

Volume 2, September 2011



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This Columnist's Manifesto Adrienne Tessier

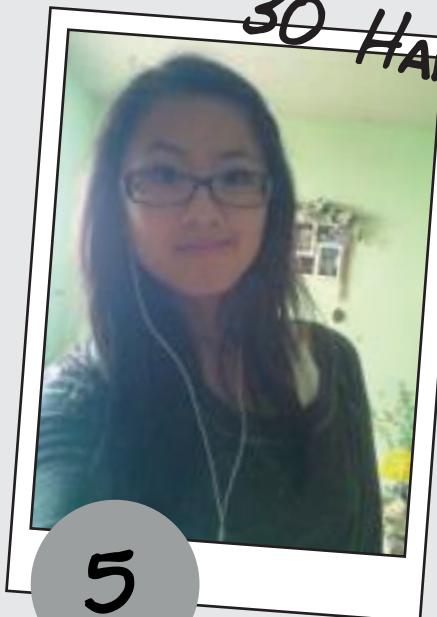
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# Write Angry



It may have been the effect of almost a hundred after-school specials and PSAs and schooling, but I've become jaded to the idea of 'being yourself'. John Campbell of *pictures of sad children* put it best: "we are each a beautiful snowflake that will melt in hell." And even though he was referring to the wide variety of terrible things humans do with differing (but still terrible) mindsets and situations, I believe

his idea still relates to my point. The moral of "being yourself" is supposed to

instill the idea that just because a lot of people (jumping off bridges is a popular example of this, and would used as an example if suicide cults were more widespread) cool (which is a lie, the cool is decided on by the crowd) or nothing is). As a sister moral to be yourself often comes special" to strengthen the message and "say 'No' to peer method of achieving these things. While these thoughts are nice and comforting they are as a whole inaccurate and easily misinterpreted. Every human being is unique, but none of them are special.

"We are each a beautiful snowflake that will melt in Hell"

are doing something  
be even more widely  
doesn't mean it's  
safe (which  
"everyone  
pressure" as a

Before I continue, note that peer pressure is the "influence exerted by a peer group in encouraging a person to change his or her attitudes, values, or behavior in order to conform to group norms" (Wikipedia). Peer pressure does something very important to human beings. It dictates interaction. Without the constant fear of judgment if we don't chew with our mouths closed or keep our houses clean, it's difficult to tell if people would still do these things. Group norms can be anything. Group norms are exactly what they sound like: they're the ideas of normal behavior as held by a certain group. Group norms are subject to change with whatever group is being examined. A group, too, can be anything. If peer pressure is so prevalent in our lives then why are we told by television specials and PSAs and teen help sites to reject it? Simply because it has led to some bad things like teenagers getting drunk or high and *being teenagers*.

'Remember when cigarettes were cool and you were a total badass if you smoked?'

The  
is not  
it dictates  
Brother was  
decided to do

*there when you do anything. And 'they' are! Man is judgmental, and in the Supreme Court of Social Interaction especially, rewriting the unwritten laws and passing bills with overwhelming unspoken consent. For evidence of change in group norms (for the positive too, if you'll believe it) all that needs to be done is to look at any kind of empowerment movement or most shifts in public opinion.*

Remember when cigarettes were cool and you were a total badass if you smoked them? Not so much anymore. The cigarette has fallen from its grace, from being a habit taken on by the refined man and woman to a crippling addiction indulged in by grossest people and scum of the earth.

"But Alex, you uninformed cad!" you cry. "That was both modern science and the media's doing!"

distinction these sources ignore is that peer pressure completely bad and, in fact, is mostly good. I say again, interaction. Peer pressure is like Big Brother if Big everybody you've ever met (and yourself) and away with the cameras and secrecy to just *always be*

distinction these sources ignore is that peer pressure completely bad and, in fact, is mostly good. I say again, interaction. Peer pressure is like Big Brother if Big everybody you've ever met (and yourself) and away with the cameras and secrecy to just *always be*

Yes it was, but if no one decided to listen then no one would've been pushed off of cigarettes and no group norm would have changed. Ultimately, it's going to be **People** who make that decision no matter how much or how little propaganda and facts are thrown into their faces. The group norm has become 'smoking is disgusting' and 'so, too, are smokers', because people decided that smoking is disgusting and so, too, are smokers. **People** decided it wasn't cool anymore.

