

# 2004

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# A tale of Christmas woe

Ok, so listen up because I've got a story to tell. A story of Christmas woe. It'll break your heart kids...gather 'round.

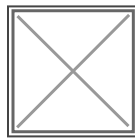
I was out shopping for Christmas presents, as people do at this time of year. I had just purchased an item at the FutureShop in Bayers Lake and was ready to go home to wrap it. This was my last present to buy. I was done. Finally. I pulled out of my parking spot, and drove down to the throughfare at the bottom of the parking lot to make my way back to the road and home. As I was passing in front of the SuperStore, a large hairy man in a small white car dashed out of the lane right in front of me, without any hint of slowing down. I slammed on the brakes. It was too late. There was a relatively loud "crunching" sound and my bumper became intertwined with his driver's side rear door like some sort of macabre dance.

Then, the swearing started.

**Updated!** Diagram of accident scene inside.

**Updated again!** I finally got [the pictures](#) off of my cell phone.

Surprisingly, I wasn't involved in any of it. The hairy man proceeded to call me a fucking this and a fucking that while I remained a paragon of tranquility. He yelled at me that he was calling the cops, which actually relieved me, since this meant that he probably wasn't going to speed away. (I found out later that he would not have been able to "speed away" since his car would no longer start.) Since he was calling the police, I phoned my insurance company and opened a new claim.



A while later, the fire engine arrived. Wait a second...The fire engine? Yes, the fire engine. We managed to get all three types of emergency vehicles at the scene. The ambulance and the police car arrived after a short time. Then, since nobody was hurt (or on fire), the fire engine and ambulance left in disappointment. The police officer remained. He took our statements: first the hairy man's, which involved a goodly amount of arm-waving and pointing. I didn't really have much to say because when he got to me, he was able to infer exactly what had happened based on the position of the cars, probably in direct opposition to the hairy man's testimony. All I had to say was "Yes."

I backed my car up and the hairy man pushed his out of the intersection. The cop went on about his business taking down information. Here's where it gets interesting:

	Me	Hairy Man
Drivers Licence	Yes	No
Insurance	Yes	No

Yeah. So the guy should not have even been driving. Wonderful. No insurance! Even better.

Luckily, my car is still drivable, but I'm more than a little embarassed about driving it around with the front of it all smashed up. I took it to the collision place (conveniently also located in bayers lake). Unluckily, they will probably be unable to get parts until the new year, after the holiday season.

So anyway, that's my story. Stay tuned for updates. I'll be posting pictures as soon as I can get them off of my damn phone. Yeah, that was the only camera I had with me at the time.

*Originally posted on Thursday, 2004-12-23 at 10:06:58.*

# Fid

I had two of my intrepid (read: unpaid) reporters go and check out [Fid](#), one of the restaurants from the burgeoning local restaurant scene here in Halifax. I mean, what's a scene if it isn't burgeoning? It's a non-burgeoning scene, that's what it is.

Click inside to read their reviews.

## Matt's Perspective

It was a cold cold night. Bitterly cold. I picked up Cindy at 5:30 from her place of work. She had a funny winter hat on that quite amused me. We went directly to the restaurant (actually, we went to my apartment for a bit, but don't tell her boyfriend. Anyways ... sheeeesh ... she just wanted to see my TV). We left the apartment after 10 minutes and went directly to the restaurant. We were greeted by a very friendly waiter who offered to take our coats. We both declined. I think Cindy was planning on stealing the silverware sometime during the night and needed a place to stash the goods.

We sat down. My shirt was a little wrinkled, so I was a bit self-conscious about that. I let Cindy look at the wine list because she's fancy ... and is generally better at picking out wines than me. We had a slight disagreement about one of the wines, but of course she realized I was correct. It was a 2001 Bleasdale Mulberry Tree ... I told her we had it before but she didn't believe me. I knew though ... I knew. Cindy ordered the wine, and we went on to discuss things such as current events, politics and fine wines. Actually, we talked about how I have a reputation for being a player.

The wine came to the table. It was awesome! Seriously. At this point I should describe Cindy's pants. She had these red chords on that she really likes. I enjoy them as well.

We ordered our meal. Cindy ordered Quail for an appetizer and beef tenderloin for her main course. I ordered scallops for my appetizer and then beef tenderloin as well. And then, I was feeling a bit frisky and decided to order yet another appetizer for the two of us to share ... a mushroom tart.

First off ... the amuse bouche. That's a little "pre-appetizer" appetizer that is served on a small spoon. I can't remember what it was, but it was sort of like a hard pate. It had a small pickle on it that reminded me of Christmas. I think at this point, I went for my first pee of the night. I had been drinking water all day and it had just started to hit me.

The appetizers arrived at the table. The scallops were among the best I have ever had (rivalled only by Da Maurizio, which are served in a port reduction sauce I believe). I don't really remember what was

served with the scallops but it sort of had a texture of ginger. Cindy put little pieces of Quail on my plate and they were the tiniest tastiest little bird legs I have ever had. After we had both finished our individual appetizers, we went on to share the mushroom tart. It was like we had moved onto dessert before the main courses even arrived. I think people should make mushroom tarts instead of apple pies this Christmas ... seriously. If you could describe happiness as a taste, I would describe it as mushroom tart. "How are you today, Matthew?" "I am feeling very MUSHROOM TART today ... thank you for asking".

The chef, Dennis Johnston came out from the kitchen at this point to greet us. Dennis is one of the nicest people you will ever meet, and if you have a chance to go to FID, make sure to have him come out to talk to him about your meal. He cares a great deal about the food he serves.

After the appetizers, we continued to drink our wine. At this point we started discussing Cindy's current boyfriend "situation" and I talked about the girl I am dating. We also talked about what we would do if we didn't have to work anymore. Cindy would like to go to Spain (or maybe she said Italy) and sell flowers. I think I would like to work with animals. We were served an apple sorbet at this point. Very tasty. Very very tasty.

At this point, I had to go pee again and I think that Cindy had to pee too.

Main Courses! We both ordered the same entrees (with the exception that Cindy ordered her tenderloin medium and I ordered mine medium rare). The beef was sitting on a bed of spinach. On the side, there was a small bowl filled with a creamy, cheesy something (I think whipped potatoes ... but fancier). The beef was amazing. However, I think that Cindy and I got our beef mixed up. No matter ... we switched and everything was peachy again. I was in beef tenderloin heaven. I'm not good at describing food ... so picture Homer Simpson salivating over a donut. That's how Cindy looked (except much more attractive). I tried to finish all of mine, but I failed.

By this point we had finished the bottle of wine but were still feeling a bit parched. So we each ordered some more wine by the glass (same wine). I was no longer feeling cold from being outside at this point. I was also probably flirting with Cindy a bit, as I tend to do when I'm drinking ... but I'm sure it was very subtle, and of course just in a friendly manner.

