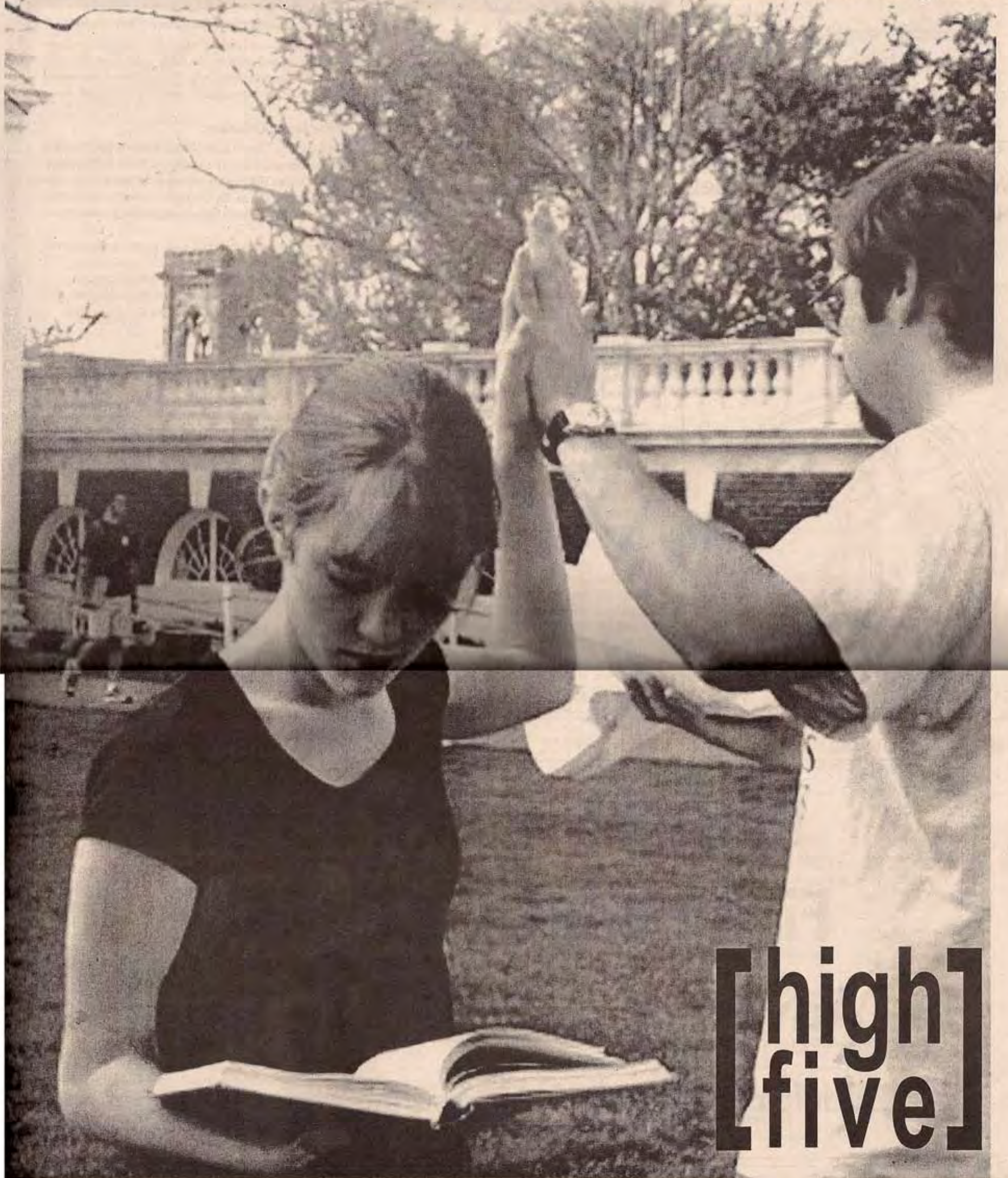


# the Declaration

April 18, 2002

Volume 30 Issue 13

A Weekly Newsmagazine



[high  
five]

# NEW ADVENTURE

t h e d a w n o f a n e

A FRIEND OF MINE RECENTLY ENTERED SCHOOL AT SANTA Clara University in California. Upon returning home for the first time this winter, he encountered many people who wanted to know how his first semester of college measured up to the times he had spent at home. Explaining, or more accurately, justifying the good times that you've spent away from your friends is always a daunting task. Picking the highlights from even the most eventful of semesters can be an undertaking that leaves skeptical friends feeling alienated and unsure of their desire to communicate with you in the future.

Therefore, when attempting to assure your friends that something that you believe is cool and fun, is indeed cool and fun, it helps to have just the right story. It's simply a matter of having the right event occur, promptly identifying it as the right event, and then committing it to memory in a manner that will not only make it a cool event, but a cool story as well.

