

# Groundhog Day: The Boar Loses Its Bite

by Matt Blankman

Each year, early in February, a bizarre holiday occurs. Humorous to all at younger ages, the institution known as "Groundhog Day" seems to have lost its novelty in the midst of teenage cynicism. The custom, brought to the United States from Germany and Great Britain, is supposed to forecast the weather for the six weeks following the second of February. The legend states that the groundhog awakens from its lengthy winter sleep on that date. The creature pokes its head out of its hole and proceeds to look around. If it happens to be a sunny day and the little fella can



Chimney Patterson

see his shadow, he gets frightened and worms back into his home. This allegedly means that there will be six more weeks

of winter. However, if it is overcast and the bugger can't see his shadow, he stays outside and frolics for the entertainment of the gaping hicks, indicating that spring is surely on the way.

Aww, come on... you buy this junk? In some strange town in Pennsylvania, local newsmen and little kids get up early on a winter morning to see if some small rodent will tell them what has eluded even Willard Scott? Sure, the Woodchuck was cute in third grade, but one shouldn't

place too much credence in him. If he sees his shadow we get six more weeks of winter? Yeah... right.

Actually, Groundhog Day is more of a semi-holiday. You see, it gets marked on calendars, but no one escapes work or school for it. Usually, when the banks, post offices, and schools are open, and nobody gets any presents out of it, it is a questionable holiday. In fact, one wonders why we even bother to take note of Groundhog Day. There is absolutely no proof that it has any meteorological value, and the odds are that it doesn't work. Another factor is that if the Europeans and settlers were

going to invent a twisted day like this, they could have at least used a better animal. A groundhog? What about Bunny Rabbit Day? Puppy Day? A grizzly bear could be entertaining. How about making it his day? Actually, the animal just may be the problem. Perhaps Groundhog Day is just another excuse to worship lower creatures. Is there a Weatherman's Day to honor those who toil with satellite maps only to be insulted by swilling dolts when their high-tech equipment is a little wrong? While we continue to worship the groundhog, we can only hope that perhaps one day the bunny rabbit will win out.

## Hall Monitor Techniques Explored

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learned slow reader can quickly calculate the speed at which he/she must read to make it last all day. Jane Harlow has the school record; it took her a full eight hour shift to read the pronoun I. She is now hailed as the slowest reader on earth.

**Small Talk Seminar:** While this is just a seminar, it is con-

sidered very important. This is another component of training which permits aides to stay sane. Believe it or not, some students find the aides less than desirable. The aides need to talk to each other, but more importantly, make friendly links with some students. That's where the seminar comes in. It allows the aides to start conversations with total strangers success-

fully. Here are the most commonly used opening lines: Nice weather we're having...

Hi sailor!...  
Gotta light?...  
Do you come here often?...  
What's your sign?...

Burger King tonight?...  
If you are thinking of becoming a hall monitor, you should ask yourself some questions. Do you have the correct character

for this type of job? Only those who are as tough as steel make it in the halls. Is your head hard enough, and are you willing to throw out a lunch tray with weak tomato sauce mixed with milk, apple sauce, and a smashed cookie? If you are, you could become the next hall monitor or cafeteria aide at Schreiber High School. All it takes is a dollar and a dream.



Photo by Dan Fisher

Cafeteria duty is not all fun and games.

## Riots, Caffeine, and Macrame on the South Side: Former Student Reflects on Life After Schreiber

This piece is the first in a series dedicated to Schreiber alumni. Each issue will feature writings from former students, expressing their feelings upon life after high school and, specifically, college experiences. The Times thanks these individuals for their contributions.

By Mike Newirth

Yo, what's up? I know, you thought that you'd gotten rid of me... but no, they just shipped me to Chicago, the city that would really like to pretend that New York doesn't exist. Strange as it might seem to some of my junior high school teachers, I actually have made it to "higher" education, and I'm here to tell you, it's more fun than putting LSD into the Portettes' Diet 7-Up and giving them live hand grenades. (Well, maybe it's not that cool, but these days what is?)

