

Wednesday, May 27, 2009

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SUMMER ARG

R.K. Milholland keeps it positive Something*positive

Chava Thomas Argonaut

Since its beginnings in late 2001 with jokes about coat-hanger abortions and sleazy strip clubs, Milholland has provided the Internet with offensive humor and surreal characters such as Choo-Choo Bear, the hairless, boneless 32-year-old cat.

In May 2004, Milholland said if his readers could match his salary with donations, he would work on SP full-time. They did it in a month, and he has been working on the comic ever since. Many in the business have adopted his business model, and he was one of the first Internet cartoonists to go full-time.

Thomas: I liked the series of Edgar Allen Poe comics you did. I've noticed there are a lot of literary references in S*P. Some of the more prominent ones include H.P. Lovecraft and Neil Gaiman. What other authors or artists have influenced you?

Milholland: I guess my big-gest literary influences would be the likes of Lloyd Alexander (the Prydain Chronicles), David Hickey ("Air Guitar"), and John Gardner ("Grendel," "The Sunlight Dialogues"). I won't pretend my quality is a fraction of theirs, but re-reading their work always inspires me to try. Gaiman's fictions --- hell, even his blog — also gets a rise out of me. The man can sew a better story up than most can dream to.

Thomas: Have you ever thought of writing prose, as opposed to comics? Besides the Holy S--- Vampire Ponies book. Milholland: When I was

in high school, I tried writing a book. I uploaded it to locals BBSes (computer bulletin board systems for those of you who never knew a pre-Internet world) and it seemed popular. Then again, when it's free people are more accepting. I tried rereading it recently and I wanted to empty a gun into my head. I was horrified. Would I like to write a novel? Yes. I'd love it. I've kicked it around a few times in my adult life and I have a few I started but I put them aside to focus on the comic. Maybe one day one will be finished. Actually. I wouldn't mind cobbling one out very soon. It's a good idea, or so I think, and it keeps haunting my brain.

Thomas: Do you like doing strips that are more joke-heavy or storyline-heavy?

Milholland: Right now I do (like joke-heavy strips). In a year that may change. I've tried to spend the last year or two focusing more on humor. S*P became known as a strip

that was cheerful to go into dramatic territory and that's fine and good, but it can wear on you. And right now I think most people need the jokes more. The storylines are still there and I'm not giving up on telling a story, but I need it to be funny right now. With one or two exceptions my readership seems to have appreci-

ated this, too. Thomas: You've tackled some really heavy stuff in vour strip ---suicide, murder, prison, et cetera. Are these scenarios derived from real life?

Milholland: Mercifully, the murder and prison haven't come from anything in my life. They were purely fiction although I did do a lot of reading on forums for people with loved ones in prison to try to learn about

the prison procedures. Most everything else is something that's touched my life or the lives of people I care about or it's inspired by my fears, such as my fear of losing a parent. I use the comic to confront myself a lot. It's a great form of therapy, writing it out and making little actors perform it to see if it's all as frightening as I imagine. Thomas: On to something a

little lighter. The characters of S*P often cook up hare-brained schemes, which may or may not work (NerdRotica and Mike's game come to mind).

Do you or your friends ever come up with million-dollar ideas and try to make them happen? Milholland: Don't we all?

Yeah, I've heard a lot of great ideas and I must admit I've had more than a few of my own. The best example I can think of is how, when I worked in a children's

theatre, all the actors would sit around and discuss major productions and off-broadway shows we wished we could throw together. From that I got the "Nailed" storyline.

But for the most part the schemes either vanish into the ether or quietly fall apart. No one's had their intestines ripped from their bodies yet. But I can hope. Thomas:

One thing that's worked for you is liv-

ing off your comic. I had been reading for maybe six months when you did your famous donation drive. Do you rely mostly on donations or merchandise sales? Milholland: My income's

divided three ways now: ad sales, merchandising and donations. It's all pretty well spread apart, so hopefully if one thing bottoms out another will take up the slack. So far that's helped me out a lot and kept me afloat even in the struggling economy.

