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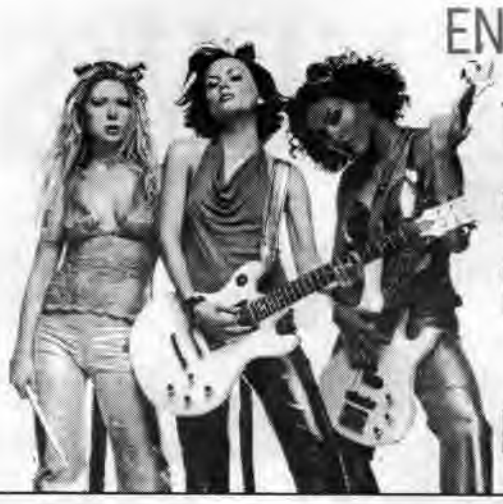
NEWS

RRC students going noodles

Page 5



ENTERTAINMENT

The purrfect pussy

Page 9

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the PROJECTOR

red river college students' association newspaper

april 23, 2001

What are you doing after RRC?

Page 3

photo: Katie Chalmers

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Money for RRC and RRC students in NDP budget

By Greg Burch

Spring in Manitoba brings two things- new potholes and a fresh provincial budget.

Manitoba Finance Minister Greg Selinger brought down the NDP's second budget on April 10, 2001.

The NDP made big promises for post-secondary education in the 1999 Manitoba provincial election, and the budget reflected this platform.

Some of the nuggets being offered up for post-secondary education in 2001 include $10.9 million for the College Expansion Initiative and a 3.8 per cent increase in overall operating grants to post-secondary institutions.

The government will also continue the 10 per cent tuition fee reduction implemented last year, providing $13 million to post-secondary institutions to compensate for lost revenue.

The government also reaffirmed its commitment to provide $31 million for RRC's new Princess Street campus.

Students' Association president Ian Scott says this budget is a good one for RRC students.

"It shows a real commitment to post-secondary education. The increase in operating grants recognizes that it's expensive to run these programs," says Scott, who says he is also pleased that the government is continuing to hold the line on tuition costs. "It's nice they came to the table with the $13 million to compensate for lost revenues. It's a move towards a longer-term approach to tuition that will benefit students."

"It's good to have the $50 back when I pay my tuition but we have so many extra costs."
Nik Thavisone

RRC president Jacqie Thachuk says she is keen about certain aspects of the new budget.

"The College Expansion Initiative will provide us with an opportunity to expand our programming, something which will be good for students," says Thachuk.

However, when it comes to the operating budget, Thachuk's analysis was more sober.

While operating grants are increasing 3.8 per cent overall, she says RRC's share of the increase will be closer to 2.5 per cent.

While this will add approximately $1.2 million to RRC's coffers, Thachuk says this amount is not sufficient to match increased costs caused by inflation.

"Students have said they want improved programs," she says. "We will try to deliver them, but it is still a challenge."

First-year Advertising Art student Peter Farmer is glad to see the 10 per cent tuition fee reduction continued for next year.

"It's a good thing," says Farmer. "Even though college is still cheaper than university, the fact you are getting extra money is a good thing."

Classmate Nik Thavisone is more measured in his support.

"It's good to have the $50 back when I pay my tuition, but we have so many extra costs. It never seems to be enough."

the PROJECTOR

Red River College's Student Newspaper for over 30 years.

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Sean Thiessen

Entertainment Editor
Tamara King

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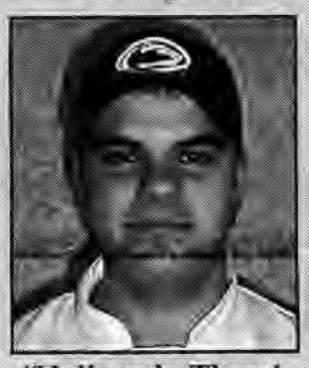
photo: Katie Chalmers

RRC Students' Association president Ian Scott with the Keep the Freeze tuition petition

'Will you find a job?'

by Sara Williscroft

Sean Collins
Culinary Arts



"Hell yeah. There's always cooking jobs. People got to eat."

Kirk Johnson
Computer Analyst

"Yes. I've already had a job offer."

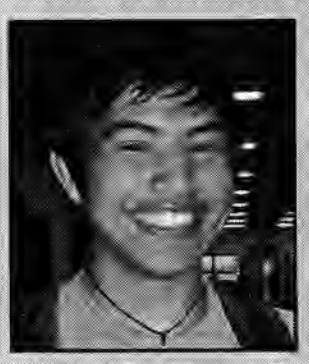
Kathryn Blais
Business Administration

"Definitely. I'm going to have two degrees. RRC is the school of choice."

Andrea Kalinowski
Business Administration

"I hope so. Business Administration covers a broad area. I think I'll be O.K."

Alvarro Pastorin
Business Administration



"Yeah. The course I'm taking right now will get me a job. But not a high paying one."

Rob Bonde
Business Administration

"It's 50 - 50. I'm not totally sure."

Upcoming RRC grads confident about jobs

National poll shows student hopes falling

By Sara Williscroft

Upcoming Red River College graduates remain optimistic about their job prospects despite a new poll to the contrary.

