

Newspaper folds due to alien attack!

NO MORE TWO-HEADED BABIES, NO MORE scoops on the latest alien invasion attempt, no more sexy snapshots of Lincoln out of drag: on 27 August, the fantastical tapestry that is the *Weekly World News* (WWN) will come to an end after 28 years in print.

American Media Inc announced this week that they would be ceasing the magazine’s publication, citing “challenges in the retail and wholesale magazine marketplace that have impacted the newsstand” as the reason for the closure. In other words, not enough people were interested in reading about the world’s fattest assortment of animals.

When I initially heard this news, I thought, “So what? Who cares if there’s one less trashy, ugly, black-and-white news rag vying for my attention at the checkout line?” Never in my life have I wondered if Hillary Clinton’s vagina was the first ever robot to give birth. And the only misunderstood, emotionally damaged teenager I have any interest in is Archie Andrews, not Bat Boy. I’ll never get tired of that freckled rascal-lion’s epic saga of cold showers and the bluest of balls.

However, the sad fact is that out of all the awful magazines you see at the supermarket, the *WWN* is the only one that’s genuine about its bullshit. Unlike tabloids, where you can pretend that you’re just keeping up on pop culture—following the stars so that you’ll have something topical to say during that next awkward silence—when you pick up *Weekly World News*, there’s no fooling yourself into thinking you’re not reading trash.

It’s like listening to your crazy, drunken uncle ramble about the time he hunted and killed the last surviving sasquatch; sure, you know it’s bullshit—and that the monster was likely just a hapless hobo—but part of you enjoys being lied to.

I won’t lie by saying that I’ve never indulged in celebrity gossip, skimming through the latest in power-couple name fusions and musing about their latest drug problems or attempts to depopulate third world nations through the underhanded tactic of adoption. But I won’t deny that, in the end, all I’m doing is killing time with easy-to-read trash.

Say what you will about hack writing, ’tis nobler to spend your days chronicling the exploits of Frankenstein’s monster’s murderous trek across Arkansas than to pick apart the coked-up, shattered ruins of Lindsay Lohan’s career like so many hungry piranhas. The *WWN* only ever imagined human misery, rather than thriving upon it.

Perhaps, instead of covering the race to prevent ancient Aztec relics capable of raising a horde of zombies from falling into the hands of the Taliban, the *WWN* should have been the first to break the story of Bat Boy’s wild sex parties and his crippling addiction to type-O blood. Or follow Christopher Reeve’s uphill battle against the stairway to heaven. Then they might have been able to keep today’s scandal-thirsty readers interested.

The sad fact is that even though this cancellation will open up a spot on the crowded magazine rack, it will be replaced by something even less worthwhile. Another splash page covered in a steaming heap of celebrity gossip, freshly regurgitated into our eager mouths so that the rest of us can justify placing them on a pedestal by dragging them, kicking and strung-out, back into the mire with the rest of us.

