Brady Christmas, I had had some minor success with various story ideas. I had even helped with the movie Nightmare On Elm Street - Part 3 : The Dream Warriors, but all that would not prepare me for what was to come.

During the fall of 1987, at the Presbyterian Center at Georgia Tech, I first began the story idea of what later became A Very Brady Christmas. Even I did not know how successful it would be. At the time, I was just a Freshman. Many fraternities had turned me down, a girl I finally got enough courage to ask out also turned me down, and I was in danger of being dropped from Georgia Tech due to poor grades. The Presbyterian Center was one of the few places offered comfort for me.

There I told the people around me of my desire for simpler times and how I could use an old fashioned miracle. One of them, a graduate student named Suzanne, was a fairly talented writer. After telling her about my previous Hollywood experiences, we teamed up and created a few skits together.

Not seen by anybody, I could play anything I wanted from Cindy Brady to Freddy Kruger. (We both liked the Brady Bunch.) Somehow the Brady Bunch episode "The Voice of Christmas" came to our attention. I don't remember if I saw it, read about it in a Brady Bunch book, or if someone mentioned it while I was impersonating Cindy. (An interesting note, Barry William visited a college in Georgia in the fall of 1987 and I remember some of the other students talking about it.) Whatever the case, I remembered my idea about a miracle and decided to help make a Brady Bunch Christmas Reunion.

The title came from a Charlie Brown Christmas (or A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving). Charlie Brown has one theme, always loosing yet somehow surviving, the Bradys have another, togetherness.

The two of us and a male about Suzanne's age started planning A Very Brady Christmas. The Christmas Miracle where everyone sings "Oh, Come All Ye Faithful" was planned first. Then we added a subplot involving each of the Bradys that would somehow be "miraculously solved" at Christmas. Some of the subplots were based on real events. For example, Bobby's decision not to go to graduate school was similar to the situation I was in when I dropped out of Georgia Tech. Another example is when Peter wants to marry his boss but is too worried about his self-image.

If I helped with the story idea why am not famous? I did not actually write the script, only helped with the story idea. (Besides, with a few rare exceptions, writers are not that famous anyway.) Most of what I did involved role playing various scenes to make

[newest issue!](#)

[home](#)

[about nar](#)

[our mission](#)

[back issues](#)

[the staff](#)

[submissions](#)

[contacting us](#)

sure they ran smoothly. My actual involvement lasted about a week. The finished product was considerably longer than what we did. Other parts were changed or omitted. However some of the inside jokes remain intact.

[Back to Winter 1998 Table of Contents](#)

[North Avenue Review](#)

A Georgia Tech Publication.

As I Lay Awake

by Lord Wingnut

As I lie awake on my bed, darkness surrounds my restless body. The darkness is not comforting, yet it does not give rise to uneasiness. The blank void just surrounds me separating me from the rest of the world. Time has no meaning here, for it is relative to the length of the thought passing through my mind. Such thoughts run rampant, as time seems to rush by without a whisper for the abyss around me offers me nothing on which to concentrate. However, as my undisturbed soul rests in the room so dark, my eyes spy something in the beyond. It appears to be a sort of blurry spot of light on the rim of the black hole surrounding me. I reach out in desperation to the phenomenon floating before me. I cannot touch it but I feel a strange warmth as I stretch towards it in vain. As I continue to study it, the anomaly before me seems more familiar. I feel as if I have experienced it before. Thoughts begin rushing through my head in search of something similar in meaning to what floats before me. It doesn't take long for me to find a match, for I think of it often. The wonder in front of me seems to be physical representation of the hope we as humans share as normality. Our entire race bases the way it lives by what it hopes will happen. We play the stock market and the lottery hoping to make extra money. We go to school to receive an education that we hope will provide for our well-being as we travel down the road of life. We also delve into relationships hoping to find that special someone. As I continued to reach out to the fog of light hovering before my bewildered eyes, an uncontrollable flood of hopes of all kinds rushed through my already overloaded head. Hopes of friendships, love, money, longevity, and power became my only recognizable thoughts. As my brain became saturated by the unrestricted battery of hope, my consciousness quickly gave way. The next thing my weakened mind perceived was the dawning of a new day.

