



Associated Collegiate Press /
National Scholastic Press Association
All American
1984 1985 1986
1987 1988 1989
1990 1991 1992
Regional Pacemaker
1988
Journalism Association
of Community Colleges
First in General Excellence,
Northern California
Fall 1994
General Excellence
Fall 2000
General Excellence
Fall 2004

Editor in chief: Aman Mehrzai
News editor: Anna Nemchuk
Opinion editor: Jerome Engelberts
Features editor: Anne Utter
Sports editor: Nick Zambrano
Photo editor: Devina Deo
Staff writers: Omer Ahmed, Steven Chavez, Carlos Cisneros, Steve Cortez Sara Kwan, Joyce Leung, Jessica Losee, Krista Martinez, Danelle Meyer, Erick Sanchez
Ad Staff: Altanette Ford, Sarah Noori
Photographers: Daniel Kwan, Mark Blockinger
Ad manager: Corie Howell
Adviser: Bill Parks
Printer: F-P Press

Offices are located in Room 5310 on campus, 43600 Mission Blvd., Fremont 94539-5884. Call (510) 659-6075. Fax: (510) 659-6076. E-mail: monitor@ohlone.cc.ca.us

Opinions expressed in the *MONITOR* are those of the respective authors and are not necessarily those of the staff, the college or the Associated Students of Ohlone College. Unsigned editorials reflect the majority view of staff members. Advertising material is printed herein for informational purposes and is not to be construed as an expression of endorsement or verification of such commercial ventures by the staff or college.

The *MONITOR* is funded by the district, by the Associated Students of Ohlone College, and through advertising revenue.

The *MONITOR* is a member of the Associated Collegiate Press, Journalism Association of Community Colleges, Community College Journalism Association, California Newspaper Publishers Association, College Media Advisers and Society of Newspaper Design.



OPINION

Cutting: where beauty and horror truly collide

EDITOR'S NOTE – Please note that we don't consider the behavior in this article healthy or recommendable. We strongly urge people to refrain from inflicting harm unto others or themselves.

By ANNA NEMCHUK
News editor

Simply put, it's beautiful.

The cold, stark glint of the blade, the tensile strength in the sliver-thin razor, the ribbons of blood unfolding from glowing white skin.

It's as if opening a present.

And the thing is, you know that this isn't just a way to mutilate yourself; trust me, horror is the last thing on your mind. It's a cleansing, almost a religious rite.

A blood sacrifice to the god of physical pain.

You slice and your soul screams for him to help, to subdue, if for a moment, the deity of psychological pain; we pick the lesser of two evils in this world.

No matter how deeply your body is ever hurt, you heart, your mind,

that intangible scrap of substance Heaven and Hell wage war over for millennia can be burned, tattered, shorn much, much worse.

Falling off a bike makes an ouchie. Breaking your arm in three different places is a bitch. Torture ain't exactly a walk in the park.

But having your heart broken...being betrayed by those you trusted most...feeling that among the millions of walking, breathing people out there you are completely, utterly alone...

I'll take a few scars over that any day.

Except it isn't really a solution. You sharpen a knife and dull one pain for a while, but how many days, minutes, seconds later do they both come back with renewed savageness?

And looking around the tissue-strewn bathroom, disassembled shaving implement rusting in your hand, the fat, red, accusing droplets plopped, plopping on the floor, a silent exclamation mark that you have, indeed, lost another shred of sanity, and in a background to this, the happy chatter of people outside, people that are so friendly one moment, so cold when you really need it, people that seem so per-

fectly content, so...fine...with themselves and their lives, but somewhere, the awful realization swells that underneath the smiles lies rot, seething, writhing blackness of putrid despair, that they are no better than you, and, somehow, that doesn't make you feel any better at all.

I only did it the once. I didn't want to die; I just wanted attention, help, advice, a hand to hold in a world that had suddenly been thrown completely off-axis. I knew how to cut to get the job done; I didn't. My scars are nearly invisible, buried in the folds of my left wrist, exactly as I intended. I showed off my handiwork, held it out proudly to the ten or so teenagers who made up my drama group, huddled on the back porch of a house next to a lake in Yosemite, smoking. In a certain part of myself, I had expected praise. But the resulting gasps of horror and muttered "Okay, now that's gonna make a bad trip." weren't such a bad thing either. At least someone else now knew. It wasn't hidden anymore. It was real. The world wasn't really a candyland of bunnies, and people weren't all good. That was enough.

Oh, but the ache. To this today, I'll never forget the sweet, slow ache of my bruised and oozing flesh. How good it felt to sit and cradle my torn wrist, to nurse my wounds and sink into the sensation, not having, for the moment, to think of anything, anyone else.

It haunts me still. In a way, the only peace I've ever known.

Which doesn't mean I'll repeat it. I grew up that night. I learned one of the most valuable lessons a human being can: you are, indeed, alone. In the end, it's you against the world. Make friends, allies, lovers, but never, never forget that if you aren't strong enough standing on your own, this life will spit you out, another lost, wailing soul swirling in the ether. You MUST have what it takes inside you. I think you do, I think everyone does, the trick is in finding it. When the shit hits the fan, it's you or them. Everything else is just accessories. All the love in the world can only help you; it cannot make you.

But I'm only one person in a sea. Only one of those I know lucky enough to realize this. Cutting still holds its appeal. Like a wet, warm dream you could lose yourself in. But I don't need it anymore. It is

like an addiction, and I'm so thankful I was able to stop before its claws sank in too deeply.

Yet it's the only thing left for some people. This world grows more impersonal by the year, there are no sensei, no masters, no wise old men to advise you of your worth, to send you off to war chuckling wisely. These days, you can be sued for giving advice. And society is aware. It always is. It just never cares. But, you see, the razor does. Somehow, its kiss means more at times than the force of friends and family combined. It understands. They don't. That's all we ever want in this life, for someone to truly, totally understand and accept us.

And unless you've done it yourself, you won't. It's a different language, this world of pain, no brethren to BDSM. It isn't pleasure in pain, it's escape.

A small slice of heaven on earth. Excuse the pun.

There's nothing encouraging I can say, no words of wisdom or compassion I can offer that haven't been said before. The closest approximation: we're human, we're imperfect, and there are worse things in this world.

CAMPUS COMMENT >>>

How can college prepare you better for real life?



KIM NGUYEN
Business

◆ "Decrease pressure - we're trying to pass our classes instead of experiencing life."



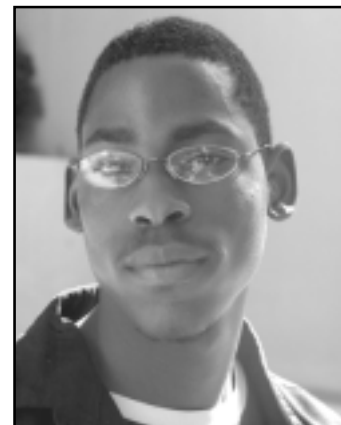
MARIA JAVIER
Environmental Studies

◆ "It prepares me by independence."



PABLO LEON
Undeclared

◆ "It gives you more leadership skills, prepares your mind."



LASITE LUKE
Broadcasting

◆ "There need to be more colleges geared for specific majors."



SEDRICK AMAR
Filmmaking

◆ "A life experience class. They can't prepare you for life; they can only give you knowledge."