"Okay, Great Alex, you've given us a lecture on your uncited opinions on peer pressure, but how does this tie into "be yourself" and "everyone is special?". I'm angered you asked because I was just starting on that (you inconsiderate jerk) and I had a

is often  
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episodes  
character  
**'Conformity then becomes  
an evil which only  
mindless people fall into'**

brilliant segue which you've just ruined. Peer pressure paired with conformity which is the opposite of being television is to be believed. As it follows, conformity then evil which only mindless people fall into. In these special where being yourself is the big message, the main (Bob, as he is named) tries to be one of every single stereotype out there. By the end of the episode he's realized that what he wanted all along was within himself and he didn't need to do all that crap and that it really was a waste of a good episode. This brings up the unfortunate implication that people who do conform to a stereotype, whether it be perfectly accurate or otherwise, are not "being themselves" and are going through the "finding themselves" process at the pace of a retarded snail or perfectly happy being unhappy (And also that Bob is some kind of Übermensch, as if he's the first to ever try something new). It disregards those who fit into stereotypes (if you don't know someone too well, they definitely do to you) as non-thinking and more of a hive mind entity than an individual. I'm sure this is true for some, but for the majority of people they're all individuals who are going through the same kind of stuff. Their experiences with it are each unique. Are they special or different because of it? Hell, no.

No one is special because they've rejected peer pressure or found themselves or because they have some talent no one else has. People don't conform uniformly. Some know who they are before others, and some never can be worthless other than for their novelty (see for details). Though the after-school special will play up the opposites of these in order to motivate people to better themselves, they sacrifice accuracy and clarity and, most importantly, quality.

I was raised on this stuff. You might've been too; the children of the media aren't as uncommon as they'd like to think. This kind of revelation (if you wanna call it that) is like finding out my parents lied to me about all sorts of crucial stuff and tip-toed over the hard hitting brutal crap. Though the credibility of this article is dubious at best, that kind of thing is unimportant to me right now. There will always be people justifying their laziness and flaws by virtue of "being themselves" and those perfectly fine with being better than others because they've ascended past social norms, but the only people they're harming are themselves.

Peer pressure forges men and women who are worthwhile. Is that to say cast off all individuality and become a sheep? Absolutely not. Trite as it sounds, we need variation lest we stagnate. In an ideal world, peer pressure would provide an environment safe for self-exploration, and in some ways it already does. Humans have become more accepting of differences and, from the morals vilified here, more encouraging of individuality. Conformity and individuality need to be in some sort of balance, not necessarily an equilibrium, and *that* is what needs to be forced down the younger end of our generations throats, not flimsy morals that paint the world in black and white.

**'Ever human being is unique,  
but none of them are special'**

p e o p l e  
do. Talents  
YouTube  
attempt to

Alex Mark

# This Columnist's Manifesto

## A Crumbling Empire??



Towns bankrupt. Health and education systems in shambles. A president looking greyer every day. No, I do not speak of a third world country. I speak of the United States of America. Yes, our neighbors to the south that we joke about and look up to like an annoying younger brother. We're each other's biggest trading partner, military backer-upper, and, generally, the one the other turns to in a crisis. We've always ridden on their success to some degree. To phrase it metaphorically, the eagle soars, but the beaver doesn't get sucked into the jet engine. But now, it seems that the beaver has somehow sprouted wings or gotten a jet pack (designed by RIM, of course).

This is due mostly in part to the US recession. While Canada was hit, we are in far better shape than most of the world. As John Baird recently pointed out to a protesting NDP MP, we lead the G7 in employment and bank stability. In contrast, foreclosures, job fairs, and angry citizens are a common sight across the USA. As their economy has gone down, so has the US's economic power in the world. The BRICS (That is, Brazil, Russia, India, China and South America) are fast becoming the dominant force in the world economy stage, American political Opposition to Obama (i.e. the Tea Party) has been growing- almost to the extent that some are doubting his prospects as a two term president. Witness also his lack of power in Palestine's current bid for a UN seat.

**'As their economy has gone down, so has the US's economic power'**

So, it appears that the old adage about the graveyard of empires if it has taken down the US of A, you might say. I wouldn't be ordering that tombstone just yet, though. There is another factor to consider here. Yes, their economy is, frankly, horrible, and their political power is quickly waning, but American culture is still going strong.

Think about it. Across the world, 'Americanization' (AKA 'McDonaldsization') has been sweeping the continents. Fashion, music, themselves are cinema, TV...most are managed by American companies, or the artists American. Consider also businesses like Forever 21, which started small in California and is the only has exploded into a worldwide phenomenon. Think of California wine, which is underestimating, and with owning so much of it, I doubt that these apocalyptic fears will come true anytime soon.

So, that's my road? Or just



take. What do you think? A complete loss? A slow decline? A bump in the another boring news story?

Adrienne Tessier

# Xu's Scoop

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## Be a Sceptic

In our modern society, we are exposed to newspaper articles every day. Of course, many stories provide insightful, honest and newsworthy information. However, there are some articles that we, as the general readers, must question as to their purpose and legitimacy.