Thomas: Do you think your current business model can keep comics afloat better than traditional newspaper syndication? Milholland;

No. This is something that's been bothering me a lot lately but I can't say what the likes of myself, R. Stevens and Scott Kurtz are doing would save syndicated comics. I think many of them could make the jump if the cartoonists involved were prepared to do it, but many aren't. Simply put, this isn't safe. There's no one handing out a paycheck and insurance. A lot of older cartoonists

want to make money the exact same way they do now but on the web they want a guaranteed safety and guaranteed success.

The web doesn't offer that. It's sink or swim. The web is pretty harsh and your audience will leave you if they think you've done one "I Hate Mondays" joke too many. Frankly, we have to do a lot of work beyond just drawing comics. Ads management, merch sales - we're everything. If someone's willing to take that risk, then yes, this could work for them, but syndicates? No. That dinosaur's lumbering about and hoping desperately to adapt.

Thomas: I've noticed that Aubrey and Pee-Jee have kind of mellowed out over the course of S*P. Is this them getting older or marriage taking its toll (in the case of Aubrey)?

Milholland: I think it's a lot of the characters changing. Aubrey's found herself in a new role — the owner of a company - and while success is something she'd always wanted, she wasn't prepared for it. It changed her a bit. PeeJee still has some of the violence in her but as she's getting older. She's finding other ways to deal with her problems. It's still there, but we all change. I'm not the same person I was when S*P started, and when the comic started I wasn't the same person I'd been five years earlier. That was one of my goals with this comic --- the characters

would change. I have a specific disdain for comics where the characters

are the exact same as they were when the strip started no matter how much time's transpired. That's not to say they won't swing back the other way and become violent again, or worse. They'll just go where they tell me they need

to go. Thomas: One of the things I like about S*P is the character development. I think you've done a really good job letting your characters become threeちたいないたいないでは、

dimensional Milholland: Thanks. Characters in comics are like children. You have to let them go where they need to be or you'll hurt

them and, worse yet, the story. Thomas: You've shown Kharisma, a character that everyone loves to hate, as a pot smoker. What's your stance on drugs, marijuana in particular? Milholland: I did? I don't

remember doing that - but I barely remember anything. My stance on pot is that the war on it is moronic. It's a substance proven to be no worse than alcohol or tobacco. It's based off William Randolph Hearst's xenophobia and need to build his empire off of the fears of others. Personally, I think marijuana's a waste of my time and loathe spending time around pot prophets who do nothing more than spend their entire lives screaming about how all of the world's ills would vanish if we all smoked weed. That's bulls—. They wouldn't. It's just a chemical, not a

magic ingredient. As for other drugs it really depends. I've got no problem with heroin being illegal but I really wish our judicial system would do more to help those suffering from it than just slap them in a prison cell and hope that takes care of everything. But part of the problem with

that is, of course, the person has to want the help.





is not the worst band. I'm sorry, I have love and respect for humanity, but I do not easily tolerate hippies. The scent of patchouli, white guys with dreadlocks, "coexist" bumper stickers. If I have a kryptonite, it may well be this.

Just as Christians are in the world, but not of the world, however, there are aspects of

psychedelia I can appreciate on merit. Out May 26 is "Eating Us," Black Moth Super Rainbow's fourth album and the first recorded in a proper environment. BMSR was one of my must-see groups for last year's South By Southwest, and alongside Jens Lekman and Handsome Furs, a highlight of the dozens of bands I saw.