The Canadian Association of Career Educators and Employers (CACEE) released a study describing the lower number of students feeling confident about their employability after they graduate.

According to the study, only four per cent of Canadian university and college students feel they will have the job of their dreams when they graduate.

The Internet study, Focus on Students, involved over 2,000 students across Canada and focused on their job situation after they graduate.

Heather McFayden, a counselor with the RRC Job Centre says RRC students are generally confident about their job prospects leaving the college.

'Always a concern'

"There's always a concern. They're just starting to get involved in finding jobs. Students from here are very well prepared." she says. "Employers are very pleased with Red River students."

RRC publishes an online report on the success rates of RRC grads. According to the Research and Planning Department, 91 per cent of RRC grads were either furthering their education or in a job related to their field.

The CACEE study also found students rated "the opportunity to travel" lowest among favorable characteristics of future jobs, and "work that keeps you stimulated" as number one.

"The money, the power and the flexibility of hours are what I look for in a job."
Katrina Hueging

RRC student Katrina Hueging, a second-year Business Administration student says the most important aspect of any potential job is the salary.

"The money, the power and the flexibility of hours are what I look for in a job. The money is very important because so many students are in debt." says Hueging.

Early Childhood Education student Robyn Rybachuk says she is confident in finding the right job after graduation.

"I'm fairly confident I'll find a job after I graduate, maybe not my dream job, but a job that I'll like enough to stay at." says Rybachuk.

'I want a high salary'

She says she is planning on attending university immediately after graduation, yet believes she will find a job that suits her needs.

Classmate Anna Biedron says making enough money is a priority.

"I really want a high salary, personally, just because the field doesn't offer that much money. So, if I were to find a job that would offer me a good salary, I would probably stick with that over others."

As for the uncertainty of Canadian students as a whole, Job Centre counselor Heather McFayden says she doesn't think those claims hold up with graduating Red River College students.

"I don't think we'd be building another campus if there wasn't a demand."

HEPATITIS C VIRUS

The Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada (SOGC) hopes to identify more at-risk patients and improve reproductive care for women who have been infected with the Hepatitis C virus (HCV), with the release last fall of guidelines that are the first in this area for Canada.

Dr. Marc Boucher, principal author of the guidelines and chair of the SOGC working group that developed them, has pointed out that most Canadians infected with HCV are not aware of it. In fact, only 30% of infected individuals know they carry the virus, which has been identified as a major public health problem worldwide.

The full guidelines document is available online at www.sogc.org; follow "Clinical Guidelines" links to "Obstetrics" and select #96. The guidelines document was published in the October 2000 edition of Journal SOGC.

The SOGC stated in a news release that Canada's HCV infection rate is escalating, particularly among 20-24 year olds, and is more prevalent in urban than rural areas. These women are of prime childbearing age, and there's a risk of transmission from mother to child-which increases from 7.9 to more than 40% if the mother also has HIV.

Among key recommendations is a call for targeted screening for women involved in risky behaviors such as past or present injection drug use, having multiple sex partners and practicing unsafe sex or being hemodialysis patients, blood recipients or children of HCV-infected individuals.

Please visit the Health Centre if you have any questions regarding Hepatitis C.

Source: Canadian Nurse, February 2001, Volume 97, Number 2

RED RIVER COLLEGE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

CREATING A VISION

HAPPENINGS

WE DID IT!

After a long struggle we have achieved what we were after – accessible tuition fees, and a freeze in our tuition. The Red River College Administration announced at the beginning of the year that they wanted to increase tuition by 14% for those students entering Red River College in the 2001-2002 school year. This is also on top of the 10% reduction which the current government gave us on our current year tuition. This 10% reduction was a one year deal, and was not projected to carry on a second year. The Red River College Students Association then teamed up with the Canadian Federation of Students for the "Keep the freeze" campaign. With the common goal of accessibility for all students, we worked together with the students to show our support. Students at Red River College banded together to show support and collected a total of 1836 signatures during the campaign. The Students'' Association then took the signatures to the College's Board of Governors to show the students support for accessibility. It was also presented to the provincial government along with the Canadian Federation of Students who had Gathered a large amount of signatures as well.

In March of 2001 the new provincial budget was released. The new budget froze our tuition at the 10% rebate level for the 2001-2002 school year. The government is also giving the College money to compensate for lost tuition fees that may have been charged for this school year.

This proves that if we work together we can make tuition more affordable and accessible to all students. When students come together we can make anything possible.

ACHTUNG!!

Gallivan & Associates would like to inform students that the benefits office will be closed from June 10, 2001 until August 6, 2001. During this time you will be able to call Canada Life at 1-800-668-6669 with any of your benefits concerns.

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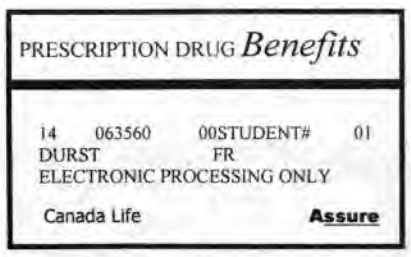

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The Student Benefits Plan Office is now hiring part time staff for the upcoming fall season.