The desert menu arrived. Cindy chose a mixture of three different deserts! One of them was a ginger crème Brulee, another was a chocolate desert (I'm allergic to chocolate so it was all hers) and the final desert totally escapes my memory ... although I think it was like a creamy green tower, if that makes sense. Afterwards, Cindy had herself an espresso. I tried a little bit of it, but I don't really like coffee. She downed it like a shot of tequila. What a girl.

The entire meal lasted approximately 3.5 hours from start to finish. It was an amazing experience. Everything, from the appetizers to the deserts, was exceptional! At one point, the waiter even took a small comb to the table to remove the crumbs. You can't get service like that at every restaurant in the city, that's for sure.

One more pee ... that's right ... three times during the course of the evening. At this point it was the wine that was affecting me I think. Also, both of us were having trouble moving from all the food. At the end of the night, we thanked the waiter. Dennis came out again from the kitchen and we thanked him as well. We went out into the cold night again, sat in the van for a few minutes while I made Cindy listen to John Frusciante on the CD player and then I drove her home. Altogether, it was a great evening out at a great restaurant. And Cindy was fortunate to have a great guy like me to share the evening with.

## Cindy's Perspective

"Oh hello Pat," chirped Matt as Cindy hopped into the passenger seat, sporting her finest -40 proof winter gear. "Well hello, mister fashion over mittens" she replied pulling off her toque and stuffing it into her laptop packsack.

Entering the restaurant, they were greeted by a warm smile and shown to their seats. "Something to drink?" offered the waiter. After a quick scan of the wine list and light debate over whether or not the vintage was in fact liked, Cindy asked for the Bleasdale while Matt concurred knowingly. In a flash a bottle appeared, glasses were filled and the toasting and savoring began. "Okay, you were right," Cindy admitted quickly changing the subject to the menu.

While Matt order not one, but two appetizers, "because one is for sharing", he was careful to show the waiter that the caramelized scallops should be placed directly in front of him, while the shitake mushroom and cheese tart should be placed more in the centre, and yet still closer to his side of the table.

A wonderful smell suddenly hit the table as the appetizers were arranged with great care and presentation. The crab apple lacquered quail was divine as was the bed of Savoy cabbage it rested on. The scallops had their own unique flair being kept completely in tact, tasting as if they come directly from the ocean and taking on the hint of mandarin orange that also graced the dish. The shitake mushrooms were filled with flavor as was the delicate tart encasing them. Polite sharing was entertained, but it was clear that these gastric treats would not last for long. With strategic timing, Matt ensured the lion's share of the central appetizer with distraction techniques. Placing a succulent piece of scallop on Cindy's plate he was careful to pick up a large portion of tart upon retuning to his own plate.

Very chatty now, warm from extravagant food and wine, and ready for the main course, they were not disappointed when two beautiful tenderloins appeared in front of them, arranged on a nest of sautéed spinach. The steak drizzled in a decadent sauce and sprinkled with crispy onion chips, was cut like butter and the accompanying dish of puréed cheese potatoes had a melt-in-your-mouth flair.

As if this feast wasn't enough, the waiter returned again with dessert menus and soon a trio of key lime mousse, moelleux au chocolat and ginger crème brûlée were placed in the centre of the table.



Single espresso shot ended the night and feeling the force of many additional pounds, the two diners waddled out the restaurant.

*Originally posted on Wednesday, 2004-12-08 at 14:57:34.*

# Finally, some new photos

Yeah, I've been a real slack ass when it comes to taking photos lately. Anyway, I finally have some more of them up there [in the gallery](#). They chronicle my company's [holiday party](#). You guys should go rate and comment on them like the good website readers that you are.

*Originally posted on Monday, 2004-12-06 at 11:17:48.*

# Plastic money

I had a startling revelation about how I perceive money today. I was at the mall, buying a CD (yes, I still do that every now and then), and I had my bank card out to pay for it. When the guy read me the total off the cash register, it didn't even make a dent in me. I wasn't even paying attention. He might as well have just said "money".

I hand over whatever plastic card I'm using at the time, punch in my PIN or sign my name, and walk off with some new merchandise. If I see the same item for a lower price, I'd still buy that one of course, but the de-cashifying of money has made me less conscious that I'm actually *exchanging* it for goods. I'm leaving the store with everything I came in with, after all; my card is still safely tucked away in my wallet.

It was kind of a weird realization; when I was walking out of the store, I realized that I had absolutely no idea how much I paid for the two CDs I had just bought. Oh well...I'll check it on my banking website.

*Originally posted on Wednesday, 2004-11-17 at 19:56:41.*

# Track your money

Ever wonder where your money goes when it leaves your grubby little hands? I don't mean your "money" in the ephemeral (potentially electronic) sense, I mean the physical bills that you spend at retailers. Well I have. But it was only recently that I came into a \$50 bill with a stamp on the back that said 'Track me! [www.cdn-money.com](http://www.cdn-money.com)'. I ventured to that website and entered the serial number off the bill. It was interesting to find out that 610 days prior was the last time somebody had entered that serial number into the website, and at that time, the bill was in British Columbia! It makes me kind of curious how it got here to Halifax. It certainly had time, but what of the means?

Anyway, if you feel a bit geeky and want to track your money, [sign up for an account](#) and [start registering bills](#).

The only catch here is that in order to find out what is happening to your money, other people have to go to the website and enter the serial number when they get your bill. I've taken to just writing the website on the back of the bill, similar to the stamp I found on one of mine. Luckily, it's [not illegal to mark on bills](#).

*Originally posted on Thursday, 2004-11-11 at 09:41:35.*

# Remembrance Day

I've said it [last year](#) and [a few years ago](#) too. Everyone should come out to a Remembrance Day ceremony, whether it's [the one I'm going to](#), or another one closer to you. Make sure you get out and support your local veterans.

I look forward to a time when conditions do not exist to facilitate becoming a veteran.

*Originally posted on Monday, 2004-11-01 at 07:34:44.*

# CBC continues to impress me

I am impressed again and again with the CBC. Most recently, I became aware that [CBC is offering streaming audio](#) of their radio stations via [Ogg Vorbis](#)! I can't wait until they give up Windows Media altogether.

In all seriousness, I think it is a responsibility of public corporations to at least investigate, if not mandate, open source software solutions to these common problems. If the government can solve its problems without spending the ridiculous amounts of cash required for licencing fees required for the Microsoft (or other closed source) equivalents, then I'm all for it.

*Originally posted on Monday, 2004-10-25 at 23:18:17.*

# Go Vote!

This is it. The day we've all been waiting for. **The Sunday Shopping Plebiscite!** Make sure you get out and make your voice heard, otherwise, you have no right to complain of the outcome.

*Originally posted on Saturday, 2004-10-16 at 01:50:28.*

# Laptops vs. Desktops

I have never really wanted a laptop, but I managed to get one from work in a game of chance. I started to find it very useful because I was able to work on the same computer wherever I was. Slow VPN connections were no longer really an issue.