BMSR, from Pittsburgh, hasn't changed a whole lot since it started up six years ago. None of its songs have clear vocals: if they aren't simply run through a vocader, then they sound as if they've been transferred to eighth-inch tape and run over by a truck. (Sometimes, both.) Occasionally you'll hear guitar, but the brunt of the work is borne by hard-working ple from the world on this that the only or 'Yellow Submarine' butches the film "Fantastic Planes" (Supplement of "Fantastic Planes" (Supplement of tion tale about two creen the supplement of which are tiny people inclusion the discus-respectively.

which are tiny people and buy of the allocation respectively. Broadly, it plays all file plays a but so that allocation of the standard of the

Acting in your own best interest

While it seems like any level

A mother and son were on the run earlier this week. Colleen Hauser and her cancer-stricken son Daniel were seen in Califor-nia after leaving Min-

nesota. What did they do to merit this flee from justice? A court in Minnesota ordered Daniel to undergo chemo therapy.

Daniel, 13, who suffers Hodgkin's lymphoma, follows a Native-American religion called Nemenhah. With the support of his parents, he refused a doctor recommendation to undergo Chemo therapy and radiation treatments. According to doctors, the treatments have a very high chance of curing the boy, while inaction is almost certain to kill the boy. The courts got involved and acted in the interest of Daniel by ordering

him to undergo the treatments.

headed person would simply suffer through the chemo, Daniel and his mother decided against it and fled. A nation-wide man hunt ensued for the mother and son who

decided to run their own lives. Now Daniel and Colleen are back in Minnesota, and authorities have seized Daniel. While in court, the

family argued against the treatments on the grounds of religious freedom. Now questions have been raised on whether it really was because of reli-

nute sedu sedu round of Chemo therapy when he was originally diagnosed. The fact that his aunt died after receiving the therapy might have had a bigger part in the decision.

However, the court sided on doing what it thinks is best for Daniel. A scary door opens when a court can decide what is best for someone and act against the wishes of that individual. What if a court decides that someone needs to go on a diet, or exercise more? I know that it is a bit out there, but is it really that different? Obviously, Daniel is a minor, but he is old enough to understand the consequences, plus he has the full support of his parents.

If anything, he should have the support of those who believe in reproductive rights for minors or those who believe in assisted suicide laws. Now Daniel and his mother had to go on run simply because he wanted to use alternative medicines. While on the run, his future looks doubtful, but at least he was controlling his future. Now the allknowing authorities are taking care of him.

Palouse's top five

Summer Arg staff members list favorite summer activities in and around Moscow

Jordan Gray

The Arboretum. It's at its most beautiful in fall and late spring. It's a great place to walk, with a long loop that stretches over a mile. Also, with a variety of little paths and benches within each of the continent sections, the place can be endlessly explored. A personal favorite is a bench by the golf course side that leaves one with an endless view of the rolling hills of the Palouse.

2. The Garden Lounge 3. The Chill Box

4. The Student Recreation

Center Climbing Wall

5. Hanging out on the I-Tower Hill

Gus Simpson Hang out on the roof of WSU's library: Take some friends, a Frisbee and a picnic. There's a cool glass dome, lots of grass, a musical weathervane and cool views of Pullman. Plus, it's fun to infiltrate WSU, especially at night. While you're there, you can marvel at the superiority of the CUB over UI's SUB.

2. Hike to the top of Kamiak Butte

3. Bike to Troy or Pullman on Paradise Path

4. Catch a concert in Spokane 5. See a movie at the Kenworthy Theatre

Kelsey Husky

Aoscow Co-op. There nev-er seems to be enough time during the school year to wander endlessly down the aisles of this wonderful store. I like to spend lazy summer afternoons walking to the Co-op, investigating those products I never knew existed, such as hemp milk. 2. My back porch, with a

beer in my left hand and a book in my right 3. Casual drives through

the Palouse

4. WSU Museum of Art 5. Sitting in air-conditioned buildings

Marcus Kellis

heep. You know how if you **O**take Farm Road behind

WinCo, you take a right turn to go to A Street? If you go straight instead, you can visit the Sheep Research and Testing Center, with 120 ewes and six rams of the University of Idaho Animal and Veterinary Science Department. I love them and they are adorable. 2. Mountain View Park.