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Pay Direct Drug Cards are now available to be picked up for students that started their program in JANUARY 2001 (AND PREVIOUS).

Watch for our up coming web site which will be accessible from the Students' Association home page.

CMOR
Red River's Power Station

"What the !$#K are you Listening to?"

RRC students going noodles

By Andrew Buck

The economic plight of students has driven some Red River College students absolutely noodles.

The RRC students have teamed up with a Winnipeg computer programmer on www.sendthisout.com, an Internet site designed to draw attention to the student cause.

Users log onto the Web site and leave their name and three basic demographic facts.

Once the site registers one million users it will deliver a truckload of noodles to both Prime Minister Jean Chretien and United States President George W. Bush.

"It's a media stunt," says Paul Emmer, who created the site.

Emmer had been employed as the director of Internet Programming and Marketing for a Winnipeg-based company.

Two weeks ago the father of a young daughter quit his job to work full-time on the site.

"If I can improve education now it's going to help her later," he says. "It's a more worthy cause than selling chocolate bars and soda pop."

The goal of the site is to improve student life, says Sara Roginson, a second-year Advertising Art student who helped to create posters and promote the site.

"It's a year 2000 kind of demonstration," Roginson says. "We're using the Internet instead of chaining ourselves to trees."

"It's a year 2000 kind of demonstration. We're using the Internet instead of chaining ourselves to trees." Sara Roginson

The site hopes to put political pressure on governments world-wide.

"They'll have to start listening to us," she says.

Emmer says the fledgling site, which started only a few weeks ago, has gained attention from around the globe.

He says he has had email from people from across North America, South America, Australia and Japan.

The price of running the site, as well as the noodles and their delivery, are being covered by sponsors the site has already lined up.

Emmer says the site's members have the choice of whether or not to support a sponsor's message. If the message is not supported, a company will not be allowed to sponsor the site.

"This site was created by the students, for the students," says Emmer. "We will put students before corporations."

He hopes the movement will catch on locally, with posters set to go up in Manitoba's three largest post-secondary institutions.

Second-year Advertising Art student Marc Bauer is also part of the group of 10 people behind the site. Bauer created the logo displayed on wwwsendthisout.com's posters.

"The logo is meant to represent students chaining themselves together across the world," Bauer says. "It shows students stand united."

Students who sign up online are registered for prizes and other incentives awarded by the site, including scholarships and sponsor-provided products.

The idea is to promote a sense of community where students can get together, says Emmer.

Finally, a response to letters

Dear Editor,

Gee, I finally see a response to my ongoing criticisms and concerns from our esteemed editor-in-chief, Kyla Duncan, in the March 31, 2001 issue.

She has decided to respond to the criticisms that I and others have raised by comparing our criticisms to the actions of the National Post co-owner, David Asper.

I'm not certain what other complaints and criticisms that Ms. Duncan has heard from the readers of the Projector but unlike Mr. Asper, I do not own 50 per cent of the student newspaper and unlike Mr. Asper I have never, ever told Ms. Duncan or any other editor not to do their jobs.

All of my criticism about the newspaper has focused on the fact that the Projector fails to do the job they are supposed to do. My student fees along with every other student's fees contribute to Duncan's salary and therefore she has a responsibility to us to address what are valid criticisms on the part of the students.

It was most assuredly her job to report on the fallacy of the Student Association petition for lower tuition, a job I ended up doing. It's quite telling that no one has rebutted my comments. Could it be because I'm correct in my statements?

One of my most overriding complaints has been the lack of information printed by the Projector on events that have occurred on campus. If you examine the majority of the issues that have been printed since the beginning of the fall term, you will notice that a lot of the published items do not even happen at RRC, particularly the editorials.

Favorite Target

A favorite target of the writers at our newspaper has been federal politicians, especially Stockwell Day. I'll admit he made it awfully easy for people to write about him but this was a story that was covered in every single media outlet in the country! Just what we need - another article or five on this idiot. What, our Students' Association politicians don't screw up? What about the college administrators?

I actually laughed quite loudly when I read, "We are a newspaper. A student newspaper. We bring you the news from around the college in a non-partisan, non-bias way."

Exactly what news from around the college is Duncan referring to? The Projector did not inform students about the change in the health plan coverage. The Projector did not report on the petition that the SA circulated, never mind print an editorial about the fallacy of the petition. The Projector did not report on the Wellness Fair. The Projector does not report on Students' Association meetings - the only way I have to find out what they discuss is to attend a meeting myself or to ask SA president Ian Scott for the information. The Projector does not report on club meetings on campus - the fitness club, the aboriginal students club . . . and so on.

On the positive side, I did notice we finally have an issue that covers events at the college rather that news from the outside.

Exercising my right

Good job on the news articles but the editorials sank the effort. A editorial about a strike possibly improving television programs? Perhaps it relates to the college television station - if only we were that lucky!

An editorial saying goodbye to the co-workers of the entertainment editor? At least it is a student saying goodbye to fellow students.

The very fact that nobody has been able to rebut my specific comments only speaks to the fact that you can not. Each and everything I have ever written in a letter to the editor has been supported, unlike your rebuttal, 'Mess with journalists and risk getting bit.'