Embracing the laptop experience, I bought a wireless router. As I type this, I'm in my livingroom with no wires at all :) I'm actually enjoying the experience so much that I found myself contemplating purchasing a laptop as my next computer. Maybe even [this one](#).

My real complaint about laptops, the small screen real-estate and keyboard, can be mitigated by simply using a different machine to remote-desktop to it. On a 100 Mbps LAN, it's no different from actually using the console. For some tasks, like storing voluminous amounts of media, you'd still need a stand-alone computer around anyway, so it shouldn't be hard to find a machine to remote-desktop from. Other than that, I think I'm a convert.

Also, touchpads suck ass. That is all.

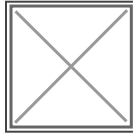
*Originally posted on Saturday, 2004-10-09 at 18:05:51.*



# Spine.cx has a new home

Spine.cx was moved yesterday from its previous home in the basement of the building on the corner of Quinpool and Windsor, to its new home in Purdy's Wharf. I think it likes it there. Better view.

In other news, Old Navy opens in Moncton on September 30th. Why Moncton and not Halifax, you ask? I can't be certain, but I feel confident that it has something to do with the ability to open on Sundays.



*Originally posted on Sunday, 2004-09-26 at 12:21:02.*

# Sunday shopping plebiscite

It's that time again. Time to think about Sunday shopping. Surely you didn't forget about the pain and the anguish we went through at the end of the Christmas shopping season when it went away? Well, on **Oct 16th** there is a municipal election for the Halifax Regional Municipality. Attached to this election is a plebiscite for which you can make your voice heard on the issue of Sunday shopping.

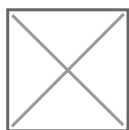
It's been said time and again on the news lately that the people most in favour of Sunday shopping are also those who are least likely to vote, so we have to do something to change that. Get all your slack-ass friends (that means students too) off their asses and get them to the polls so we can go buy shit whenever we want to. DO IT.

*Originally posted on Wednesday, 2004-09-08 at 19:42:13.*

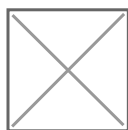
# The Village

I saw [The Village](#) last week. Didn't really have time to write about it though. This is [M. Night Shyamalan](#)'s latest effort (and fourth that he's both written and directed). For those of you who haven't seen [The Sixth Sense](#), [Unbreakable](#), or [Signs](#), this one has the same sort of twistiness to it, but I won't spoil it for you. Anyway, I recommend it. It gets my seal of approval.

I thought the main chick in the movie was pretty hot, so naturally, I looked her up on IMDB. Turns out she's only hot with no makeup on like she was in the movie:



Hot



Skanky

*Originally posted on Saturday, 2004-08-28 at 10:58:45.*

# Today I saw a power bar explode

Today I saw something I've never seen before. Nor do I ever expect to see it again. It was the damndest thing. [Jeff](#) kicked a power bar, the things with multiple power outlets that you can turn on and off, and it fucking blew up.

It exploded with a fury and anger that I've never seen a power bar manifest. This was not just a spark and a black spot. This was a blinding flash of light and the plastic casing splintering and flying in all directions. Truly a sight to behold, if you're wearing the proper eye protection.

Sorry I don't have anything more exciting to tell you, but I've been working so damn much I haven't had time to do anything. I'm going to [Al's](#) party on Saturday night. That should give me some good fodder for posts.

*Originally posted on Thursday, 2004-08-19 at 20:54:06.*

# Chixdiggit!

One of my favourite bands, [Chixdiggit!](#), is playing in Halifax tomorrow (Friday) night at **Stage 9**. As good as they are on record, they are even better live, so I suggest that anyone who can check them out should do just that.

As for Stage 9, I'm still trying to get a feel for it. I've only really been there once. Anyone else have a good/bad experience there?

***Update! 8/14 17:27***

Anyone who missed this one should be sorry. This was probably the best show I've attended all year. It was the non-stop rockfest that I've come to expect from Chixdiggit. The sheer energy that these guys put out on stage could power a small city, I'm sure of it. "Let's hear it for Kevin on guitar! Let's hear it for the audience, come on audience! Let's hear it for Halifax." Every song is a love song and you can tell they mean every word.

But the best news was that they announced that Chixdiggit will be coming out with a new album and that it'll hopefully be in stores by the spring.

*Originally posted on Thursday, 2004-08-12 at 16:44:28.*

# I've been a slacker

I know, I know...I haven't posted anything in over a week. I'm a big slacker. Well, here's some new photos: First, we have some [Tall Ships](#) and next we have [a house being demolished by a backhoe](#).

Talk amongst yourselves. I'm busy.

P.S. T-shirt guy, I still have the shirt. I'll get it to you sooner or later.

*Originally posted on Monday, 2004-08-09 at 19:05:57.*

# Cool Blue Halo Live at Tribeca

My [roommate](#) bought this [portable electronic media player](#) the other day. It's very cool because it's really small, and plays [Ogg Vorbis](#), my preferred format. Another cool feature is that it can record in realtime to MP3, which means, depending on the quality to which you set it, you can fit many hours of audio in its 256 megs of flash memory.

We put this theory to the test at Tribeca (located on Granville Street next to MEC) on Tuesday night when early 90's Haligonian band [Cool Blue Halo](#) re-united to play a show. The device was connected directly to the soundboard with a regular old 1/8" stereo cable and the recording began. After a bit of futzing with the sound with a wav editor, we were pleasantly surprised with the [results of our efforts](#).

*Originally posted on Thursday, 2004-07-29 at 11:48:44.*

# Those damn conservatives

This time they've gone too far. Well, maybe not *too* far, but certainly far enough for me not to like it. Perhaps you've seen the [signs they've posted](#). I've seen them around the Bayers Lake area. "[Take Back Canada](#)", they say. From what? From social progress? From women's rights?

I think we should put up signs that say "Free Canada", as in free us from the jesus freaks and good ol' boys who want to try to tell us what we should be doing and how we should be doing it.

[Promise Keepers](#), anyone? Scary.

*Originally posted on Monday, 2004-07-26 at 10:52:33.*



# Eyesores be gone

They are finally tearing down the decrepit, condemned, old parking garage on the corner of Granville and Sackville Streets. It's been a long time coming, some would say. It's stood there for a number of years, useless; a shadow of its former self. Perhaps it yearns for the day when cars drove upon its ramps. Now it has been overrun by pigeons. Pigeons that have called that structure home since before it was decommissioned. Where are those poor pigeons going to live now?

Even as the structure is being dismantled, the poor birds flee from the sounds of the jackhammers and the metal-cutters. Some of you might question my concern for creatures which are annoying to many and hated by some. Well, I ask you, if they aren't free to live in the old parking garage, what will they do? They'll be out shitting on people, that's what. Or picking up stray pieces of donair meat and [dropping them on unsuspecting cars](#).