3. Vandal Entertainment movies on the Tower Lawn. 4. Ferdinand's in Pullman.

5. Hordemann Park.

Elizabeth Rudd

Dinner at La Casa Lopez: The food is always fantastic and the atmosphere is fun and relaxing. It is a great place to catch up with friends or go on a date, either way it is a perfect start to any kind of an evening.

2. Grabbing coffee with friends

3. Biking on Paradise Path 4. Barbecue with friends

and family 5. Exploring the shops downtown

Kelcie Moseley

Sisters Brew: This coffeeshop is so great for studying or reading. The atmosphere is perfect and it feels like a home away from home with the ceramic mugs they serve your coffee in.

2. Mingles 3. Bowling at Zeppo's in Pullman

4. Hastings 5. Sangria

Kate Kucharzyk

Barbecuing with friends. We barbecue either at a lake or on someone's deck

- and play music. Campus Rec
 - 3. Alehouse
- 4. Salsa dancing at The Zoo in Pullman
- 5. Biking to Troy

Greg Connolly

ri-State: One time, I needed CLR and waterproof boots. I only had to make one stop thanks to Tri-State.

2. Bookpeople

3. Three Sisters Brew

4. University of Idaho Golf Course

5. Quizno's



Jeffrey

Reznicek

Summer Arg

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Wednesday, May 27, 2009

SUMMER ARG

Plasma pays in Moscow

Elizabeth Rudd Summer Arg

The economy might be crashing, but Moscow's Bio-Medics is thriving.

Bio-Medics, a plasma collection business, has seen donations continue to rise. In the middle of April, Moscow's branch of Bio-Medics hit a record number of donors-reaching over 100 each day, not including the weekend, said Logan Wrigley, manager of Moscow's Bio-Medics branch.

Bio-Medics Plasma Centers of America, a private company, has been harvesting plasma since 1974. Its main office in California has felt the recession, and Wrigley said Moscow's branch has been slightly affected, but it has still maintained high productivity.

All of Bio-Medics' plasma is shipped overseas to Octapharma, a pharmaceutical factory in Austria, Wrigley said. He said Octapharma uses the plasma to make medicines for burn victims, blood-clotting disorders and premature babies. "As far as I know there isn't

a recession over there, so they just say 'keep it coming'," Wrigley said.

He also said the drugs could not be made synthetically, so plasma was needed and they were always looking for donors. Ray Peterson, also a manager of Moscow's Bio-Medics, said

increase of donors, their numbers still drop in the summer. 'Our main donor base is stu-dents," Wrigley said. "We try to get the word out to locals because they are going to be consistent, but (at) every Bio-Medics' located in a college towns numplummet bers

(in summer)." Donating

plasma is a more time-consuming donating blood because the process, called plasmapheresis, needle which speeds up the pro-

cess and prevents blood clotting. All in all; it takes an average of about an hour and a half to complete the process. For this reason,

Bio-Medics compensates its donors for their time. Wrigley said they averaged out the typical amount of time spent donating and decided on a flat \$30 rate. To encourage donors to return after their first visit, **Bio-Medics** compensates the donors \$40: The first bottle of plasma collected is useless due to the numerous tests they require for donors, Wrigley said. "It's a great busi-

ness. It helps people who need (extra money) and being in a college town there are plenty of people who need it, so supply and demand," John Radle said. Radle, an engineering student at the University of Idaho, donates plasma twice a week for some extra money.

In addition, donors go through in-depth an screening the first time, and then annually after that, Wrigley said. This includes a physical and medical history as well as going through the each step of the process and what the donors should do to prepare for donation. Each visit after that involves a brief screening to see if anything changes from one donation to the next, he said.

Administration safety standards,

Kate Kucharzyk/Summer Arg

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A State of the sta

as well as internal standards. To oversee safety, the company has a quality account coordinator who regularly monitors the clinic, Wrigley said.