I will not stop exercising my right as a student to make valid and legitimate criticisms of our newspaper.

Criticisms such as, Where is the news in the April 9, 2001 edition of the Projector?

There are only two news articles in the entire edition of the newspaper.

Adding insult to injury, both articles are on the same topic.

Why couldn't you report on the fitness club meeting? The preparations for the April 19, 2001 business conference?

It is my responsibility as a citizen and student at RRC to voice these concerns. It is the responsibility of the Projector's editorial board to listen to these criticisms and act on them.

Scott Wignall
Business Administration

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This is the end my friend

I graduated from the University of Manitoba three years ago with a four year honours degree. Sounds nice - maybe even a little prestigious - but in reality I was working construction within a week of graduation.

Sure I fired out resumes but I quickly figured out why they call a BA a degree in bugger all. Hopelessly underemployed I entered Red River College. After graduating from university and still having many friends in university I saw RRC as a step down the academic ladder - way down.

Now, two years later, I am about to graduate.

Unlike university I am graduating with a wide range of practical skills, confidence in those skills, personal contacts with people in the industry and some very real job prospects. Not to mention about a dozen close friends. All for a fraction of the price I paid to attend the hallow halls of higher learning.

It's a shame our high school system, maybe our entire society, is so university orientated. Despite the fact that I came from a construction family where the knowledge gained at RRC helped put food on the table I looked at it as the place where people who couldn't get into university went - how wrong I was.

This is not to say RRC is an educational utopia.

Anyone who has had to deal with the Media Services department in the library knows that it is an awkward hassle at the best of times and a rude nightmare at the worst. There are people there who really know their stuff and will bend over backwards to help you. But there are also people who wouldn't know a camera if it was filming them and refuse to admit it.

Yes, I was the person who kept gear forever and returned it only at my leisure. Why? There was nothing to stop me.

My beef with Media Services is a calf compared to the one I have with parking at RRC. I hope to never see a more disorganized way of obtaining parking. To line up for hours behind people waiting for a single cashier to buy everything from books to pens to parking is insulting - even more so when the sold out sign is put up. The level of this lunacy is highlighted when compared to the U of M system which is done over the phone from the comfort of your home and is over in a matter of minutes.

I parked for two solid weeks with no pass and no ticket.

As with anything, along with the bad comes the good, and for me the best thing about my time at RRC was the Projector.

Special thanks to Scott Wignall. For every person who writes in there are 100 people who agree. If you're not making people mad in this business you're not trying. Keep the letters coming.

I got to give a big shout-out to the Students' Association for fully appreciating a free student press and giving us absolute authority on what to print - flattering or not.

It could be the Stockholm Syndrome speaking from all the late nights we've spent locked together - but the Projector staff will always hold a place in my heart.

Katie Chalmers for lending her gifted eyes to even the dullest of stories (not to mention making my ass look good on the front cover). Kyla Duncan for allowing me walk around with a big stick with any story. And of course the recently departed Adam Clayton. Doosh - doosh, enough said.

Sean Thiessen

We're out of here. From left to right, Katie Chalmers, Sarah Michelle Gellar (standing in for Adam Clayton), Kyla Duncan & Sean Thiessen.

'A photograph doesn't lie - loser'

Every end is a new beginning. That's what appeared next to my name and photo in my high school yearbook.

Every end is a new beginning. How lame. How boring.

And yet as we publish our last issue of "the Proj," I can't help but feel equally as sentimental and lame.

As photo editor, there is much I will miss about the Projector. First and foremost: my talented co-workers and good friends-Adam Clayton, entertainment editor, Kyla Duncan, editor-in-chief, and Sean Thiessen, news editor. You guys made it fun and we made an awesome team.

I always looked forward to scheming up cover photos with Sean, my edgy news cohort. With a mind of part brilliance, part scandal, Sean dreamt up many of the shots that appeared on the front cover. I am especially indebted to him for his help creating a urinating shot more realistic than I could have ever hoped for, and for putting up with constant reminders that "photos are not square."

I looked forward to production night, and Adam's wit. From his darkened corner of the room, beneath his shrine to Sarah M.Gellar, Adam made me laugh, a lot. I want to thank Adam, the creator of the Fake News, for his dry sense of humour and for understanding that "a photograph doesn't lie, loser."

I want to thank Kyla for hiring Rachael King and I, for being supportive of my work and for getting the toxic darkroom chemicals removed. I looked forward to our secret chats in the former photo den of isolation...so did Adam.

I also want to thank all the RRC students who took the time to pose for my camera, including Tamara Bodi in the washroom, Jeremy Brooks, who covered himself in chocolate, Todd Burnell, who played the town drunk, Ramia Farrage, my shhhh...girl, Paal Juliussen, who played a great doomsday psycho, Toby McCrae, who posed for well, just about everything, and smoky Heather Dzioba.

A special thanks to contributing photographer Elizabeth Treusch, volunteer coordinator Jeremy Brooks, and Pasquale Greco, our unofficial drop-by-just-in-time-for-food guy.

I'll miss the laughter that came out of that little rotting trailer, at the corner of E and F Building, surrounded by monster rabbits at 4:30 a.m.