Fuck pigeons. Fuck them up their stupid asses.

*Originally posted on Wednesday, 2004-07-21 at 18:47:03.*

# A contest

I have had a black [Simple Plan](#) t-shirt, size large, donated to me by [a generous benefactor](#). It doesn't even come close to fitting me, so I thought I would give it away on the website. I wanted to post a picture of it, but every time I tried to get the picture off my memory card, my computer would reboot. Three reboots later, you're still not getting a picture.

Anyway, this contest is going to be fairly simple. [Email me telling me why you want this shirt](#). The email that does the best job of convincing me wins. I'll even mail it to you if you're not local.

The contest is over whenever the hell I want, so send your emails promptly ;) I'll notify the winner and get their mailing address at that time. I'll even post the picture if I can ever figure out what the hell went wrong.

*Originally posted on Wednesday, 2004-07-14 at 10:08:58.*

# Songs for short attention spans

Find modern songs too long to listen to? Can't wait to hear the closing chords and get on to something new? [This album](#) may be just the thing for you. It's 100, yes, *one hundred* songs squeezed onto one 80 minute CD.

By forcing himself to find really, really short songs, the compiler has created an eclectic mix that's not at all unpleasant to listen to. If you have the means, I highly recommend [giving it a listen](#). Even if you don't like a song, it's usually over in less than a minute.

*Originally posted on Wednesday, 2004-07-07 at 23:32:30.*

# The most fucked up things happen to me

What's the last thing you would expect when you wake up in the morning? For me, the last thing I would have expected was for my eyelid to be turned inside out and swollen like an altar boys's tuchus. Honestly, I wish I had a photo of that for you (stay tuned, there *are* some coming...), but I was kind of panicked at the time. This was around 5:45 this morning, and it's no doubt what woke me up at that ungodly hour. I pop it back the right way around, and although it's still very swollen, I figure I've sufficiently remedied the problem and I go back to sleep.

Two hours later, I wake up for real. No dice, my eye is [still puffed up](#) more than your dad on viagra. As I'm getting ready for work, I make the judgement call to hit the E.R. on my way in. It was relatively quick and painless, those liberals really were swift about keeping their shorter-waiting-time promises.

Unfortunately, the only thing that the nurse and two doctors that looked at my eye could tell me was that something had inflamed the tissue of my upper eyelid (No shit!) but it was probably gone by now. The best I could hope for was to take some anti-histamine or anti-inflammatory drugs and wait a couple of days. It wasn't really anything I didn't expect, I just think it prudent to see someone who knows what they're talking about when it comes to your eyes.

As I left the E.R., it was [already looking a bit better](#). Hopefully I'll be good and healed up for some heavy drinking on [Canada Day](#).

## **Update! 1357h:**

The [swelling has gone down a lot](#), and my vision in that eye is pretty much back to normal, but I think it'll be a couple of days until I stop looking like I lost a fight.

*Originally posted on Tuesday, 2004-06-29 at 11:09:38.*

# I got to ride a Segway

Yeah! I was at the Technology museum in San Jose today and I got to ride a [Segway](#). At first, it's not very intuitive, you just feel like you're going to tip over when you lean, but you get the hang of it fairly quickly, and it becomes pretty natural. Still, US\$5k is a bit too much to drop on something that amounts to a really neat toy.

Click [here](#) for a video of me riding the segway. It's pretty big, so don't download it over dialup.

*Originally posted on Saturday, 2004-06-26 at 00:05:39.*

# You gotta fight for your right

From: Dragos Ruiu  
To: bugtraq@securityfocus.com  
Subject: Caveat Lector: Beastie Boys Evil  
Date: Wed, 16 Jun 2004 01:10:23

Well I truly regret actually purchasing a copy of the new Beastie Boys album to support them.

It seems that Capitol Records has some sort of new copy protection system, that automatically, silently, installs "helpful" copy protection software on MacOS and Windows as soon as you insert the CD into default systems. I'm not sure exactly what it does yet, but I am sure regretting actually purchasing said media now... they don't deserve my money if they choose to pull stupid stunts like this. Installing software without your permission sounds like viral malware behaviour to me. I certainly hope the AV companies put signatures into their products for this crap.

They include some sort of uninstaller buried on there for Windows, but I see no such thing for MacOS. If anyone has disassembled the aforementioned malware already and can save us some time with instructions on how to remove it... thanks in advance.

*Originally posted on Thursday, 2004-06-17 at 10:19:50.*

# Downtown power outage

They couldn't have picked a better day for a transformer explosion: Sunny, 25° I'm standing by the window in my office on the 12th floor of a downtown office building and I hear a huge BOOM and then all the power goes out. Fantastic! I'm very happy that Visual Studio saves your work automatically when you compile.

Since the HVAC is now non-operational, and it's hot in here at the best of times, we proceed outside. There is literally nothing that can be done, so what's the point, right? We go get a coffee and then execute the requisite standing-around period until we finally decide to go to the bar. It's only 11:00, but we figure it's a nice day and the decks will be open.

We're halfway to the Argyle and my cell phone rings to tell me that the fucking power is back on already. It had barely been an hour! Damn those Emera Power workers for being so efficient.

*Originally posted on Wednesday, 2004-06-09 at 11:30:06.*

# My birthday party

So, yeah, my party happened on Saturday night. I'm still working on getting the webcam's photos turned into some kind of stop-motion video. It worked pretty well while it was light out, but after that the pictures just turned out black. Bummer.

Anyway, the biggest mistake of my night was [playing checkers](#) with [Ryan Belbin](#). See these weren't ordinary checkers, but rather [each piece was a shotglass](#). I got destroyed in more ways than one.

For most of the night, I didn't take many pictures, but I distinctly remember more than a few flashes going off, so I'm sure that there are photographs floating around out there. If you took pictures, post your links in the comments.

Also, if you missed it, a bunch of punks showed up and played [Fax Hands](#). I heard one of them fell down my front steps.

*Originally posted on Monday, 2004-06-07 at 10:47:03.*



# My Friday night

Friday was [Jeanine's](#) birthday, so a bunch of people went out for drinks and eats at [Mexicali Rosa's](#). Unfortunately, I accidentally ordered their 'contest food', simply because it was a good deal. After finding out that I could get my picture on the wall and a free deep-fried ice cream for finishing the Bigger-than-your-head burrito, I was compelled to try, not only by my ego, but the dozen or so people who had suddenly become my biggest fans.

Obviously they hadn't a chance to actually measure *\*my\** head, previous to this engagement, because the 'bigger-than-somebody's-head' burrito was handled with ease. This was certainly no [72 ounce steak](#).

Following that outing, which was relatively tame compared to where I was to go next, I caught a cab home, changed (because I had gone to Mexi's right after work), and headed to a friend's place for another birthday party. He shall remain nameless because I am about to describe various acts of belligerence and debauchery, which may or may not be illegal where you are.