In addition, Bio-Medics oper-ates under Dr. Paris Kharbat's

physician license. She visits the clinic weekly and approves certain changes that need to be made. Tara Heatch, quality account coordinator, said it's a full time job to keep Bio-Medics running, but they are making it work.

"We're here all year ... six days a week and we will take everybody we can get our hands on," Wrig-ley said. "We do our best to make it as quick, easy and comfortable

Bio-Medics as possible, but must comply with Federal Drug if you're scared of needles, just stay home."

Kate Kucharzyk/Summer Arg

A new set of medical utilities ready to undertake plasmapheresis sits waiting for the the next donation at Moscow's branch of Bio-Medics.

"As far as I know

there isn't say 'Keep it

Logan

coming"





A Moscow donor gives plasma at the local branch of Bio-Medics Plasma Centers of America. Bio-Medics also has a branch located in Pullman, as well as various other locations across the nation. involves separating the plasma from the blood. It uses a bigger then simply



a recession over there, so they just

SUMMER ARG

Program proves Palouse is full of fun

Kelsey Husky Summer Arg

Outdoor Program coordina-tor Mike Beiser knows plenty of ways to have fun in Moscow over the summer.

"We're the gateway to what's off campus," he said. "Our No. 1 goal is to get people off cam-

pus and learning new skills." The Outdoor Program is putting on five different trips this summer — from backpacking to rafting to biking — all at reasonable rates.

It will also host clinics throughout the summer, including sailing, sea kayaking, whitewater kayaking and mountain biking clinics. Beiser said a waitlist often

develops on these activities, so it's best to stop by the Outdoor Program Office early. The office is located in the Student Recreation Center.

The Outdoor Program has its rental center open all summer, providing a wide selection of equipment to students at reduced rates.

"If you don't have it, we do, at ridiculous prices," Beiser said. The Outdoor Program also of-

fers an array of general informa-

tion for students looking to be active and spice up their summer. It has maps, information and experience on everything outdoors for about 500 miles.

Beiser encourages exploring the area.

"The more you gain your sense of place," he said, "the more you'll like where you live."

The Outdoor Program can also alleviate bored staff and faculty members.

"A lot of staff and faculty don't know ... that we can do retreats for departments," he said. "People come away with comments that they thought it would be a waste of time but (they) got more done (than they did at other retreats).

explained Beiser there are many other activities to do on the Palouse that don't involve sports or the outdoors.

"There are more than 350 things posted on bulletin boards at one given time," he said. "That means you could go a year and not do the same thing twice."

Off campus, local art galleries and summer theater series serve as an indoor outlet.

Comentive tribe

emerganners

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Farmer's Market brings community together

Tara Brandenburg Summer Arg

As live jazz music drifts through the city, craftspeople sell and trade homemade and freshly grown goods. Every Saturday from the first week of May to the last week of October the Moscow Farmer's Market unites the community from early morning until noon.

The Moscow Food Co-Op organized the Farmer's Market in its parking lot during the late 1970s. In the 1980s it grew too large, so the Moscow Arts commission took charge and moved it behind City Hall. When the city remodeled Friendship Square on Main Street the market took up its current residence. Vendor booth fees vary and the proceeds go to pay live musicians and sponsor other Arts Commission community events.

People flock to the Moscow Farmer's Market because it is one of the biggest in the Inland Northwest. According to Linda

Christenson, who has been with the market since it began, only about half the vendors and shoppers are locals. Some people, like Karen Kelly, even moved to Moscow for the market's appeal.

"It was my hope that when we retired I could sell my soaps and lotions here," Christenson said.

A day at the market is a family affair for many people. According to Chantelle Bloomfield, the market is like a big family.

"Here you get to know people and you get to know the customers," she said, "where in a big city you don't.'

She said the market gets the whole family involved and that it's a great inexpensive opportunity for small businesses.

The Farmer's Market has something to offer for all age groups with fresh food, live music, crafts, house hold goods and a playground for the kids. For information on becoming a vendor contact director Tym Park at (208)883-7132.



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