We spent a lot of time together-sometimes it felt like too much as we watched the sun creep over the trees. But then again, too much of a good thing can be wonderful-and it was.

Katie Chalmers

Just the fix for a journalism junkie

See-ya, so-long, farewell. Saying good-bye to something you love is never easy. And my love-affair with the Projector must now come to an end.

It all started two years ago when my first article "Vacation in chaos" was published in the Projector. What a rush to see my by-line staring back at me in black and white. I was hooked.

Then I sat on the baby-sitting staff of the Projector last year. The sense of accomplishment I felt when I dropped off the paper at the loading dock after an all-nighter was overwhelming. I felt like a mother seeing her child off to it's first day of school. It was amazing. I checked back later that day to see if the paper was picked up by the courier and breathed a sigh of relief.

And just when I thought it couldn't get any better writing for and editing the paper - it happened. I was walking down the hall and I saw someone pick up the Projector and read it. I couldn't help but smile to myself, my step was lighter, my heart beat faster. I was in love - with my job.

So when they hired me as the next editor-in-chief I was ecstatic - but in disbelief. I was slightly intimidated by the very large shoes left by very prestigious past editors. But my affection for the paper took over and I ran with it.

Now I have been editor-in-chief for a little over a year. And what a year it has been. My time with the Projector has been enlightening, challenging and rewarding. I have never learned so much doing any other job. And I've had such a good time. This past year has been a blast and there are so many people who made the long-hours a walk in the park.

Our readers, of course, have been my greatest source of enjoyment. Nothing has made me happier than to walk down the hallway to see two or three people reading the Projector. My footsteps are still light and my smile just as big. You make all the work worthwhile. And to our most dedicated reader - and you know who you are - I encourage you to continue your contributions to the Projector's letters page. I'm sure the next editor will enjoy your opinions as much as I have.

The Projector, as an umbrella organization of the Students' Association, has always maintained its fierce independence. I am pleased to say however, that a healthy relationship with the SA administration and executive has helped produce a better paper.

It has been a pleasure to work with all of you. Owen and Guy - you are my treasures. Ian and Robyn - your dedication to an informed student body has made you a wealth of story ideas. You two have done an exceptional job. I will miss my cruise down the SA hallway, seeing your smiling faces.

And the Projector wouldn't have been the success it was this year with out my staff - Sean Thiessen, Katie Chalmers and Adam Clayton. We kicked some serious ass this year guys. Readership has been high all year. We have set a standard, and maybe made those shoes a little bigger. Sean - you have been my voice of sanity and my co-conspirator. Katie - I am still amazed by your talent and your ability to out-party everyone else. Adam - you helped make the shoes fit. Your constant challenging has made me a better editor and writer. I couldn't have picked a more dedicated, talented and brilliant team. Congratulations on a job well done my friends. I will miss the comradeship most of all.

Good-bye is never easy to say. As my career as a journalist continues, I will always remember my Projector days as the best days of my life. The first love is always the strongest.

Kyla Duncan

PROFILE

The Maroons

Marooned!

Canada's only Ramones cover band "sedated" in Winnipeg

By Tamara King

"We have yet to get anybody dancing on the tables," laughs Maroons frontman Kelly Fairchild.

Faircild's laughter is a good contrast to the miserable day when the two of us spoke.

He couldn't have been all too upset- this was before he found out about the death of Joey Ramone, lead singer of the band Kelly imitates.

The Maroons try to keep an upbeat attitude.

"The Ramones are just about fun," explains Kelly.

Which means the Maroons are too.

The Maroons pay tribute to the Ramones by dressing up exaclty like them and playing cover songs, sans the concert arena setting.

The Ramones were the forefathers of the punk rock movement, giving birth to bands like the Sex Pistols, the Clash and Blondie. Unlike the more hardcore punk rock outfits, the Ramones were more about upbeat party music. The Maroons definitely have the same energy over the phone as their idols, the Ramones, maintained at their shows.

Judging by our phone call, the Maroons have the same engery as their idols.

Tribute acts are becoming more popular. In March, an ABBA tribute band played in Winnipeg.

As one of only two Ramones tribute acts in North America (the other is in New Jersey), the Maroons fill in the gap for Ramones fans all over. "We were all they had left," says Fairchild.

"Essentially, we were the Ramones, in some people's eyes."

There isn't much of a chance for touring with ABBA impersonators though.

The Maroons

"The crowd that would see ABBA wouldn't want to see the Ramones," says Justin Sequin, bassist for the Maroons.

The Ramones stopped touring in the early 90's; the Maroons picked up shortly thereafter in 1996.

Fairchild came up with the concept for a Ramones outfit. At the time, Fairchild was in an original band, but left because it wasn't what he wanted anymore.

"Essentially, we were the Ramones, in some people's eyes," says Fairchild.

"I was a little frustrated with the original scene," said Fairchild.

So he got together with some of his buddies, also musicians, and started a punk rock band.

"Kelly dreamed it up," says Sequin. "This is just stress free."

"You just pick a song and learn it. You don't have to worry about writing a song. One rehersal and it's done," says Fairchild.

For a punk rock outfit, the Ramones were top notch in terms of harmonies and vocals.