[newest issue!](#)

[home](#)

[about nar](#)

[our mission](#)

[back issues](#)

[the staff](#)

[submissions](#)

[contacting us](#)

[Back to Winter 1998 Table of Contents](#)

[North Avenue Review](#)

A Georgia Tech Publication.

The Sport of the Next Millenium: Trunking

by James McDuffie

Have you ever ridden in a car trunk? Do not believe all the negative things that the movies tell you about riding in a trunk. In all my years of ridding in trunks I have never been shot once the trunk was reopened or had the vehicle I was ridding in thrown off a bridge into a body of water. But you still must be cautious, if your friends are either criminally insane or have a very sick sense of humor one of these things could happen to you. So take that as my disclaimer, I am not responsible for anything you do or have happen to you whilst riding in a trunk. That said I will now outline the intricacies of my hobby.

First of all you can not ride in any trunk, simply because so you may not be able to fit into! But you do get bonus points if you can get into a small trunk. I leave it as an exercise to the reader in determining how best to arrange themselves in these trunks. Once you have found a good-sized trunk, then by all means get in! But make sure you have the permission of the driver. My first time I forgot this and was almost arrested when one person returned home, went to take out their groceries and found me there.

Before the vehicle is set into motion you have to find a suitable position. For most people the most comfortable position would be lying on their side. I would recommend when lying on your side to have your face towards the direction of travel. In this manner you will not have your face slammed into something whenever the car accelerates swiftly. If you are trunking in a car such as a Pinto this is not necessary since cars such as this one are not known for their high rate of acceleration. If drive is prone to braking very swiftly then you should face backwards since the breaking will slam your face into the side of the trunk. In these positions you can obtain a wide range of sub- positions. If the trunk is very small the fetal position will probably be forced upon you. However if you are trunking in a land yacht then you have the freedom to spread out.

Other options for position include facing up or facing down. These two methods have the ability to protect your face from acceleration or braking. The down part reveals itself when it comes to bumps in the road or potholes. Of course in this aspect size does matter. In some vehicles you can see the brake light going off while lying on your back. This breaks the monotony of trunking over long distances. But beware not to concentrate on it too much. In some instances people have become entranced by "the light" and have never broken out of their stupor. It is one of the risks of trunking that just has to be faced head on. Laying face down is a generally not done unless you are really trying to be a daredevil. There are two many areas of the body that can be hurt and are very painful.

To cut down on some of the dangers of trunking, some trunkers turn to protective gear.

[newest issue!](#)

[home](#)

[about nar](#)

[our mission](#)

[back issues](#)

[the staff](#)

[submissions](#)

[contacting us](#)

A helmet is the most vital protective piece. Wearing a helmet allows a trunker to go for the more dangerous moves and positions that in national tournaments garner extra points. Knee and elbow gear are also helpful for certain moves such as the "spinning change" where the trunker switches completely around from a fetal forwards to a fetal backwards with a intermittent stretched back position. But novices who trunk not for competition but for fun will probably need only the head gear unless they are practicing for competitions.

Long duration trunking is a feat in itself, but there have been those who have gone mad from the never ending darkness and the steady hum of the engine. The longest recorded trunking lasted for thirty-four days and five hours. The trunker was given food through a back seat that pulled down to give access to the trunk. The trunker slept and bathed only in the trunk during this entire time. The car was a 1995 Ford Escort that belonged to a Chicago businessman. The businessman gave regular use to his vehicle and was not involved in any part of the process but was aware of it. He agreed simply because he used to be a trunker and wanted to see the record of 23 days and 6 hours broken. After the whole ordeal the record-breaking trunker was said to at times twitch violently and stare at people in an erratic manner as if their blinking eyes cause some stroke of memorance in him. Also he got away with his bed and bought a trunk and used it to sleep in. Friends say he was never quite the same as he was before the ordeal and sometime honked instead of saying, "excuse me."

