

# The Love Below

## Happy-Go-Jacky News from the Class of '03

### What do you do with an American Studies Degree?

*By Doug Mack*

It's been a year since graduation. A lot can happen in a year. Or not. I mean, I've had some interesting experiences, but nothing truly outrageous or thrilling, to be honest. No near-death experiences involving crocodiles, hitchhiking or Donald Trump. My thrills have mostly come vicariously through the travails and travels of my friends. Meanwhile, I have stayed in my hometown, Minneapolis (The Coolest City On Earth, according to the tourist brochures) and working for a nonprofit, where I am the Office Manager, which means that I

assist my boss (the only other employee) with various tasks, such as writing letters to foundations in hopes that they will help to "ensure the ongoing, dynamic programming" and "providing much-needed financial security for this unique community asset."

I also spend a fair amount of time (somewhere between thirty seconds and four hours per day), during lulls in work, making astute and humorous observations about the parallels between my job and my degree. Astute and humorous to me, that is; my boss merely stares in confusion and incredulity. The lesson here is that, for the time being, my degree in American Studies has provided little more than arcane punch lines. I never got around to taking the Envelope Stuffing 126 class or the senior seminar Dealing With Impatient Morons on the Phone, so I have to try to inject my studies into my otherwise mundane routine.

For example, there was the "bowling alone" joke about my social life, which was actually funny, I swear. So was the one about taking a lunch break in a park across the street from a construction site, where I encountered a machine in the garden. Ha! I even tried, once, to write the entire "organizational background" section of an application to the McKnight Foundation in the style of DeLillo's *White Noise*. Community, diverse,

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### Townie Corner

Friends,

Greetings from Northfield. Yes, many of you may have gone off into the world to do exciting things, but not this guy. I thought what the hell, I've been in Northfield for four years, I might as well extend my stay. I'm working in the Alumni Affairs Office, so if you ever need anything alumni related, I'm your hook-up. And I'll probably be here for a while, so don't be shy.

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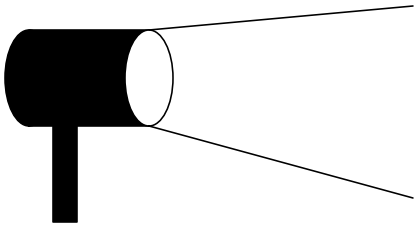
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**PLuS!!!**



## '03 Spotlight: Dan Farmer

Dan Farmer '03 has never been a stranger to politics, having served on CSA as a Senator and VP. In fact, his mother received more votes for CSA than some actual candidates. Recently Dan took a moment from the Kerry campaign to chat.

### **What's your first job memory?**

Driving 20 hours from Mass. to Iowa. The trip proved to be largely uneventful. As I got more tired, for some reason, I got more paranoid that a brontosaurus was about to jump out of the woods, and that I would run into its leg and die. Also, Northern Ohio stank like a mo-fo. Definitely drive through with the windows up.

### **Note taken. Once you got to Iowa, what was it like?**

My first task was to coordinate the overnight stay for Mr. Kerry's candidacy announcement. Ends up there were three such people, all with experience, doing the same thing the month before in NH. I had my work cut out.

### **Did you get a place for Kerry?**

Yeah, the whole thing went off without a hitch. I also, at different times, made sure a birthday cake was refrigerated, got lemons for Mrs. Heinz Kerry, distributed press clips e-mailed to me at 3:30AM, and so forth.

### **Doesn't sound like much time for sleep.**

No sleep. Just responding to random requests.

### **So, are you buds with Kerry?**

Well, he knows my name and says hello and asks how I'm doing. But if you're running for president, making time in your

schedule for the Farmdawg sometimes takes a backseat to meeting farmers in Iowa.

### **Any other Iowa stories?**

Along the line, I received an awful nickname. There was a crop of women in the DC office that took a liking to me through e-mails and phone calls. I finally got to meet two of them before I left. The first one jumped excitedly out of her chair and said, "Hey Parita, this is SHMOOPY!"

### **Shmoopy?**

Shmoopy. Remember what you looked like the first time your parents told you about the birds and bees? Yeah, that was me. So, in an attempt to restore my dignity and, more importantly, my street cred, I insisted they call me "Shmoop Dawg." However, that just led to more mocking.

### **[Laughing]**

Let me clear up one thing: I am a bad ass. For all of you who thought otherwise, I just want to make sure you understand that.

### **Was "Shmoopy" the worst nickname you've ever had?**

Dan Farmer was pretty bad in grade school. Speaking of which, Peter Yarrow [of Peter, Paul & Mary] called me an "old fart" before hugging me goodbye and leaving for the airport. That was odd.

### **Are you doing Advance around the country now?**

Yeah, I do mostly Crowd Building. Of late, I have traveled to Phoenix, Detroit, Las Vegas, Columbus, Minneapolis, NYC, New Orleans, Allentown, San Francisco, Pittsburgh, Des Moines, Jacksonville, and Seattle. I actually just got back from building a rally in Beckley, West Virginia.

### **Wow, racking up the frequent flier miles.**

Tragically, I just thought about signing up last week.

### **What's been the best story?**

Oh wow. Highlights have been: Almost picking up illegal immigrants in Phoenix; Being yelled at by Secret Service for not having Mr. Kerry's dinner checked for bombs; getting some dude in Iowa to roll up a flyer, throw it in my face, and call me a Communist.