And for the Maroons, being tribute act isn't all a party.

At times, the music scene can be frustrating.

"There's a bit of a challenge to us. They [the Ramones] are sort of an underground band," says Fairchild. "If the Ramones came to town, they'd only fill the Walker."

This makes it more challenging for the Maroons to fill larger venues.

"You can't really play out too much- how much of one band can a city take."

"The problem with most tribute bands is they play to bands that still play," says Fairchild, noting N'Sync and and Backstreet Boys type acts. "It's lame," says Fairchild.

"It's ridiculous, "adds Sequin.

Sometimes, like in the case with the Ramones where they stopped touring, the tribute bands are all the fans have.

"But all they ever get is a rip-off..." Fairchild laughs.

Fairchild says about a year after the band started playing together in 1996, it was hard to find Ramones CD's in record stores.

"There was a little Ramones resurgence," says Fairchild.

"We actually did end up getting a big fan base. We would see all kinds of fans coming out with their small Ramones shirts they bought from one Ramones concert or another."

Fairchild says Maroons shows can even be enjoyed by people who don't own all of the band's merchandise table."It's real fun. Once they see the show, they relize they would know lots of the songs."

The Maroons bandmates all play in original bands. Fairchild is a member of Dik Tickel and B.S Romeo, Sequin is a member of the Jills, Brian Aitken (drums) is from Chocolate Bunnies From Hell, and Shaune Kemkaran (guitar) from Stungun.

The band took a bit of a rest. Kemkaran moved to Vancouver a year ago, but had no problem picking up again.

"It's nice. You can still remember how to play 30 songs."

"We're basically ready to pursue shows now that we have a full band again."

"Can't beat playing the Ramones," says Fairchild. "You just can't beat the energy- you just can't."

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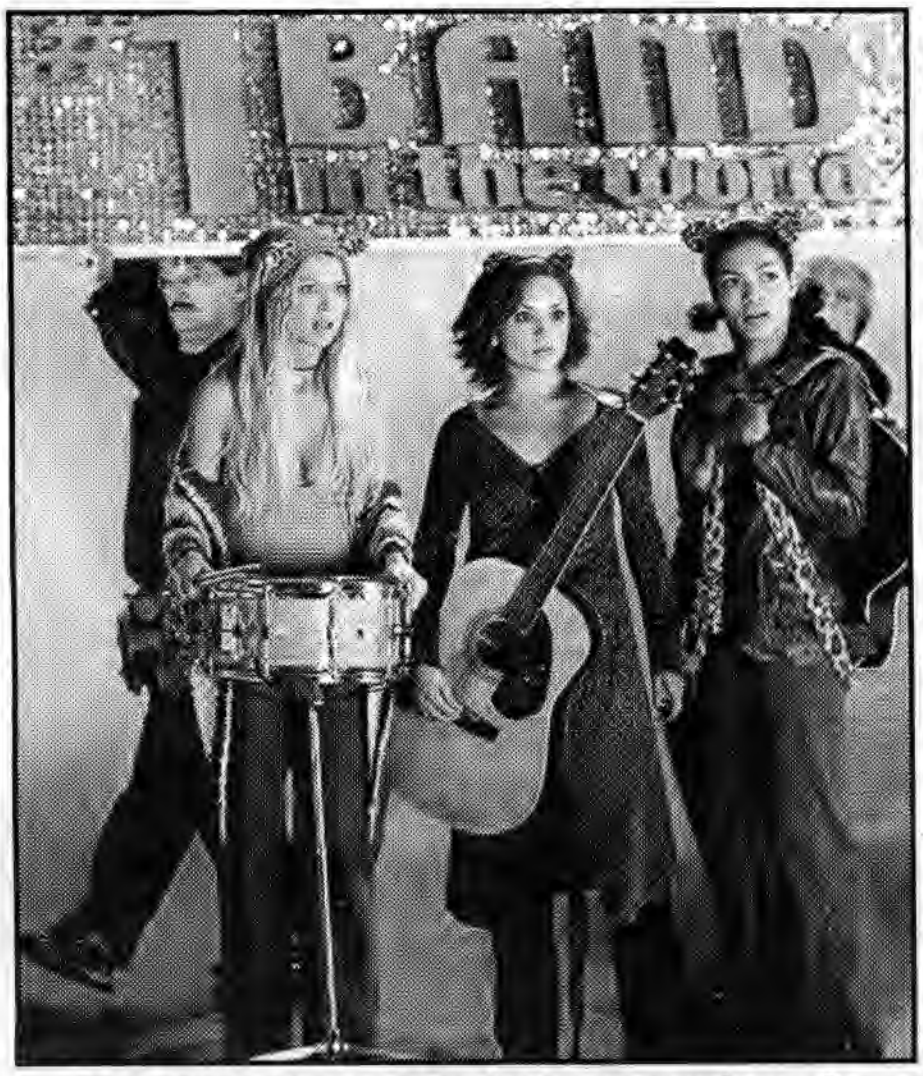
Playful pussycats movie purr-fectly humourous



The Pussycats: purrin' pop-punk rock.