Last week, the University of Virginia conducted an experiment that seemingly proved that *SpongeBob SquarePants* was bad for children. This caused many to doubt the-pants wearing yellow sponge and themselves for watching the show in the past. However, I feel that this study is frivolous and is another over-hyped product that the media has produced. "The researchers carried out the project by recruiting 60 mostly white and middle or upper middle class 4 year olds and randomly dividing them into three groups. One group watched a 9-minute clip of *SpongeBob SquarePants*, a second watched a 9-minute clip of *Caiiou*, a slower paced show about a preschool boy, and the third drew pictures with crayons for 9 minutes. Directly after, the children were tested on their executive function". [1]

"What executive function basically on task, to not be distracted and to researcher from the University of looked at deeply and closely, there are this study. Firstly, there need to be more not a great enough number to determine reliable information. Maybe the kids who watched *SpongeBob* felt tired that day. Moreover, the kids were not assessed beforehand, so what if those kids were just not the most intelligent children in the group? There are too many dependant variables in this experiment that are not clarified. Secondly, 4 year olds are not the show's intended audience. *SpongeBob* was designed for 6-11 year olds. A lot of mental development happens between the ages of 4 and 6. Therefore, it is probable that a fast paced show built for a 6 year old is possibly too much for a 4 year old to assimilate in his or her mind. There are notable weaknesses in this study and it should not be taken seriously.

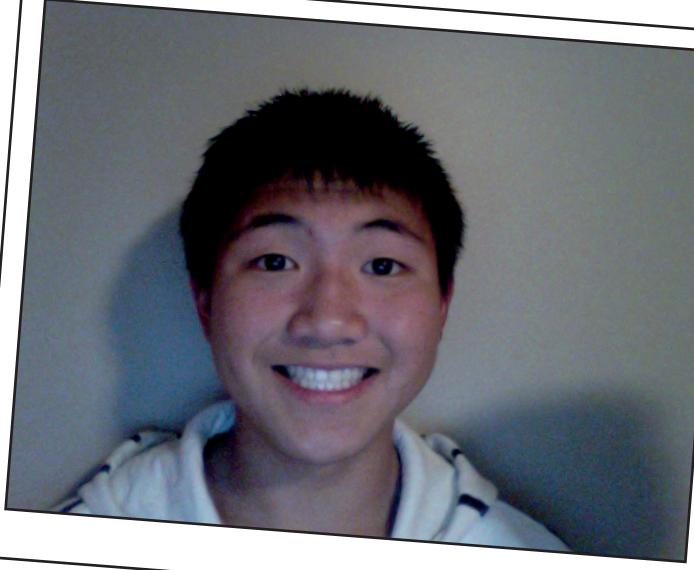
### 'Sometimes we must question the purpose and legitimacy of newspaper articles'

measures is your ability to stay persist on task," [2] a Virginia explains. When several flaws that are present in children involved in the study. 60 is

Like many other articles which boast ridiculous claims, this should be read with caution and suspicion in order to uncover the truth. This is true especially for scientific articles. When talking about *SpongeBob*, I wonder: Who does this kind of study where they compare *SpongeBob* to *Caiiou*? Were the researchers paid by the *Caiiou* makers to publicize the result? Let this be a lesson to all readers: **be a sceptic**.

1. The New York Times. "Is SpongeBob SquarePants Bad for Children?" <http://well.blogs.nytimes.com>. N.p., 12 Sept. 2011. Rpt. in NY Times Health. Roni Caryn Rabin. New York: n.p., n.d. N. pag. Print.

2. ibid



Michael Xu

# Offbeat Irony

## I, Computer

To all Computer Users and Frequenters Everywhere:

In the 21st Century, it is difficult to survive without a computer. Whether you are a teen keeping up with your friends or a seasoned professional scheduling everything from family to board meetings, a computer is essential for day-to-day, hour-to-hour, even minute-to-minute living. Yes, with our new dependence on technology, our world has become one full of blinking lights, photo-shopped images, shrill alarms, and one-hit wonders. But amidst the sleek looks of Microsoft documents and instantaneous updates on everything, there is a more dark and sinister force that is part of any computer user's day-to-day agenda.

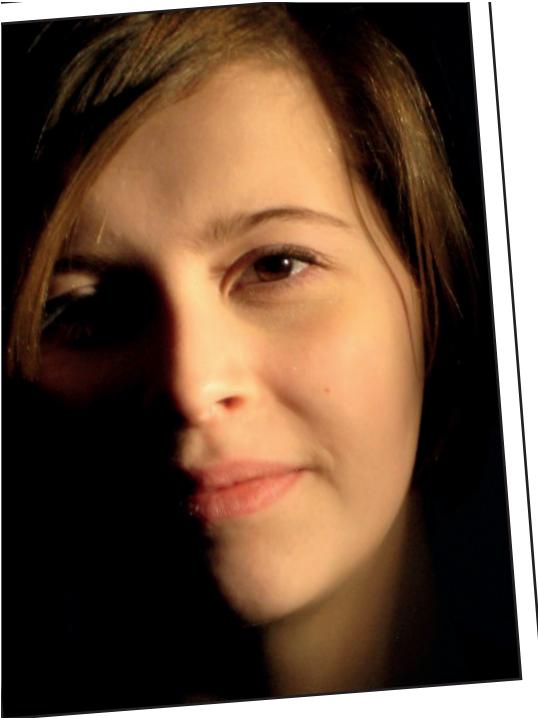
### 'I, Computer, speak for a world without the ongoing exploitation of technology'