First, allow me to describe the scene as I walk in: To my left, a full DJ set up. Two turntables and a microphone, [as Beck would say](#). To my right, a bar selling shots for \$2. This was excellent, because I hadn't brought nearly enough beer for this party, which was surely destined to go all fucking night.

Not 5 minutes after I had entered the place, some jackhole (who shall also remain nameless) grabs a container of [bear mace](#) (*bear fucking mace*) from somebody else's pocket, and proceeds to spray it in the living room. For anyone who has not yet experienced this lovely concoction of chemicals, let me tell you that it's not exactly pleasant. I can say with absolute certainty that I do NOT want to get this shit sprayed in my face. You couldn't exactly *smell* it, but you could definately *feel* it. It was spicy. Kind of like somebody holding an indelible tabasco marker under your nose.

The house bascially had to be evacuated. You couldn't exist inside without coughing up a lung. Stay inside long enough and it made you gag. Windows were opened, and fans were set up. About 45 minutes of hanging out on the deck later, and it was ok to go back inside. You're probably thinking that was the worst thing to happen that night, right?

Wrong.

Around three o'clock in the morning, some fucking yahoos try to crash the party and end up (I heard this second hand) getting pushed down the stairs. Naturally, they try to start a fight by insulting people. Being drunk and stupid, people respond in anger. Party crashers get driven off, only to promise to return with firearms and shoot up the party. That's when I left.

[Here are my photos](#). I didn't have my camera at the crazy party, because I'm sure you realize, as I did, the places where you most want to take pictures, are the places where you least want to take your \$400 digital camera.

So there's my Friday night in a nutshell. Can you top that? Post your stories here.

Oh, one more thing: After being in a room that has had bear mace released into it, remember to wash your hands **before** using the washroom. That is all.

*Originally posted on Sunday, 2004-05-30 at 12:57:56.*

# Steve: 0, Beef: 1

I've done some stupid things in the past. Some of them really stupid. This ranks up there with the best of them. My brother convinced me to attempt eating a 72 ounce steak at the Lone Star. It cost \$40, but it was one of those, "If-you-can-finish-this-meal-then-it's-free" things. You have to tell them 24 hours in advance so they have time to thaw it out.

I'm no slacker when it comes to eating steaks. I was confident, maybe even a little arrogant about my ability to finish it. I mean, I'll routinely get a 20 ounce from the butcher, and I thought eating what would equal 4 of them wouldn't be that big of a deal. Holy crap was I wrong. A more forceful defeat at the hands of beef could only include being trampled or gored by an actual bull.

When the waitress brought it out, I couldn't believe the sheer size of this thing. It was a gargantuan brick of flesh and sinew that the establishment offhandedly labeled 'steak'. More like a roast, actually. Never had I seen such an amount of beef that wasn't actually on a cow. I started to doubt my abilities right out of the gate. This steak filled the entire plate save for the space taken up by a slice of pickle and two half slices of toast (I have no idea why they include toast).

It actually came in three pieces, loosely bound by sinew. Two of the pieces, roughly the same size flanked a third, half again the size of one of the others. All of them were about 2 inches thick. I made it through one of the flanking pieces and about halfway through the middle one before the beef topped out my stomach and started to fill my esophagus. I had been defeated by beef.

I got the rest of it to go, gave the half of the big piece to my brother and kept the other whole piece for myself. Maybe I'll eat it tomorrow, but for now, I have had just about as much beef as I can stand.

You can see pictures of the entire ordeal [here](#).

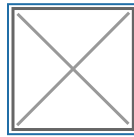
*Originally posted on Sunday, 2004-05-23 at 23:06:37.*

# Bomb scare in my neighbourhood

Ok, so I'm driving home and the street one block down from me is roped off with police tape. Cop cars all around. You'd think, "WTF?!", right? Me too. Naturally, I pull over and [walk back, camera in hand](#) to see if I can find out what the hell is going on.

I tried [talking to a cop](#) but didn't tell me anything useful. The people evacuated from their homes, however, were quite eager to tell me that it was a bomb scare. I fully expect this to be on the news tonight, but you heard it here first. Take that Bruce Frisko!

Spine.cx: Your number one source for rumour and conjecture.



*Originally posted on Sunday, 2004-05-23 at 17:27:11.*

# My birthday party

[My 28th birthday](#) is on the 1st of June. Since that's a Tuesday, I'm throwing [a party the following Saturday](#), the 5th of June. Bring meat to barbeque, and booze to imbibe. If you don't know where I live, [drop me an email](#).

It's been a long time (last August 16th) since I've had a house party, so lets try and make this a good one.

*Originally posted on Sunday, 2004-05-23 at 03:28:03.*

# Beers, beers, beers

Recently, some beers have made me curious. Some because they have no carbs, and some because they're used in bizarre party games. I decided to try them both.

There are many low or no-carb beers out there now, and I had to pick one, so I chose [Sleeman's Clear](#).

The other beer is [Faxe](#), used in playing the extremely strange party game, [Faxe Hands](#).

Faxe is a Danish beer that is light in colour, but heavy in taste. It's remarkably thick for how light it is. But the most curious thing about this particular beer is that it's 10% alcohol. If you want to get ripped in a hurry, then this is your beverage of choice. At only \$2.50 for a tallboy from the liquor store, you can't beat it for dollar/alcohol value.

Sleeman Clear is what it purports to be: A clear beer with only 2.4 grams of carbs per serving. What it definately does not purport to be is anything fucking worth drinking. This beer is putrid. It's as if they hooked a good taste sucker up to each bottle as it went out of the factory, and turned it on full-suck mode. I would not buy this again if it were the only beer in the store. Your milage may vary, but I doubt it.

*Originally posted on Saturday, 2004-05-22 at 21:57:53.*

# Point Pleasant Park reopens June 4th

Just like the title says, [Point Pleasant is scheduled to reopen](#) for general use on Friday, [June 4th](#) at 9:00.

Hopefully, it won't look like [this](#) for the next generation of park-goers. The city is planning a long term project of replanting trees, but it'll obviously take a while before it's anything like it was before Juan.

*Originally posted on Thursday, 2004-05-13 at 11:28:11.*

# Gas and mouthwash

These gas price increases have gone on long enough, so I thought it was about time to write a full-fledged article about it. [Ninety-six point nine](#), eh? That's getting pretty fucking crazy. When it starts costing people more than \$50 on average to fill their tanks, it's time for people to seriously start thinking about [alternative means of transportation](#) and/or [alternate fuel sources](#).

As far as I'm concerned, the economy is still in the shitter. [This poor guy](#) that I saw at the bus stop can't even afford to drink [brand name mouthwash](#)! What's the world coming to?