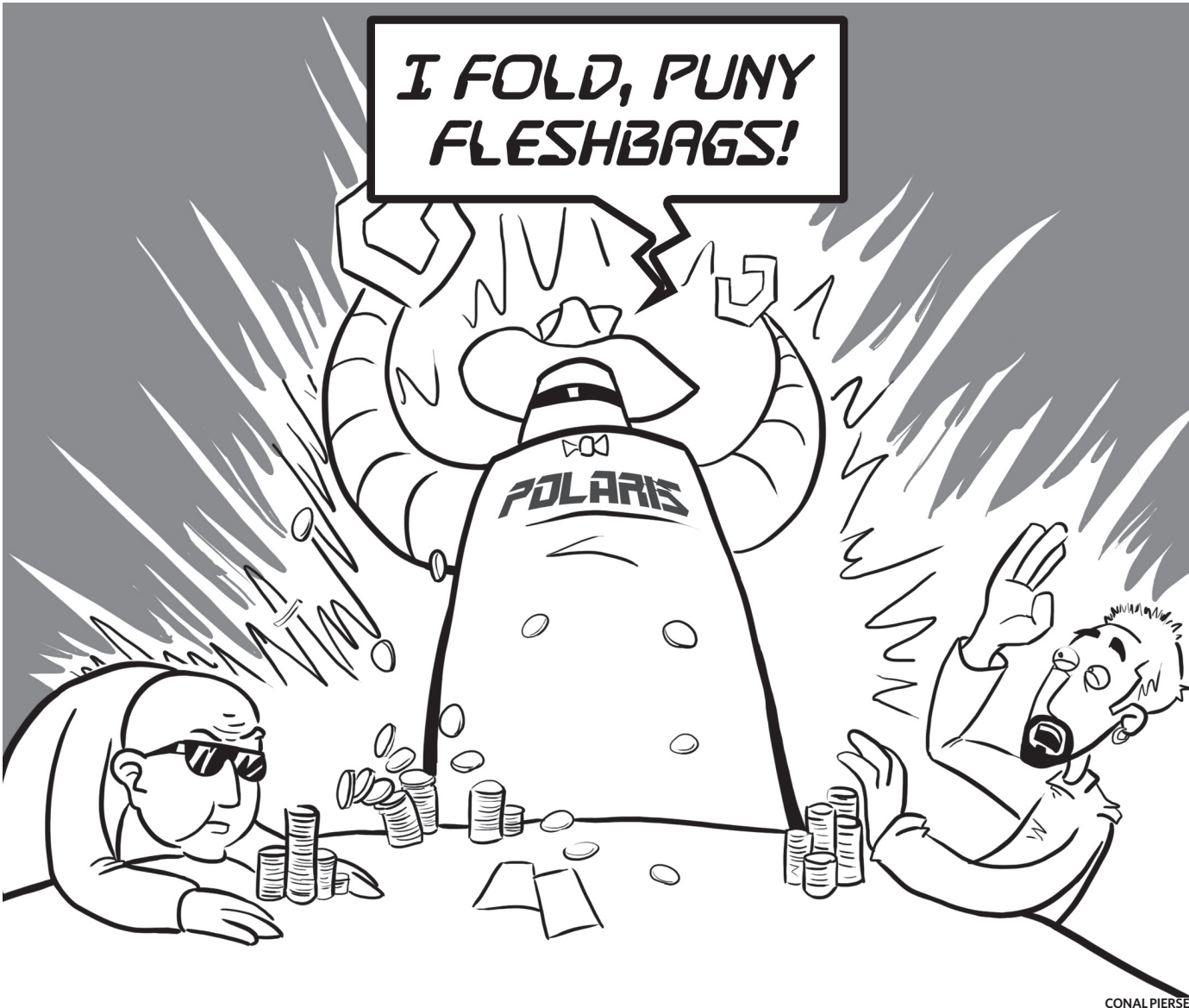
CONAL PIERSE
Opinion Editor

Iraq just can’t win

IN A SHOCKING SERIES OF EVENTS THAT SADLY but neatly sums up hundreds of years of cultural strife in war-torn Iraq, the national soccer team pulled off an invigorating 4–3 victory over South Korea in the Asian Cup, only to see two car bombs and multiple shootings kill dozens and injure hundreds more in the jubilant aftermath.

Even as the biggest boost to the collective morale of the Iraqi people in recent memory was occurring, a barbaric few were there to ensure that these tentative hopes and fragile psyches were swiftly battered back down. Business as usual in the Middle East, in other words.

ADAM GAUMONT
Editor-in-Chief



CONAL PIERSE

LETTERS FROM THE ARCHIVES

Letters from a son at university to his father

I received your last letter alright and am returning it with the mistakes in spelling underlined in red ink. You will find them in the dictionary, with the exception of the word “ain’t,” which you won’t find any place, and which you don’t want to look for.

I’m glad to hear that Ma is well except for having the typhoid fever and likewise the children.

The social life in the University has been of an extremely high order so far this year. In no less than three receptions have we participated as an institution. A very successful, shall I call it *Soirée*, was held recently by the sophomores.

I was enjoying the program immensely until imagine my embarrassment when, upon looking up, I discovered that I was only six seats from a girl. I hastily rose and withdrew to a seat where I would not be subject to scandal. The program was interspersed with promenades, in which I took no part, as none of the ladies asked me for the pleasure of one.

Next came the supper. The freshmen took down the ladies, which greatly relieved me, for it gave me a chance to take down some coffee and sandwiches. Everyone seemed to be enjoying themselves so much. It reminded me of Plato’s saying “*Labor vincit omania*,” which means freely “boys will be boys.” How I wish you could understand Latin, as you could embrace more readily my feelings towards life and things, and these little quotations would need no translation.