By Lisa Thomson

Josie and the Pussycats is a perfect blend of mindless comic book cuteness and substantial subplot. The movie is fun and light hearted while trying to sell a semi-scary subplot about subliminal advertising to that all important demographic: teenagers.

The story focuses on the speed-of-light rise to fame of The Pussycats, a girl band from Riverdale (the Archie Comics) who can't seem to catch a break until they are almost run over by Wyatt Frame (Alan Cummings), a big time manager looking for "the next big thing." Suddenly, The Pussycats are Josie and the Pussycats. Wyatt and his diabolical boss Fiona (Parker Posey) start tearing the girls apart. And the girls discover their music is being used to brainwash all the teenagers in America to buy new cool things.

Underneath the music, teens hear commands to buy pink shoes, because pink is the new red. Pumas are the new Nike. Jerkin is the new word for cool. And Josie and the Pussycats are the coolest band ever. From the showers, to the airplanes, familiar logos (you might have heard of Target, or Revlon) are everywhere in the movie.

The "girls" are Josie, Valerie, and Melody who all of course, have their very own distinguishing feature. We have Josie (Rachael Leigh Cook), the leader, who does vocals and is the only girl who gets a love interest (the adorable Alan M played by Gabriel Mann). Valerie (Rosario Dawson) is the tough but smart friend. She can fight, but she also volunteers at the library. Finally, every group needs a loveable doit and Melody (Tara Reid) fills the gap to perfection.

Despite being predictable comic book characters, the girls provide plenty of laughs throughout the movie. Melody is enjoyable in all her scenes even though she doesn't remedy that old dumb blonde rumour at all.

Cummings is surprisingly evil for a light teen comedy, but does it so well you have to almost admire him for it in the end. Posey, on the other hand is so over the top her character would be unbelievable even in a cartoon. Fiona runs around in outfits that either have-long-stemmed flowers protruding from her neck or resemble cut out pieces of fabric attatched to her body with packing tape while she laughs about her plot to rule the world.

Josie and the Pussycats is a pretty "jerkin" movie. It has a catchy soundtrack and larger than life characters who keep you entertained for a whole hour and a half. On the other hand, isn't it funny a movie preaching about the horrors of mass marketing is one of the most heavily marketed movies in recent months.

Chubby Brit seeks original story

Bridget Jones's Diary like a British Ally McBeal

By Kelly Stifora

Take Ally McBeal, subtract the surrealism, add some Britishisms and an extra dash of naturalism and presto! You have Bridget Jones's Diary.

The film, based on Helen Fielding's 1999 best-seller of the same name is funny, but ultimately doesn't live up to its own hype, let alone that of the book it was based on.

Although I've never read the book, I assume that much of its poignancy and its power came from the format it was written in: that of a diary. Unfortunately, this format doesn't translate very well to the screen.

At the beginning of the movie, it seems as if some of the books features might carry over. The chapter headings, in which Bridget states her current weight, the number of cigarettes she smoked that day and the units of alcohol consumed, are present at the beginning of the film, but are quickly abandoned after the first reel, which, incidentally, is when the film begins to bog down and become little more than another British romantic comedy.

Like her American television counterpart, Bridget (Renee Zellweger) spends most of her time wishing things were better and being generally unsatisfied, that is until she begins an affair with her much-fantasized-about boss, Daniel Cleaver (Hugh Grant), a womanizing cad (there's one of those Britishisms) who we know from the beginning will ultimately hurt Bridget.

This is why we root for Mark Darcy (Colin Firth), the family friend and barrister that Bridget trades verbal barbs with at every family gathering she attends. Mark can't help but point out repeatedly that Bridget used to run around naked in his wading pool when they were both children, and Bridget just can't seem to say anything nice about Mark at all.

Hence, the triangle is formed and dramedy ensues.

This is not to say the movie is bad, it isn't, but its strengths don't come from the story, which is predictable and boring. Rather, it comes from the characters, and the acting.

Hugh Grant, believe it or not, is only mildly annoying as the self centred and insensitive Daniel, perhaps because, for once, he isn't playing Hugh Grant but an actual character.

Even better than Grant is Colin Firth. His turn as Mark Darcy (a role that could have easily gone to Grant, and that he would have been annoying in), the awkward barrister who reluctantly falls for Bridget, provides the kind of foil the punchy lead character requires.

The true standout here is Zellweger. The Texan whose casting caused an uproar amongst British fans of the book gives an outstanding performance in the title role. Constantly surrounded by Brits, Zellweger hides her Southern twang so effectively under a squeaky British accent that one never doubts for a second she is herself from across the pond.

Zellweger, who gained 30 pounds to be Bridget, approaches the character without a trace of vanity. Watching the film, I couldn't help but wonder if Grant wasn't wearing more make up than she was.

Even with designer clothes, designer washrooms and computer generated efects, Ally McBeal never looked this good.

Yin & Yang

By Andrew Langendorfer

Spring is now upon us. Just like every year at about this time. I'm not surprised by this, but somehow a lot of my fellow residents of the Red River Valley are utterly shocked.

Sometimes I have to wonder what the thought processes are of people who live by rivers, specifically the Red, the Assiniboine and tributaries thereof. "Hmmm, we lost everything we owned in '96, and again in '97. The last couple of years have been pretty bad too. But I guess there's no point in preparing ahead of time this year."