*Originally posted on Tuesday, 2004-05-11 at 21:24:36.*



# My new toy

I love getting new pieces of electronics. It's like Christmas; the sweet smell of virgin circuit boards filling your nostrils. Last week, I went and bought myself a [Palm Zire 72](#) as an upgrade from my [Zire 71](#). Coincidentally, I'm also looking to sell my Zire 71. [Let me know](#) if you're interested ;)

The Zire 72 improves on the Zire 71 in just about every conceivable way: It has has more memory (16 -> 32 Mb), faster processor (144 Mhz OMAP -> 312 MHz XScale), better camera (now 1.2 MegaPixels), and best of all Bluetooth wireless capabilities.

*Originally posted on Monday, 2004-05-03 at 22:17:52.*

# Why Free standards are better

The reason I prefer Free, open standards is because [shit like this](#) can't happen. People expected it to happen with GIF. Compuserve had a patent, Unisys owns Compuserve, pretty much everyone saw that one coming.

This JPEG thing is a different story. I thought that standard was pretty safe. I guess I was wrong. Some people rag on me for using [Ogg Vorbis](#) as my primary audio file format, but the reason I do is because of [this](#): the patent owners for MP3 charge licencing fees to encode, decode, or distribute anything in MP3 format.

I believe that vendors will eventually all include Free format support in their applications because it will cost them nothing except the time to implement it. I believe that users will eventually use Free formats because it will cost them nothing to distribute their works and the applications that create them will cost less because of the absense of licencing fees. But most of all, I believe that the world *needs* to support Free formats. I mean, why should you get charged for the format in which you distribute *your* work. It just doesn't make sense to me.

Don't get me wrong; I appreciate all the work that the authors of the MP3 format did to increase the electronic distribution of music, but the opportunity now exists for the masses to put their weight behind a truly open and Free standard. And I'm doing what I can to support it.

Open picture format: [PNG \(Portable Network Graphics\)](#)

Open audio format: [Ogg Vorbis](#)

Open video format: [Ogg Theora](#)

*Originally posted on Monday, 2004-04-26 at 23:31:49.*

# Hardware failures

Of all the pieces of hardware in a computer that could possibly fail, the most annoying is a hard drive. Guess what piece of hardware in my computer is in the process of failing? Hey, you got it. I bet that didn't take more than two guesses.

About two weeks ago, I bought a 160 Gb drive from [Futureshop](#) because they had a kick ass mail-in rebate deal. Anyway, it cost me only \$170. I set it up (in software) with the 160 Gb drive I already had as a 320 Gb striped array. Fantastic. Until the new drive started giving me read errors.

I had just finished the laborious process of transferring over one hundred gigs of crap off of my previous drives and onto the new striped array. That took basically a whole day of watching progress bars. Now I have to do it all again, only this time, I have to go "pleasepleasepleasepleaseplease" everytime it starts a new file hoping against hope that it doesn't fail. There is nothing worse than losing data.

Once I get all the data off that I can get, it's back to Futureshop to see about getting a replacement. I don't have the package anymore (they make them such that you can't get the damn drive out without destroying them), but I do still have the label; I was just about to send in that mail-in rebate, you know. I have high hopes that they will still take it back, because the magic 30 days have not yet passed and it *is* defective, after all.

Wish me luck.

*Originally posted on Thursday, 2004-04-15 at 23:19:09.*

# Best. Monitor. EVAR.

I think anyone who's ever written a client/server architected program has either basked in the glory of, or pined away for, a dual monitor set up. I know that since I have had dual monitors, I just can't go back. It's just too sweet.

[This monitor](#) however, would put all that to shame. If you were ever writing a server/client/client/client/client/client program, then this is [the monitor](#) for you :)



*Originally posted on Thursday, 2004-04-08 at 11:11:18.*

# Canadian women win gold

The Canadian women have done it again: won a world hockey championship. There was definately some questionable refereeing going on during this game; bad calls were made on both sides. But it if weren't for a (bad) decision in calling one of the Americans' shots that actually went in the net a non-goal, this may have been a vastly different game. Sure it happened in the last 5 minutes of the game, and Canada was up by 2, but still, there's that nagging feeling in the back of your mind that says "what if..."

Did anybody else watch the game? Was anybody there? Please comment.

*Originally posted on Wednesday, 2004-04-07 at 12:07:10.*

# Downloading music in Canada is now 100% legal

A Canadian court has rejected a motion that would have allowed file sharing netizens to be sued. Looks like it's open season (as if it wasn't already) on file sharing.

The original article on [CBC.ca](#) is [here](#).

The Recording Industry Association of America has sued about 400 individuals in the U.S. for allowing others access to song files. Several people have settled out of court for about \$3,000 US each. The Canadian Recording Industry Association tried to sue 29 Canadians earlier this year.

*Originally posted on Wednesday, 2004-03-31 at 18:33:54.*

# New photos

I figured if I was going to start posting more frequently, I would go out and actually take some new photos too. There are two [new albums](#) posted for your viewing pleasure.

[One of them](#) is my (albeit short) visit to [Point Pleasant Park](#) on Saturday, when they were letting the public into see what's left of the flora; and let me tell you, it's not much. [The other](#) was my visit to [Ski Martock](#) on Sunday for their final day of the season. They put on their annual "Slush Cup" where skiers and snowboarders attempt to make it across a 40 foot stretch of (muddy) water without falling in. Most were unsuccessful.

*Originally posted on Monday, 2004-03-29 at 19:00:12.*

# A night of free drinking

Hold on just a minute, this isn't something I'm offering to the general public; rather, it's something I have just experienced. Some friends and I were at the Granite Brewery on Barrington Street and started to eat supper, continued drinking beer, and decided to stay for the currently-sound-checking entertainment.

Drinking, some old arguments were brought to the table, such as "Does a peanut butter sandwich imply jam or jelly?" and "What days of the week comprise the weekend?" We tried to engage our waitress in the conversation, but she didn't seem appreciative.

Still drinking, we were the only clients in the bar. Waiting for the live music to start was turning out to be a bit of a chore. Simply drinking was not holding my attention. Eventually, more people started to roll in and around 10 pm, the two female singer/guitar players took the stage. At first I was confused by the fact that they were singing love songs about "she" and "her", but upon scanning the audience and finding its constituents primarily mannish, and female, I understood the situation.

Nevertheless, it seems that I really like lesbian singers because I really liked the last band that I knew was lesbians (lesbian sisters, at that—[\*Tegan and Sarah\*](#) was their name) too. Some fantastic guitar playing and better than average singing was heard and enjoyed. They played very melodic, folk-like tunes that really spoke from their hearts. These girls were not afraid to lay their emotions down in song lyrics and you have to respect anyone who can sing their feelings to a crowd of strangers.

On my way home (I took the bus, because I'm too cheap to cab it when I'm just going home to Palmela Handerson), I was eavesdropping (is it really eavesdropping when they're talking more loudly enough for you to hear them three seats away?) on this guy and girl coming from what sounded like a movie screening. Turned out they were digital arts students that were making short films and jazzing them up with special effects and such. If you think computer people can talk with the buzzwords, you have *got* to hear these digital media people going on. They were throwing around jargon like high school seniors with a freshman's lunch money.