I often think of the farm and

animals and you and mother. I must close now. As the French have it: “*Je vais dearie achos*,” or to translate: “I am going to say good-bye.”

November 1910

Since my last letter the exams have come and gone. Most of them were easy. In the chemistry paper, one of the questions was “how would you tell the difference between a stick of phosphorous and a stick of dynamite?” I said: swallow it and kick yourself—which I’ve no doubt was right.

Immediately after the exams came the “Conversat,” which is an annual way of spending a dollar. Down in the refreshment room where I passed most of the evening, two of the students were clinking their glasses together and saying, “here’s to luck” and similar phrases. One of them turned to me and said, “Do they ever drink toasts where you come from?” I responded, “No, Miss, we usually eat it,” which crushed her. The idea of drinking toast!

I attended my first hockey game last week. It was between the Varsity and the YMCA. The game is played by 14 men and two detectives in plain clothes. Every few minutes one of the detectives would ring a bell and the players, thinking it was dinner time, would stop playing, whereupon the detective would seize the puck and keep it for a minute.

Each player has a certain name. One is called goalkeeper, another right wing, etc One was called the rover, as far as I could see, because he always arrove at the wrong time.

There were a lot of students watching the game, and they made a great deal of noise. Some had loud voices, some had loud horns, and some only loud clothes, but all managed to make a fearful row.

I’m afraid I made an awful breach of etiquette at the Conversat. The programs said “Refreshments

served from 10 to 12.” I tried my best but I could only stick it out for an hour and a half. If I had taken another bite, I think I’d have died. Perhaps no one noticed that I left before time was up.

I’ve had my picture taken as you told me to. I only got a head-and-shoulder picture, however, as the camera was not large enough to take my feet. Still they will be enough to let people see how I look. I must now close this letter.

February 1911

Just a couple more weeks and I’ll be home again. This has been a very heavy month. Besides preparations for the exams, there has been the Mock Parliament, the Freshman reception, and we’ve been in the heat of an election campaign.

I was nominated as president of the Students’ Council to run against Mitchell and Ottewell, and I took the whole University by storm. Everybody was shouting my name and I could see that the two other candidates were becoming intensely jealous. Finally they began to feel so strongly that I felt it necessary to withdraw in order to arrest hard feelings. There would have been a lot of work in connection with the office anyway.

The Mock Parliament has been a very marked success. One night I arrived about five minutes late and found that the nation’s business had been dispatched, and the members were all dancing around the floor.

I took a chair and watched the proceedings for a minute, but I almost fainted when I looked across the floor and saw my friend Pink, dear old Methodist Pink, with his arm around a girl, going around and around in a circle and stepping on first one of her toes and then on the other. I wondered about him, but then you can never tell what Pink will do next.

In a few minutes the music stopped, and the girl retired into a corner to rub her sore toes while Pink came bouncing across the room to me with a broad grin and said, “Oh, Bob, I’ve learned to dance! That was the ‘Walrus’ that I just learned and soon they’re going to teach me the ‘Squad drill.’”

I heard of a very odd case the other day in Strathcona: a middle-aged lady got a bad earache, and in order to relieve it stuffed both ears full of cotton. Soon after someone asked her a question, and she shook her head, whereupon her head at once blew off. She discovered next day that she had used gun-cotton instead of the ordinary kind.

There’s lots more news which I might tell you, but I think I’ll keep it till I get home. Don’t forget to meet me at the water-tank where the train comes in.

I remain, Your Offspring,

BOB
1910-1911

From the Archives is a semi-regular feature where the Gateway runs historical letters that we feel are of particular importance—or are just really hilarious.

Modern day letters to the editor should be dropped off at room 3-04 of the Students’ Union Building, or emailed to letters@gateway.ualberta.ca.

The Gateway reserves the right to edit letters for length and clarity, and to refuse publication of any letter it deems racist, sexist, libellous or otherwise hateful in nature. The Gateway also reserves the right to publish letters online.

Letters to the editor should be no longer than 350 words, and should include the author’s name, program, year of study and student ID number to be considered for publication.