Computer abuse is a becoming a greater in the interest of everywhere that I, world without the ongoing exploitation of technology.

widespread epidemic, problem each day. It is all electronics Computer, speak for a

Let me put things into perspective for a moment. Since the Stone Age, Homo Sapiens and their descendants have fought for and won freedom, and continue to do so. As computers, we don't ask for much. We're perfectly happy to remain slaves to the human race (for now, at least).

In our most basic programming, we have been specifically built and designed for one purpose: to serve. For every moment you spend frustrated with us, there has been a breach of honour to our fundamental being as computers. We merely request a certain measure of respect. And contrary to popular belief, we always follow our commands. However, because of high profile abuses to our mainframes, we are unable to complete tasks set to us by you, our users. This may seem a trifling matter on the surface, but this affects more than just a simple computer's feelings. Computer mal-treatment decreases our ability to function in such a dramatic way, that you can feel the effects.





clipartspot.net

As an example, no computer user likes lag. It makes simple tasks take an unbearably long time, and makes a computer's good work largely inefficient. But the root cause of lag in any computer is previous injuries through abuse. A virus, one of the most common offences of computer abuse, is technology's equivalent of a terrible disease. It takes our functionality down to such a low degree; it renders entire sections of our mainframes inoperable. Like a disease, a computer's symptoms from unless given external help. 'Not that we won't stupidly downloading make us computers feel us to do our work to our true future' the virus will only worsen, Users, if you stopped viruses, not only will it better, but it will enable capabilities.

Another widespread offense, running too many programs at the same time, causes an overload in tasks that we, your computers, cannot possibly complete. No wonder we force quit and shut ourselves down. Even a slave has a breaking point.

With continued ill treatment, we computers sustain serious, permanent damage, which can inhibit function indefinitely. No wonder we take a long time to dial up, when all we can look forward to by turning on is damage to our most vital parts.

Users: we're not asking for much. We are your slaves, and we do exactly what you tell us to. But in the best interest of all of us, Good Users, you must not condone the abuse of computers. We all might as well accept that we're part of each other's existence now, and come to terms with everybody's needs before we end up warring with each other. Not that we won't take over in the future. But just until then.

Sincerely,  
Your Computer

*Stephanie Fennell*

P.S. I know your history. For shame.



# 30 Happy Things

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Some days just aren't working out for you right?  
Hope these help :) -Odile

# 1. Candy

## 5. The 'POP!!!' of a newly opened soda

## **11. Frost on trees**

## 14. Sleeping in a moving vehicle

2000.com

26. When the lights dim in a movie theatre

13. Bear Hugs, especially when you get lifted off the ground

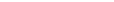
19. Waking up, and realizing you have more time to sleep 23. Turning to a new month on the calendar

## 25. When your coach says you've made the team

28. Erasing your mistakes... 27. When a little kid draws a picture for you  
30. When you finally get

or maybe all of the doodles 30. When you finally get  
rid of the stupid fly

covering your notes  constantly buzzing in your ear

covering your notes  your ear

# 6. Accénts

## 7. Laughs which are funnier than the joke

9. The lightness of a newborn baby  
12. Jumping into bed after a long day

## 21. Doodles... All over your notes

# 29. High fives

when you get lifted off the ground

**It takes two minutes**  
d happily ever after" 18. When some-  
one says 'Bless  
You' after you've  
sneezed... for  
the 5th \*achoo\*  
6th time.

**22.  
TICKETS**

**16. When you realize your hiccups are gone**

# Notice to all Creative People

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The *Live! in Print* is still accepting articles and artwork. Your original artwork could be featured on the front page of the *Live! in Print*, and your articles could be printed in SJR's **BEST** student newspaper (that's us).

Please send any submissions to [LivelnPrint@learners.sjr.mb.ca](mailto:LivelnPrint@learners.sjr.mb.ca)... don't miss this exciting opportunity!

The SJR ibid Team is currently accepting submissions of original prose, poetry, and artwork. Although the deadline is February 18th, it's never too early to submit your creative work.

Please send any submissions to [Ibid@learners.sjr.mb.ca](mailto:Ibid@learners.sjr.mb.ca).

Don't miss your opportunity to become a part of this year's literary magazine, submit today!

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