The University of Chicago is a pretty weird place all right. Some rocket scientist decided to put the campus right in the middle of an urban demilitarized zone. The media calls Chicago's outlaw gang, El Rukns, crazed, bloodthirsty, crackdealing bandits. I call them neighbors. Here at U. of C., going to pick up fried chicken requires an armed escort. We

were all issued handguns in our orientation. (I didn't need another sweatshirt anyway.) I mean, how many other universities have a "Crime of the Week" listed in the school newspaper? But I'm proud to live on the South Side - at least we got to go out for Halloween.

The U. of C. has a reputation for being a total academic grind, which is really only half the story. (This is the part of the letter when I'm supposed to win your sympathy by whining about how tough college is and how I'm married to my coffee pot, but "honesty is my only excuse." Besides, I drink tea.) Sure, some people do have the option to be like my roommate, who works from 9 to 5. That's nine in the morning to five in the morning. He's a great guy, although he does have a habit of putting on Mozart just when I have a hankering to melt my brain with, say, Gore (nutty, Swedish instrumental band who you won't be reading about in Spin any time soon). Yeah, my roommates can be such a panic. I got off lucky compared to some, like the ROTC from Kentucky paired up with the back-to-nature wrestler from Vermont. (No, I'm not making this up.) When it comes time to fill out those wacky preference

cards, just put down that you enjoy worshipping Satan, plotting to overthrow the government, and macrame, and hope for the best.

Anyway, college is pretty cool. Obligatory dorky-but-so-true sentiment: it's what you make out of it. As for this college, what can I say? It's not as though I'm impartial. The University of Chicago isn't for everyone, and it really isn't a school where the Spuds MacKenzie lifestyle comes before reality. But like we say around here: if you're going to walk on thin ice, you might as well dance. More to the point, we need more New Yorkers here. Seriously, folks, think about it. The University of Chicago - Where You Keep the Tools.

Let's see, my Calvin & Hobbes says it's January, which means the college application game (WIN fabulous prizes!) must be goin' full steam back at Paul D. Schreiber High School. Listen to your elders about this stuff; it might be the last time their advice is correct. (Maybe their first time as well, I don't know.) Spend a lot of time on your applications, don't apply to too many schools, and be realistic about your chances. Juniors, especially, listen up. I now know that I made a lot of mistakes

with the whole shebang— my application here was almost a fluke, and if I wasn't at the U. of C. now, I'd probably be Metallica's vodka roadie or something. (Actually, that sounds like a career I should have looked into a little further.)

More corny advice: seniors, savor the next few months. Treasure every single day. I know what it's like now, when it's cold, and there's never any room in the Monfort Lot, and you really can't see the point of getting out of bed. Last January, I, too, would have happily shot my teachers (as well as about 2/3 of my classmates). But all this will be gone before you know it. You'll be on the threshold of something new and potentially great, but you'll be surprised to find how much you might miss what you left behind. Naked Raygun says, "And so it begins that some things last forever," but the uniqueness of this time is not one of those things. Sure, with all the day-to-day pressures and social b.s., the temptation to hate your friends can be very strong (especially the ones who gained early admission to Cornell). But wait, you all scatter and they don't keep in touch— then you can start hating them for real. For now, try to realize what you

have and savor it.

Wow, that was touching, my roommate is drowning in my tears. So anyway, how about that President George Bush? I think The Who said it best: "Meet the new boss the same as the old boss." Maybe in 1992, we won't get fooled again...

If you're ever in Chicago, tune into WHPK, 88.5 FM. Maybe you'll get lucky and catch my show. That's right, they've let me loose in a radio station, and Chicago will never be the same.

Anyhow, enjoy the remainder of the school year and I look forward to seeing each and every one of you next time I blow back into town. (I'll pencil you in, we'll do lunch.) (Anyone who would like more information on the University of Chicago or knows where I can get the last two MC5 albums is encouraged to write to me at: 5514 S. University Ave. #1802, Chicago, Illinois 60637.)

Right now, I'm going to scurry off to the library, do some homework, and think about how much I miss high school...and we won the Vietnam War, there was no police riot in Tompkins Square Park, and Guns n' Roses is going to have a very long and exciting career. Rock and roll for President...