"ONE SPIRIT SPEAKING TRUTH IN COMMUNITY"

1997-98 CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY THEME CONTEST WINNING DESIGN
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design winner

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Kunkel Editorial Focused on the Negative

Concerning Dustin Kunkel’s article “Things I Have Never Seen...” I feel that the Promethean staff could have much better used the space in their publication to accent the positive things about our campus, than waste it on such negativity. Because Mr. Kunkel’s not having a good day is no reason to mess up everyone else’s. Maybe some students feel as he does, but many do not. The Asian on my crew has his lunch daily with Americans; I have seen President Schlumpert many times in my one-and-half years. A lot of us enjoy Pastor Norm’s whistling.

I’m sorry Mr. Kunkel’s experience at Concordia has to be compared to a toilet, but he doesn’t speak for the majority, and the publication space could be used much more positively - I have to now spring out to rake up the leaves.

Kunkel Misses the “Truth”

I would like to respond to the “opinion” entered in the Fall ’96 Promethean by Dustin Kunkel, which he called “What Is the Essence of Truth.” I would suggest that a better title for this marginal bit of literature could have been, “Four-and-a-half Years of Avoiding the Truth.”

I was disappointed that, even to the very last sentence, the author couldn’t get his head out of the toilet. It isn’t the language that bothered me. It was the insistence that because truth is elusive, even after attaining a college degree, that it’s the fault of the instructors and apparently everyone else who, during this sacred time, has not provided the silver chalice instead of the porcelain pot. There were, in fact, 28 cliches or clever descriptions and soundbites served up by the author before the editorial really began. In response to those comments I offer these for consideration: If your mother didn’t take care of your toilet training, you’ll simply have to collect definitions of “crap” for the rest of your life. Or how about this one? Get out of your anus and into the community of your life. Nobody owes you the ultimate answers, but you won’t find them in the toilet either.

Unfortunately, the answers to the question “what is truth” or “what is its essence” and “where do I find it?” can’t be served up with Gen-X sound bites. I am encouraged by what’s said at the end of the article, but I’d like to see a revision that begins, rather than ends, with the importance of relationships. I agree that communication is seriously deficient at Concordia. And we certainly do bid behind our cliches to avoid the messy business of building community through intentional conflict resolution. I firmly believe that involvement in community experiences like intramurals, science club, choir, theatre, sports, handbells, and even team projects in the academic curriculum are essential forms of building community in higher education. The end result of these micro-communities can inform one’s role in the broader community beyond these walls. These experiences deserve to be included in the curriculum of life because... well, they just might be the necessary manure for finding the truth.

Larry Gross

She’s Not Old; She’s My Mother

I got mad this week. Real mad. It’s about fingernails and “girl” stuff. It’s also about discrimination and respect and what it means to be human. More specifically, what does it mean to be a human when you’re old?

My mother is old. 74 years is old, no doubt about it. She is also intelligent, well-read and interesting, with a lifetime’s worth of wisdom and compassion. She has never missed a general election and is very knowledgable about local issues. She walks two miles every day and wears a size 6. She is slightly deaf and very shy. That’s my mom.

Two small things that Mom really enjoys are shopping and getting her nails done every week. Both are a chance to get out of the house and talk to different people, and after sacrificing, with my dad, to raise 6 kids, I figure she’s entitled. Here’s the rub: I’ve noticed sales clerks trying to hurry her through the checkstand as she counts her change, and department store clerks seem to look right through her (unless she has her charge card out). Last week it was the girl who does her nails.

Mom calls Annie a girl. I guess to a deaf and very shy. That’s my mom.

Mom’s back to her own ugly nails, ugly and damaged from years of dishes and laundry and floors and yard work. She was ashamed of them for years and has really enjoyed the acrylics; she felt so feminine. Doing without long nails is not the end of the world, but I’m mad.

You see, after telling me this story and rejecting my advice to report them, Mom sighed. Just a little sigh, and she broke my heart. She said, “Sometimes it’s like I’m invisible. She [Annie] acted like the fungus was no big deal because I’m old and who looks at old ladies’ hands? I don’t need a lot of attention, but I don’t want to be invisible!” She apologized then, for complaining about such a petty thing, and asked about the family. So we talked about my school and kids and dad’s health, because Mom prefers to put unpleasant things behind her. She won’t dwell on it, but she feels diminished, she said. Unimportant.

