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the university? President Gaudino has come to this institution during an incredibly difficult time and he realizes that our state-funded institution is becoming a privatized one. Not by choice, but by force. We can no longer rely on the state to provide the subsidies to us that they have in the past and because of that, the administration has had to make some very difficult choices. I don't believe they take those choices lightly. As we move into this new and uncharted territory of becoming increasingly reliant on tuition dollars to keep this ship afloat, we are all going to experience changes and have to live with decisions that will continue to keep this university operational and allow us to provide the education our students are paying for. Like I said before, my heart really does go out to everyone who has lost their jobs or have had their hours reduced. My husband has been unemployed since December and we were forced to sell our home at a loss. It's not easy, but you move forward and you seek out new opportunities. You survive.

Lisa Plesha
Office of Financial Aid
CWU Alumni - Class of 2000



Senior Farewell

What did Gargamel want with the Smurfs, anyway? Do they make a tasty jelly? Can he get the same taste with the Na'vi?

BY BRIAN IIYAMA | Photo Editor

You poor souls. I have to voice my heartfelt sorrow for everyone out there in the Ellensburg area. I am able to escape this doomed place, yet I feel guilty for leaving so many people behind to their untimely deaths.

Soon, President Gaudino will unleash his doomsday device and reduce Ellensburg to smoldering rubble. He recently bought some land next to the university with no announced plans of what he's going to do with it, but I know the truth. That's where his missile silo will be installed, and

Sorry about that, I had to get that out of my system.

I'm leaving Ellensburg! I'm leaving Ellensburg! I'm leaving Ellensburg!

My apologies, that had to get out too.

No more frozen winters sits well with me, but on the same coin I lose the beautiful summers. I won't be kept awake by neighbors feeling the need to destroy their brain cells on Tuesday night, but then again I won't be able to keep my neighbors up by destroying brain cells on Wednesday night.

"... and everyone will get a personalized Chia pet."

beneath it his lair of debauchery and sinister scheming will be carved out among the caverns deep beneath the earth. Laying off workers without bargaining is just the first step. After his lair is constructed, he will create a genetically engineered army of half shark, half halibut henchmen with lasers surgically installed into their eyes and they will march across the earth after the missile launch is a go.

I have the benefit of leaving the area to prepare for the great counter offensive. Fear not, my fellow humans. Kingpin ... I mean Gaudino, will not get away with this obscene disregard for human life.

I get to head out into the world and work (or attempt to work) in my chosen field. I will be living in a concrete hive, away from the lush valley I've actually come to appreciate.

I'd like to thank the academy, mom and dad. Oh, I'm forgetting so many people ...

Once the counter offensive is complete, then we will be able to unite behind my banner and make our own rules.

We will trade one dictator for another, yeah, but my tyrannical rule will have pizza night every Friday, with muffins... and cherry soda ... and chili ... and everyone will get a personalized Chia pet.

Just submit, it'll all be for the better.



Senior Farewell

Life, LOST, and weird smells

BY RYAN RICIGLIANO | Assistant News Editor

As I reflect on my two years here at Central and what the future holds in the turbulent world of journalism, I can't help but tie it back to the television show "Lost."

I'll be the first to admit that I've always wondered what it would be like to be a passenger of Oceanic Flight 815. Would I have followed Jack or Locke?

But in a smoke monster-less world, I can actually tie my experience at Central to the frantic story twists of the popular television show.

I came here not by choice or desire. I always made fun of kids who went to Central. I was accepted twice to the University of Washington, but some regrettable life decisions kept me from taking that plunge. After moving back home and becoming a full-time loser, my parents suggested I take another look at Central.

But I did end up here and I wouldn't change it if I could.

At Central, I found a calling that interests me,

friends that I'll take with me forever and an experience that's allowed me to grow in new directions. Much like Kate, Jack and Hurley, I've come to know an eccentric group of characters who are now an integral part of my life.

When I came here I didn't know how things were going to fit together or where my story would go. But now as I graduate, I can see a bigger picture and how all those twists work out.

I now value that experience. I don't get worked up over not seeing the entire plotline laid out, and even find the beauty in not knowing.

Granted, I still don't know what the hell I want to do with my life and I'm just as scared about the rest of my life as the next kid. In many ways, my time at Central ends much like the saga of "Lost." Questions remain unanswered - like who shot at Sawyer and the survivors on the outrigger, and where'd that weird smell in my apartment come from - but I'm glad to be here.

And, hey, at least I wasn't dead the entire time.

REALationships 101:



True REALationships

BY ERICA SPALTI
Online Editor

Before I start this week's column, I want to take the time to say thank you. This is my last column for The Observer and to those who are happy to see this column go ... good for you. To those who read, enjoyed and supported REALationships 101, thank you. YOU are the reason I continued to write this column. This week's column is not advice for anyone, but more of a look into how I got to be who I am today.

When I was younger, a family friend (whose husband my dad worked for) used to watch me before and after school, before my parents got home from work. Her name was Mary and I became so attached to her that she became my "Aunt Mary" and her husband became "Uncle Mike." Every morning we would watch "The Wizard of Oz" for about 10 minutes. I remember asking her if the world was really black and white. She would laugh and say, "In some ways, yes," and I never understood it until I got older.

Aunt Mary would talk about her love for the University of Washington her house had Husky memorabilia everywhere. She used to joke with me and say, "You want to be a Husky, NEVER a Cougar." I was really confused, so Mary then explained to me what a college was.

One morning I went to my grandma's house instead of Aunt Mary's, and after school that day, my grandma told me that Aunt Mary was sick and that she had a brain tumor. Even though I was little, I knew that was bad. Months went by and Aunt Mary was still so full of life. She would always yell at us for being so careful around her. Even though I was young, I admired her strength and courage.

One summer day I came home from my friend Emma's house to grab some sleepover essentials and my mom was crying. I didn't have to ask her, because I just knew. I went upstairs, packed my things, got in Emma's mom's car and went to stay the night like I had originally planned. I had no idea at the time that was how I was going to handle grief from then on out - by not believing it.

A few days later, Aunt Mary's services were held. The next day they had a burial. I went to the service where people stood and spoke about their time with Mary. I sat, with my parents, with a speech I'd written in hand, but said nothing. My parents gave me a choice to go to the burial and I chose not to. Not going to say my final goodbye is the one regret that I have in my life. I decided that day that I was going to go to college and I wanted to make my Aunt Mary proud of me. So in a way, coming to this school, working for this paper and gaining this experience, was all because of her.

When I decided to write this final column, I decided to ask my mom about it to make sure it was OK. We got talking about my love for "The Wizard of Oz" because of Aunt Mary, and then I realized something. The Wizard encouraged Dorothy to make her dreams come true, but she was the only one who could reach them. Aunt Mary was the Wizard - or as I like to call her, my guardian angel - who encouraged me to achieve my dreams, dreams that only I can reach for myself.

My relationship with my Aunt Mary changed my life and ultimately inspired me to write this column, because it truly was a REALationship.

X.O.X.O.
Erica



PETE LOS

VISUAL STIMULATION

"Spring is nature's way of saying, 'Let's party!'" - Robin Williams