Because of the problems involved in long duration trunking it is recommended to have some sort of aversion to break the monotony. The typical emergency kit placed in trunks is a treasure trove of possible activities. The emergency flasher can be used to create a sort of slow motion environment. Used in combination with the reflectors interesting patterns can be made upon the walls of the trunk. It is especially rewarding when the patterns made appear to be actual objects. The flares found in the kit can make the hours pass by very quickly by writing messages seemingly in the air. The jack typically used for changing a tire can be used to form interesting patterns in the top of the trunk. Try for instance to spell your name out using the jack. But be very sure that you have the permission of the car's owner before attempting this.

In all its many flavors trunking is a sport that will survive long into the next millenium. Its popularity with people of all walks of life show the great satisfaction that those who trunk get. It is increasingly becoming more popular and mainstream. There is even talk about admitting it as an official Olympic sport in 2000. Trunking has the ability to clear your mind of all your troubles and allow you to concentrate on how to improve your life. There is also a returning to the womb nature that has fascinated clinical psychologist for years; they are still trying to explain it. Even despite its few dangers trunking is worth the effort.

[Back to Winter 1998 Table of Contents](#)

North Avenue Review

A Georgia Tech Publication.

Time Displacement

by Deanna Janacek

I hate the time period in which I live. Actually, hate is too strong a word. I greatly dislike the modern age. Not because of the people, the pollution, the politicians, and the like (well, okay, maybe a little, but that's normal for most people) but because I don't belong here; I've been "displaced". I should've been born a very long time ago, probably before the 1700's.

I'm not alone in my feelings, I'm sure of that. Look at all of the people who go to and work at Renaissance Festivals across the nation. Not necessarily all of these people, because some are in it for the acting experience or to make a profit. But take the ones who dress "authentically" in home made Ren Fest clothes. Many people who work at Ren Fest's or go to them are trying to express something about themselves that has been lost. That sense of being lost in time, being displaced from where they're supposed to be.

By now, you're probably thinking that even the theory of being displaced in time is impossible. That's only because you've never felt the longing that we displaced people have felt. Allow me to explain, using myself as an example. I am descended from the Celts, probably Irish. The sound of a dulcimer or harp or any other form of Celtic music takes me instantly from the moment where I'm at and tries to pull me to somewhere else. But, you say, that's a feeling that anyone can get when listening to ancestral music. True, I will concede that point. However there's another feeling: extreme frustration.

Frustration like you've never felt before. You are trapped HERE. You cannot go "home", where ever that may be. Sure, I could go visit Ireland, but that would only be in a physical sense. HOME would be the ability to hop into a time machine and go back. Unfortunately, that's not possible or even realistic (thus, Renaissance Festival). Frustration is a bad time to encounter a displaced person; it can lead to several other emotions (as for me, I may tend to get angry for a while). Eventually, another state is reached: apathy or depression.

Let's start with apathy (how I was feeling earlier). Just not wanting to do anything or care about anything. Apathy is hard to explain; it's just feeling bad, bordering on depression. "There's not really anything that can be done about this modern world and all of it's problems. I wish I was not here!" This is different from a longing for the "good old days". Any truly displaced person knows that previous time periods were not the "good old days". At least now there's not much threat of being bled to death by leeches in case of a headache or worrying about the next attack by the Huns.

And then there's depression. Not really suicidal, but more of a hopelessness of even having a truly complete identity. For some people, this leads to tears, feelings of

[newest issue!](#)

[home](#)

[about nar](#)

[our mission](#)

[back issues](#)

[the staff](#)

[submissions](#)

[contacting us](#)

loneliness, hours of being quiet and wondering, "What's the point to all of this??" Other people just get moody, and the rest of us start philosophizing, writing stories, or drawing / painting. The expressions of where they ought to be.

So, the next time that you see someone making mead or medieval clothing; see someone driving dressed in strange clothing on their way to the nearest Renaissance Festival; hear the eerie, haunting music of an ocarina flute or a recorder being played in a stairwell or outside, don't shake your head and think that person is messed up in the head. Don't think they're trying to escape today by living in the past. They're not. They're just trying to remember what home was like.

[Back to Winter 1998 Table of Contents](#)

[North Avenue Review](#)

A Georgia Tech Publication.