If you've read this far, you're probably wondering, "When the hell am I going to find out about the free drinking?" Or maybe you forgot about that all together. Anyway, when I get to my door, in my mailbox is a mail-in rebate cheque for \$50 for something I bought at a boxing day sale. Because of that cheque, my entire night out cost me \$2.50.

*Originally posted on Saturday, 2004-03-27 at 01:21:39.*



# FNP 8: Because drinking is half the battle

Yeah, I know it's been over a week since I last posted something on the main page, but honestly, it's because I've been either working or sick. This post will make the wait worth while.

I am announcing the 8th incarnation of the Feelin' No Pain pub crawl franchise: [FNP 8: Because drinking is half the battle](#). That link should pretty much answer all your questions. If you have any others, [email me](#).

I've carefully timed this one to coincide with the end of university exam schedules, so hopefully we can get lots of people out. Spread the word.

*Originally posted on Thursday, 2004-03-25 at 07:48:28.*

# My bus is an elevator

That's right. On *my* bus, people get in, stare at the door, and do not talk to anyone else for the duration of their stay. Unless you're with friends, in which case talking is allowed. This is because the rest of us get to eavesdrop on whatever interesting conversations we care to. I figure a bus is just like an elevator that moves throughout the city and doesn't necessarily go up and/or down and you don't really press any buttons.

People get on an elevator with a plan and somewhere to go. I thought the same was true for a bus, but it appears not to be so. People get on a bus with time to kill.

On *my* bus, a complete stranger would not interrupt my listening pleasure to ask, "What the fuck are you listening to?". On *my* bus parents would not let their children run screaming up and down the aisle. On *my* bus, people would not pay in pennies and then argue with the driver (who won't move until the situation is resolved) that you're sure there was \$1.75's worth in there.

*Originally posted on Thursday, 2004-03-11 at 22:15:00.*

# The "new" Merrill's

I'm worried about Merrill's. It's been an institution in my perception of the downtown scene for as long as I can remember. Since getting a job basically across the street from it, I've been there for lunch a number of times and I've brought nearly all of my pub crawls there. But recently it's changed hands. New owner, new chef, new menu, new name: the "new" Merrill's.

Since this change took place, I've been noticing a disturbing trend, fewer and fewer people are gracing the doors of this fine establishment. In my opinion, the menu is better than it ever was (except for the lack of nachos, but don't get me started on that), the chef is a nice guy (I was talking to him when I was there soon after the opening), and the atmosphere is pretty much identical. Because of those reason, I can't understand what is the deal with the declining patronage.

After J.J.'s closed, I started to get paranoid about losing the bars that were my old favourites. Everybody go down to Merrill's and have a drink. Show your support.

*Originally posted on Wednesday, 2004-03-03 at 20:13:42.*

# Complete. Total. Ineptitude

I'm not sure if the title yet applies to the HRM employees or the retarded fuckers on the road this morning, but it's possibly a little of both. They had a curfew on for two nights so they could clean up the streets. They closed off downtown so they could widen the roads. Why, then, did it take me nearly 1 1/2 hours to get downtown today on a bus route that normally takes 1/3 of that time?

I have patience. Really, I do. I understand that it takes a herculean effort to clear such an [amount of snow](#) as we have seen here lately. But this storm was on THURSDAY. That's a full 5 days ago (nearly 6). I'm thinking that we should be pretty much back to normal now. No sir. Not the case.

How can the city expect people not to use their cars, while at the same time scaling back bus schedules? The only option for some people is not to go anywhere and even that's not really an option [for some](#). Shouldn't the priority for widening roads be the roads along which the buses travel?

Are the traffic problems because of the [cops directing traffic](#)? Possibly, but I doubt it. It may not even be anyone's fault in particular, but I rather enjoy imagining to myself that I've figured out the problem...especially when I have 90 minutes on the bus (did I mention I was standing?) to do it.

*Originally posted on Tuesday, 2004-02-24 at 09:59:20.*

# Undergrads

Undergrads, one of the best animated shows ever, in my opinion, has finally come out on DVD, but guess what? It's not available in Canada yet. Sure I could order it on Amazon, but I think I'll wait. The rips are coming out online (I've got 6 episodes), so I'm not in a rush, but I will \*definitely\* buy this DVD set for the special features and interviews with the creator, Pete Williams.

I'm willing to bet Nitz, Cal, Rocko, and Gimpy all remind you of someone you know. That's what makes it such a great show.

*Originally posted on Friday, 2004-02-20 at 22:16:36.*

# The WB cancels Angel

The WB network has announced the cancellation of [one of my favourite shows](#), despite increased ratings over the same period last year. They are at least allowing them to finish the season, but I have my doubts as to how they're going to end the series gracefully with less than half a season left to shoot.

On the bright side, there is talk of movies and otherwise continuing the Buffy/Angel universe. Perhaps the end of the show will be what it takes to get [more Buffy cast members](#) to guest star on Angel.

*Originally posted on Sunday, 2004-02-15 at 13:12:26.*

# FireFox

For anyone who doesn't yet know about the best web browser out there, here it is: [Firefox](#). Previously named Firebird, previously named Phoenix, still the same great browser. Tabbed browsing, automatic pop up blocking, sheer blinding speed, and, well, the fact that I personally use it should be enough to sway you to the cause :)

[Get Firefox](#)

*Originally posted on Monday, 2004-02-09 at 09:28:08.*

# Tidbits from Slashdot

There a couple of links from [Slashdot](#) that I found very poignant to whom I think my readers are ;) It's not plagiarism if you cite your sources, right?

[Building a home theatre PC](#). Something I am currently thinking about; yeah, I have a computer that's hooked up to my television, but I want one that can output in HD and Dolby Digital.

The [specs for Xbox 2](#). 64 bit microprocessors, PowerPC chips, NO internal hard drive, and NO backwards compatibility top the list of interesting bits.

*Originally posted on Tuesday, 2004-02-03 at 14:01:18.*



# RealPlayer with no spyware

The BBC uses real media format to stream their videos and such, but were annoyed (as we are) that RealPlayer came bundled with spyware and other crap that nobody likes. They commissioned Real to make them a player with no ads or spyware, but because they are a public-service broadcaster, they can't advertise. Relax, it's not the end of the world, it's still crappy software.

[Get it](#) while it's hot.

*Originally posted on Tuesday, 2004-02-03 at 09:41:51.*

# Bubba Ho-Tep being shown at Park Lane

Many of you probably have never heard of [such a movie](#). Those of you who have will know that it's one of [Bruce Campbell's](#) later movies. That's right. Bruce Campbell from [Army of Darkness](#), the campy, horror/comedy classic.