When does a person become unimportant? I hope I don’t diminish people. No one should be invisible. I’m still pretty mad.

Vicki Kramer
FEATURES

1997-98 Theme of the Year

"ONE SPIRIT SPEAKING TRUTH IN COMMUNITY"
Slogan and explication by Michael Anderson, contest winner

ONE SPIRIT

- John 4:24
  "God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."
- 1 Corinthians 12:4-6
  "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men."
- 1 Corinthians 12:13
  "For we were all baptized by one spirit into one body - whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free - and we were all given the one spirit to drink."
- Ephesians 2:17-18
  "He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one spirit."

SPEAKING TRUTH

- Ephesians 4:25
  "Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body."

IN COMMUNITY

- Romans 12:4-5
  "Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others."

"New Visions and Voices" was an appropriate theme to initiate a new tradition in this 96-97 academic year. The classroom, the chapel, and the music concerts are among the vehicles whereby Concordians were introduced to new visions inspired by the voices of their varied cultural traditions. It was a good beginning. And there is more to learn as next year's theme is anticipated. A faculty committee representing the five colleges of Concordia recently selected the 97-98 theme to be "One Spirit Speaking Truth in Community." Michael Anderson, a student, is the author and award winner for submitting this theme. Kris Zelinka, from the Concordia admissions staff, was also given an award for her logo design, which is printed on the cover of this issue. The faculty committee and the Promethean also thank the following people for submitting thematic ideas: Prof. Robert Blake, David Colburn, Charlotte Evensen, and Koty Zelinka.

The faculty committee solicited ideas for an annual theme which might unify the various activities at Concordia. The possible applications for this theme are numerous, and all Concordians are encouraged to participate in the theme's development. For examples, faculty may adjust their courses to explore the theme; Student Services and Associated Students may plan activities and events which promote the theme; individual students are encouraged to suggest ideas for Speaking Truth in the classroom community; Chapel and performing arts ensembles will continue to promote the theme. Look forward to a spirited dialogue at Concordia next year!
LITERATURE & THE ARTS

Annual Fiction Contest Winner

Moon and Night, This Air of Memory

Tonight is not like other nights. The air is soft and thick. Breaths come slowly with purpose. This humid air makes itself known to the skin and lungs. I feel it across my tongue and sliding in and out of my nostrils. I feel it riding upon my back, sitting upon my shoulder whispering quiet mysteries of the night which I can’t understand yet know are true. It wraps its dark shawl around me and holds me close to it. The night pours in through my window, gathers about my feet and slowly fills the room, and me, with its temptation – with its thick sultry air.

I have recently taken to walking in the evening down the cobble stone streets which are so common in this area. At one time they had been common black tar streets used for automobiles, but now they are blocked off to motor traffic and used only as stone walk ways.

The city becomes another place under the calm veil of twilight. The business of the day is done; the mind of the day goes to rest and a new one – a night one – begins to awaken. This mind sees things which aren’t seen in the day. How does a brick wall take on the aspect of time long past? It becomes a potential blood stain. Here someone spilled a drink or did they cut their wrist; there a bus spill oil, or did someone die? We see only the stains of the past and we can’t really know.

I, walking along these streets, must remember the times of ago. Peal back the cobble stones, look underneath at the black tar of yesterday, find the oil spots and skid marks of before. History covered up, that is all it is, a try at forgetting where we were and we can’t see were we are because of it. There were times when I believed in the theory of “forget”. Let bygones be bygones they said, and so did I. But I can’t any more. There must be history; there must be identity.

And so on my evening walks sometimes I feel very secure. Other times I don’t. Last week I saw a horrible thing on my walk. A women was killed by a bus. Her body lay on the sidewalk twisted and red, limp and seemed filled with a false sense of comfort. It was a catastrophe; it was frightening. The simple fact that she was hit by a bus was not what frightened me, it was her blood – the amount of blood. The blood alone made it horrible. Her head hit the bench and cracked open. Her blood ran like crimson water across the sidewalk and into the gutter. A crowd gathered around her, staring, silently. Others had run off, unable to look. But many stayed with eyes gaping and mouths gawking to watch her blood run upon the stone.