And that's a fair attitude. Just because your yard floods every spring, why would you take it upon yourself to implement flood prevention measures during the summer, when it's dry? I think it's entirely appropriate to do jack-all until two days before the crest hits, then scramble frantically to fashion a makeshift dike just tall enough to stop the flow.

Why would we be expected to take some initiative, comfortable in the knowledge that it's gonna flood this year, just like it does every year?

Taking initiative is for suckers and missionaries, especially when all three levels of government seem to have no problem pissing away valuable tax dollars providing sandbags and evacuation to the same bunch of slack-jawed gawkers who are totally blown away by the fact that, holy shit, it's flooding this year (again).

If I have to watch one more six-second news clip of some moronic housewife bawling her eyes out in the church basement while mother nature ravages her home, I'm going to throw a water balloon at my TV.

Here's a clue. If you don't want massive amounts of water to throw your belongings around like so many rubber duckies, don't buy or build a house on a freakin' river.

I learned in grade three social studies that Manitoba was once covered almost entirely by a little something called Lake Agassiz. Lakes Winnipeg, Manitoba, and countless others exist today as remnants of this glacial lake monster.

Lake Winnipeg is a helluva water stain for something to leave behind a few millenia ago. Something tells me this water ain't going anywhere too soon. And if you expect me to sandbag your sad-ass St. Vital picket-fence wet dream, you shouldn't leave either.

Stay behind so I can leave the tap running while you drown.

By Tamara King

Floods in Manitoba. When the province announced a few weeks ago Manitoba rivers might flood (again), people's flood fears surfaced (again).

Visions of 1997 flood my mind. Those men's rubber boots I bought fromWal Mart, with the green bottoms. Throwing sandbags around a white stucco house in St. Norbert. Exemption from classes to help with the flood effort.

At least one good thing came out of the flood.

Good bands.

There was a kick ass concert at the Forks for flood relief. Wide mouth Mason, the Watchmen. A big concert at the Forks is always a good time, especially in this concert-starved city. (Sorry, but why exactly is U2 skipping over Winnipeg in their latest tour? And why is it that the Vans Warped Tour never stops in Winnipeg? We can't even use Mother Nature as an excuse, because apparently we aren't going to flood, and we probablywon't have a blizzard anytime soon).

From there came a slough of outdoor concerts. Great Big Sea, the Hip.

And the Flood of 1997 really put Winnipeg on the map. My friends went to Ottawa, and as soon as they told people they were from Winnipeg, they were greeted with lavish sympathy. People east of Kenora actually acknowledged our exisitence.

So stay in your riverside homes, if you like. If you need me, I'm there. Even if my efforts are like trying to empty Lake Winnipeg with a teaspoon.

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CD Reviews

Toadies
Hell Below / Stars Above

An impressive collection of post-grunge from a group that obviously takes their time, this is the Toadies' first album since 1994, when their debut was released. It's refreshing to see someone out there can write a grunge album without simply ripping off Pearl Jam.

-Kelly Stifora

Rating: 8 out of 10. Favourable Tracks: 7, 8, 11, 12

David Gray
Lost songs 95-98

It might be a little premature of Mr. Gray to be releasing best of albums just yet. However, this bedtime album is the cure for insomnia-- in a good way. Soft vocals, smooth acoustics, a total sitting-in-your-pyjamas album.

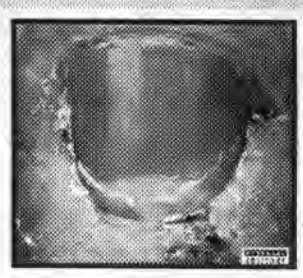
-Tamara King

Rating: 8 out of 10. Favourable Tracks: 4

Alien Ant Farm
ANThology

If your CD collection ranges from Incubus to Matchbox 20, ANThology is for you. AAF is versatile, enjoyable, and defies the "Be like Creed" mentality that is sweeping modern rock (yeah, that's you, Lifehouse). I was pleasantly surprised by these farm boys. I usually hate ants.

-Jen Sharpe



Skrape
New Killer America

This entire album is as unoriginal as the title would indicate. After wallowing in the overused melodies on this Orlando bands debut for 45 minutes, I found myself once again mourning Zack de la Rocha's departure from Rage Against the Machine.

-Kelly Stifora

Rating: 7 out of 10. Favourable Tracks: 9, esp. 11 & 13

ATC
A Touch Of Class

Mixing Ace of Base vocals with a Love Inc. style background makes ATC no different than any other pop group on the market. I challenge the group to plug their noses and see if they smell any different.

-Sara Williscroft

Rating: 6 out of 10. Favourable Tracks: 4, 9, 11

Groove Station 7
Various Artists

The latest incarnation looks like a Hot 103 playlist. The transitions in the "continuous DJ mix" are amateurish at best. This disc can't even be called a dance album. Look for this collection to be played incessantly in malls everywhere.

-Cory Qunitane

Rating: 6 out of 10. Favourable Track: 2,7,9

Rating: 6 out of 10. Favourable Tracks: 9,11,16

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Don't Let History Repeat Itself

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