Anyway, it's playing at Park Lane Cinemas, on February 9th (next Monday) at 7:00 pm. Tickets go on sale at 6:00 pm and they will cost \$8. Check out [the official website](#).

*Originally posted on Tuesday, 2004-02-03 at 08:41:35.*

# Pixar ends relationship with Disney

After putting out several films together, such as [Monsters Inc.](#), [Toy Story](#), and most recently [Finding Nemo](#) (the most successful animated film ever), Pixar has announced that they will be severing ties with Disney, who distributed their works.

As usual, the argument was over money. Pixar wanted more of a share of the profits and a lower distribution fee because their movies were so successful. I can't say I blame them. [Disney's going to shit](#) these days.

*Originally posted on Friday, 2004-01-30 at 10:20:34.*

# New \$100 bill

Not to be outdone by the American's \$20 bill, the Canadian government has released a new \$100 bill with the usual ramp-up of anti-counterfitting features: Watermarks, holograms, metallic strips, etc.

Check out a picture in [this story](#).

*Originally posted on Thursday, 2004-01-29 at 11:28:35.*

# Sir Bill of Microsoft

Is it just me, or is the [Queen of England](#) knighting people like it's going out of style? Originally, I thought, fine, she can knight whomever she wants, but at least up until now she was confining herself to British citizens, as they are the only ones who can legitimately use the title "Sir" in front of their names. I cannot see rhyme nor reason behind the upcoming [knighting of Bill Gates](#).

Bill will become a "Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire", but since he's not British, no "Sir" for him. I think Sir Anthony Hopkins could kick his ass in a joust anyday.

*Originally posted on Monday, 2004-01-26 at 10:22:49.*

# No scents is good sense

"No scents is good sense", or so the new signs in my office tell me. It's supposed to be the start of some sort of campaign to get us to stop wearing scented products to the office for people who are sensitive to them. What about the people who are sensitive to people's fucking B.O.? I am acutely aware of *those* peoples' needs because I am among them.

What I think people really need is some lessons in moderation. I know how horrible it is to get on an elevator 10 minutes after the last person, and not be able to breathe because 6 gallons of perfume is still hanging in the air. But it's also not very pleasant to have to sit next to the stinky guy on the bus, is it?

Surely there is a happy medium.

*Originally posted on Friday, 2004-01-23 at 09:28:30.*

# Alexander Keith's becoming the top beer in Canada?

Read [a story](#) in the [Daily News](#) today that said the president of Labatt Breweries of Canada wants to position Keith's in a "splashy marketing campaign" that could make it the most popular brand in the country. It goes on to say how Keith's will always be brewed in Halifax, and that the marketing will not overshadow (in fact, it will *use*) the fact that Keith's has a long history of maritime brewing.

Maybe we'll find out whatever happened to Roger, the Admiral, and my personal favourite, the Admiral's daughter.

Alexander Keith's Hockey Night in Canada, anyone? :)

*Originally posted on Wednesday, 2004-01-21 at 10:19:00.*

# HDTV and why you should get it

So, [Eastlink](#) recently started offering [a new set-top box](#) that can [decode and display HDTV](#). "Why is this significant to me?" you may ask? "Well", I would answer, "HDTV is not only the most significant update to television as we know it since black and white gave way to colour, but it also looks fucking fantastic.". Yes, I believe that's exactly how I'd answer.

HDTV offers about 16 times the resolution that traditional TV does. Think about it. How many of you have your computers set at 640x480? Traditional television is only about half that. Although HDTV capable sets are still fairly pricey, they're coming down quickly. As an early adopter (4 years ago), I paid through the nose for mine.

I'm not much of a football fan, but let me tell you, it's very cool seeing a game in the the clarity that HD offers and hearing the fans yell and cheer from behind you on a Dolby Digital 5.1 sound mix.

Eastlink's HDTV package has 6 channels, five of which you can get for free during their trial period and the sixth you get with a subscription to the movie network. So that's FOX, ABC, NBC, CBS, and two channels that they show everything else on. All of the prime time shows are in HDTV and they look fantastic. For anyone who didn't know, since HDTV's aspect ration is 16x9 instead of traditional television's 4x3, which means that these shows are all filmed in widescreen. It's a much more pleasant experience, like everything you watch is a movie instead of a television show. Some of them even come through in 5.1 sound.

Of all the channels, CBS really shines through with the best quality video. I don't know what it is, something intangible perhaps, but the crispness and clarity of the CBS channel is far better than the others. I would give second place to the PBS programs broadcast on the first "catch all" channel; high resolution images, to be sure, but I tend to notice some shimmer. All the rest are clearly better than standard television, but they just don't compare to the quality of the top two. When the HD channels are not showing native HD material, they show up-converted 480i programming. Even this looks staggering better than normal.

So, everyone go and get an HDTV compatible set, and get on the bandwagon. My dream is for one day to have every program on every channel to look this good. I know this is mandated by the CRTC, but they keep pushing the date back. You really haven't experienced television until you have seen HDTV.  
*Originally posted on Tuesday, 2004-01-20 at 16:15:41.*



# Winter driving

You would think that we, as Canadians, would have this winter driving thing all worked out by now, but after last night's 15 cm snowfall, I can see that we have not. I witnessed some un-smart things being done by people this morning. For example, sliding into a pole is very un-smart, but perhaps that wasn't in the driver's control; I won't bitch about that. What I am going to bitch about is the amount of snow that people leave on their cars and think it's perfectly OK to drive around.

You sloppy bitches.

Not only can snow from your roof blow off and hit the windsheild of the car behind you, it can slide off when you stop and cover your own. Also, try brushing the snow of your brake lights so perhaps I could tell when you were stopping. Post your own complaints about awful winter drivers.

*Originally posted on Monday, 2004-01-19 at 09:41:42.*

# Kodak says, "Screw film, I never liked it anyway."

Kodak has [decided to stop producing and selling film cameras](#) in the United States, Canada, and Europe (except for disposables) and put all their resources towards digital ones. That's a fairly major statement for a leader in the field of consumer-level photography. Time to buy some [Sandisk stock](#) I guess.

Anybody out there an amateur (or professional) photographer? I know at least two people who are, one uses film and [the other uses digital](#). Do you see this as the death of film photography? Will it be relegated to the annals of history as something only professionals or weirdos use like turntables or betamax tapes? Personally, I think it's a pretty bold step by Kodak; one I wasn't expecting to see for a few years to come.

*Originally posted on Tuesday, 2004-01-13 at 22:12:12.*

# New year, new pub crawl

After what I thought was waning interest in my pub crawls, I have recently had several people ask me when the next one was going to be. What kind of guy would I be if I let down my readers? A shitty one, that's what kind. So Feelin' No Pain 8 will be arriving sometime this spring. Probably in March, so keep your calendars open, kids.

[Email me](#) if you have any suggestions for any part of the crawl, theme, bars, etc.

*Originally posted on Monday, 2004-01-05 at 13:18:30.*