Now there is nothing. This road, this cobble stone road that I walk upon every night, is like me. I know how it stares into the night but feels the past at its back. Millions have passed over it, and millions more may still pass over it and to them it means nothing. But the road knows and remembers.

The moon put all this into my head. Father, who, only hours before, leaned ominous of the sunset on the river late in the road knows and remembers. The moon put all this into my head. Father, who, only hours before, leaned ominous of the sunset on the river late in the road knows and remembers. I happily laid bricks over time, there are a few that a person needs to know are true. It wraps its dark shawl around me, with its temptation - with its silent legacy of my past, a memory only I can see, a fame only I know.

And I feel responsible for all that. At one time I was in love, and I took life for all it could offer, forgetting what was before. I happily laid bricks over time, over this road of my life. To keep going was all I cared about. Higher walls! Thicker bricks! If it’s ugly, plaster over it! Anything can be hidden out of sight out of mind!

Now there is nothing. This road, this cobble stone road that I walk upon every night, is like me. I know how it stares into the night but feels the past at its back. Millions have passed over it, and millions more may still pass over it and to them it means nothing. But the road knows and remembers.

The moon put all this into my head. On my usual evening walk, days after the bus accident, I had been walking this street thinking of how the river may move on, but the road never does, it only hides. I looked to the sky to see the progress of the night’s advance. There, high in the wine dark sky, I saw the true whiteness to our throes and struggles – the moon – for what seemed the first time. The whiteness of our crescent reflected off the burgundy waters of the river, but the sky so much more could be seen. The greater part, the secret part, the part which is dark and slowly revealed during the month was visible. It did not take care to cloak itself completely. I could see the whole of the orb, the light and the dark, the open and the closed, what was meant to be seen and what should not be seen. There were no more secrets in that moon, no more hiding. Why should I be allowed to see so much? I stood and stared like a child, like a voyeur, at the nakedness of the moon.

There are very few people left in my life. Some have died. Some have moved away to far off places long ago. Some are better kept at a distance, but there are a few that a person needs to keep close. Family is the most needed. I have not spoken to my family in years, not since my sister died. These bricks of time and emotion lay thick over the memory of my family, and of my father. I saw this in the moonlight, when all things were revealed, and the river was quiet and still, not giving any distraction, but letting the air, the heavy damp air of that night, seep into my heart.

I turned around and went back to my house. When I arrived, I sat down immediately and wrote this letter:

Father,

I know we haven’t talked for a long time, and I know that we’ve been
Moon and Night (continued)
hard on each other. Her death was too much for me, but now life, and loneliness, have become too much for me also. Please let me say that I am sorry, and that I miss you. It has been too many years. Let us move on now. You exclude the people you need most. At this time of year let us remember love. I'm coming home for Christmas. I'm coming home for Christmas.

The Walk
A breath in
A breath out
Sweaty sweat
mopped down
A wide forehead
Lashes stick together...

She lifted her foot
One step
A puff on air
Three more minutes.
Her other foot
raises up.
She breathes in deeply.
The foot comes down
One minute.
She'd walked
a 12 minute mile
A step in front
of a step
A skip over cracked sidewalks-
green shoots from within,
She steps
The blades
are crushed
thirty seconds left
thirty seconds...

My Lament
Oh Lord, My God
Why am I all alone?
Where have all my beloved ones gone?
How am I to go on
without their comforting?
I am left without help
in a land full of demons.
All around me they are attacking;
imprisoned in my own thoughts.

Only You can provide the strength I need.
Only You can fight them off.
My life is in Your hands.
No one understands
this trial I am going through.
What have I done to deserve
such a punishment as this?
Lonely, I sit and think.
They forever attack.
I cannot defend myself
from these frightful fiends.

Tears rage down on my face.
Sorrow consumes my empty heart.
No nourishment passes
through my teeth.

Only You, Lord.
Be with me still.
Wipe my tears and
fill me with heart with joy.

You, alone, are my hope
You, alone, are my peace.
You, alone, are my joy.
You, alone, are my love.
In all days, I will praise Your name.
Everyone who looks at me
will see Your loving kindness.
You are The Way...

Back Then
It was when life was
Simple
Sailing on a canopy
of clouds
Simply meant
exactly that.
God-religion-politics
were transferred
as they should
be
Power to Power
So now,
Idle threats are
simply that
idle
However,
you and I will
die
by the same idleness.
There is no
mention of a crucified body
No discussions of
A guileless love
Only the here - the now.