### **How are your co-workers?**

I loved my staff in Iowa. Now I work a lot with volunteers, God love them. My favorite was in Seattle when this guy complained to me about how we weren't organized. Then he added, "I got this e-mail from Dan Farmer. He's not very together." That's when I busted out "I AM DAN FARMER!"

### **Or Shmoopy.**

[Sigh] Or Shmoopy...

## A Message from your Vice-President Ari

You heard from El Presidente Will last time, so now it's time to hear from your Veep. But unlike our nation's VP, I'm not going to tell y'all to go f--- yourselves . . .

There have been many changes for your class officers in the past few months. We've all moved to new places: Will went from Mexico to Madison, Scott moved from Atlanta to San Francisco, and I've finally left good ol' Northfield and gone to DC. Excitingly, we're all gainfully employed with real jobs now.

I'm still getting to know DC, so I haven't yet found anything like

the seamy underground network of transvestite wrestling, which Will enjoyed so heartily in Mexico. Instead, I'm pondering taking up extreme ironing [www.extremeironing.com](http://www.extremeironing.com) as my particular activity of choice.

Finally, we'd like to take a quick moment to thank all of you who donated to the Alumni Annual Fund this year. Half our class gave money, better than how we did last year with Senior Gift. So thanks again and congrats on reaching one of the highest first-year-out giving rates of any Carleton class.

## Wazzup

Rachel Rubin thinks that The Love Below is some damn fine reporting, and Justin Schoolmaster likes it so much he wants another one. How 'bout the rest of y'all? What's goin' on in your lives? Send a note to [carletonnews03@yahoo.com](mailto:carletonnews03@yahoo.com)!

In other news, I'd like to note that on Page 4 of the first issue, there were supposed to be little pictures of Will, Ari, Scott Calvin, and Luke along w/ their bios, so it'd be like those other little fliers you get in your mailbox. Oops.

Finally, Sam McWilliams knows how to grill a mean chicken.

## Photo Contest!!!

Congratulations to Annie Vu as the first winner of The Love Below's Photo Contest! Each issue the editorial staff of The Love Below (i.e. Scott Calvin Kleinheksel) will select the best photo sent to [carletonnews03@yahoo.com](mailto:carletonnews03@yahoo.com). Didn't hear about the contest before? Well, I came up with the idea after the first issue was published, and Ms. Vu had sent me some pics, so she kinda won by default. Those things happen.

This picture is of Ryan Navratil flicking off Ms. Vu while walking to the Metro in DC. Notice the way Nav's right arm helps frame his face while his left arm breaks free of the dominance of his legs, adding complexity to the photo. Enjoy.



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educational. Get it?! No? What about my quips about people working with volunteers on a mass mailing, and how they were proof that collective action was actually possible and ... and ... Oh, never mind. Maybe those jokes aren't so funny. Perhaps I should maintain silence rather than share my observations about the parallels between grant-writing and Janice Radway's observations on the subversive writing structure of romance novels. Or about how being in a new office is like being an "approaching stranger" in a

different culture. Still not laughing? No wonder I haven't gotten that big promotion yet.

Academic theory, I have found, has little application in the real world. Maybe you bio or political science majors have had more success with this, and are able to apply your studies to your job. Maybe. Or perhaps you've found other ways to save the world, or at least learn more about it, in the year or so since we wore those silly hats and strutted nobly across the stage in front of Olin. To those individuals, I salute you. To the rest of you, the people still trying to figure out what you want to do when you grow up, still

looking for that elusive noble endeavor (not necessarily a job) that provides meaning and, one would hope, financial security, keep up the search. Come reunion time, you'll be the ones with the interesting stories. Smaller paychecks, perhaps, but better stories.

And if you get really desperate, you can always become a standup comic, using your academic pursuits to build an act that has a loyal following ... of about four people who understand your jokes. That's my plan. Watch for the hilarious "American STUDies" sitcom, coming next fall on the WB.

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I even bought a house in town (yep, I got me a mortgage) so if you're ever around swing by 317 Linden Place. There are three bedrooms and will always be beer and orange juice in the refrigerator, except when I run out. Plus, the party goes 24-7.

Anyway, I'm here to provide a little update about what's been happening in Northfield since you all left. First, Chapati's closed, which sucks. They got booted out of their old location, but they are trying to relocate so keep your fingers crossed. Hardee's and the Byzantine also closed, but I don't think anyone really minds that. Plus, they did open a Wendy's and the Ranch House is being remodeled so things are ok.

On campus, I'm told Sodexo has made some improvements in the past year. Once a week during the term (typically Friday) they provide a service called Stir-Crazy, which is essentially made-to-order pasta bar. I guess it's very popular. They also added, with some CSA funding, a couple Impinger ovens which, evidently, students can use to cook personal pizzas, etc. For those of you who may not know, these are the ovens with conveyor belts, like you'd find in Domino's or other pizza chains. The word is that they work ok, but were really expensive meaning the supplier ripped off Sodexo and the CSA. That silly CSA! Finally, Sodexo also started serving French Toast Sticks. You may not find this

interesting, but they are a favorite of mine, and I thought it noteworthy.

Ok, this has really been food-centered, so I'll move to other things. Terry Rivers is still here. The Ebony party is now held in Great Space, sans alcohol. Spring Concert was held inside. Rotblatt actually resembled a real game this year. Chris Ghery brought his puppy to campus this spring. And the field behind West Gym flooded. Some of us went swimming. That's pretty much it, but seriously, if you are ever in town, give me a call and I'll take you out for a beer or something. And if you are ever looking for something to do, invite me to your town, because I have nothing to do.

*-Luke Hasskamp is eligible for the NBA Draft.*