Affairs of the Heart
Affairs of the heart
You may not know which part.
Will be the spark
that stirs the heart.

At first, when I saw you,
I had seen only night.
It was at this point, I knew
for the first time in my life,
that affairs of the heart
you can know which part.
Could be the spark
that stirs a heart.

Then I felt a shining light
and could feel His presence.
You would be the sight
that will fulfill all life's essence.

With all God's might
you are the sight.
My heart's wounds have been sealed
because you have healed
the affairs of my heart.
I know now which part
is the spark
that stirs the heart.

The breath of life you see
comes in many things for me.
It may be in the breeze
coming off the ocean's seas.

It could be in the voice of a child
calling to their daddy while
they experience the exciting joy
of playing with a newfound toy.

The falling of a year's first snow
or of my mother rolling dough,
the tree at Christmas time
or hearing the spring winds chime.

The light of a crackling fire
that rouses that inner desire
of being at your side
when life's battles subside.

But, most of all you see
the breath of life for me.
Is when I see your face
it makes my longing heart race.
Momma Told Me

Momma told me of her life,
About the times long ago.
Of the good ones and the bad,
And where her dreams would go.

She told me of the good times
When her and Papa met.
Her 18th year had come around,
Their wedding plans were set.

She recounted all the joy.
The men mocked and gestured,
And they laughed a bit too.
But the women turned their backs,
And thought, "Only if they knew."

She then produced a smile,
One filled with so much bliss.
Her father's words she spoke again,
"But I wish you both the best."

She said that her and Papa
Held on with all their trust.
Their love had held a promise,
It whispered that she must...

Hold on, stand strong,
Keep your spirit high.
You have your own two feet,
And stand on them with pride.

Momma told me of the love
She sent out to her man,
As he went fighting for his country,
When the first war began.

Working in a factory,
Laboring for less than man,
She put up her stubborn chin
And thought up her own plan.

She began fighting for her rights
As the women took their stand,
Saying, "We can work as hard as He
With machine or with our hands.

"Just look at us as equals,
Every time you look our way,
And we will work like any man,
Any time of any day."

The men mocked and gestured,
And they laughed a bit too.
But the women turned their backs,
And thought, "Only if they knew."

"To hold on, stand strong,
Lift their spirits high.
Women have their own two feet,
And stand on them with pride."

Momma had told me,
The twenties came and went.
I was born in twenty-nine,
The year the bad times hit.

In bed for nine months,
Two pink slippers she knit.
Those months had gone by,
And she found that they fit.

My papa was proud,
I was Daddy's little girl.
My momma kept me pretty
With ribbons and with curls.

I learned how to shoot,
And use arrows and a bow.
Daddy's little gentleman
To a young woman would grow.

(continued)
The Cow of Clackamas County

In the county of Clackamas, year AD,
But before the time of you or me
There lived a man and his ten livestock:
Six cows, two goats, his pig and pet rock.

The goats were beautiful, lovely sheen.
The pig was overweight, ugly and mean.
The rock just sat and did nothing all day.
The cows just basically mooed and ate hay.

But one of the cattle, a young lass named Nell
Did more than just eat, she could jump quite well.
At night, when the rest were fast asleep,
Nell would sneak out to practice her leap.

She’d jump over the fence and land with ease,
But that was so simple she went on to trees.
Even that was a cinch, so just for a thrill,
Young Nell leapt over a neighboring hill.

One month the carnival came to the town
And held a contest for those all around
To see who could jump the highest of all
No matter the size: fat, skinny, short, tall.

Nell thought she might enter and win first prize.
But Mabel, the cow who was old and wise
Barked, “Don’t enter that contest, arrogant calf!
You’ll stumble or fall. The people will laugh.

Who’s heard of a cow that could skip or hop?
You’d amount to nothing more than a flop!”
So Nell gave up and went back to her stall
And while the rest jumped she just stared at the wall.

Later that night she went out to gaze
At the final bar and she was amazed!
The measurement stood barely eight feet high.
All that Nell could do was to stare and sigh.

Eight feet was nothing to what Nell could do.
Compared to the rest she practically flew!
She could have had fame, received cheers and shouts,
But she lost it all because of her doubts.

Jonathan Fisk