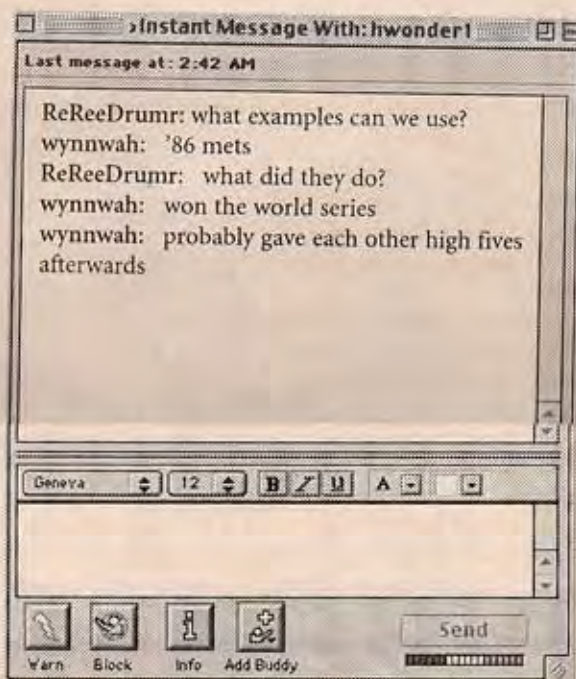
Fortunately, this friend of mine had just such a story at his disposal. It went a little something like this: During the first couple weeks of school, he went out for a jog along the Santa Clara campus. Off in the distance, I imagine at least a football field away, he saw another jogger running towards him. My friend, still unsure whether or not he had chosen the right school, decided right then and there that his happiness and faith in the school would be determined at that precise moment.

"If this school really is the place for me," he thought, "This guy will respond to this gesture." And as the distance between them grew narrower, my friend raised up his right hand and kept it there, long enough for the other jogger to realize what was going on, raise his own hand, and give him a wordless high five as they passed.

The two never saw each other again. They jogged off in opposite directions, not even exchanging a word. But the sheer significance of the event was undoubtedly not

lost on either man. One jogged off believing for the first time that the next four years of his life might not be too bad. The other jogged off with emotions that are still unknown. But, by relating this story to me, my friend made me question whether or not my first few weeks at U.Va. would have been able to withstand the scrutiny of the high-five litmus test.

I think, and I assume that many people will agree with me, that the answer is a resounding no. Dirty looks, feigned obliviousness, or mace to the eyes are all more likely interactions between a high-fiving and a non-high-fiving member of this community. This needs to change.



Thus, I propose to you, a National High Five Day. A day when, without inhibition, people can freely exchange high fives between all different genders, races, heights, and social classes. There's nothing else to it. Just a day when U.Va., and America as a whole, will be looking to give high fives, and will be just as ready to receive them.

I, for one, am willing to go to all lengths to ensure that this happens. This includes the establishment of a semi-permanent booth in the middle of the service sector of the Lawn. The irony and inhumanity of establishing a booth for something as seemingly inconsequential and trivial as a National High Five Day (when I routinely

lower my head to disaster relief, countless charities, and Dance Marathon activists) is not beyond me. But everyone's got to believe in something.

The justification for such a holiday is quite simple. I'll pass on to you the very description that we used to trick the *Dec* staff into printing this article:

Imagine that while on your way to class, you pass a dignified looking middle-aged man in a suit. You, of course, are wearing the same underwear as yesterday, a pair of pants off your floor, and a T-shirt with something ironic printed on it. Instead of noticing this dignified pillar of society fifteen seconds or so before your interaction is fated to occur, and lowering your head to avoid his disapproving scowl, you take another course of action. You confidently walk forward, and at the moment of passing, you and the businessman simultaneously raise your hands and wordlessly high-five. The sound of the perfect high five resonates, causing those nearby to silently and enviously take notice. You both walk on, and likely relate the story to whomever you eat dinner with that night. There is no reason why this should not happen with alarming frequency.

\*\*\*  
Excerpt from the AIM profile of wynnwah: "I'm not one for the 'profile,' but this is important. This isn't a joke. Me and some friends are trying to do something with our lives."  
\*\*\*

Why the high five? Why now? Perhaps the first step is to point out that the second question is completely invalid. High fiving has been a symbol of triumph and idiocy for as long as people have been around. Anyone who has seen the Charlton Heston movie *The Ten Commandments* is familiar with the famous high-five scene.

After a long period of psyching up and persuasion, Moses is finally prepared to confront the evil Pharaoh. He entreats him to "Let my people go!" Moses walks away from the astonished Pharaoh, and when Aaron (his faithful sidekick) asks him how it went, he proceeds to walk past him, slapping him a high five as he does. Aaron turns around to follow him with admiring eyes as the film switches into slow motion and the chorus of the song "Hair of The Dog" blares in the background ("Now you're messin' with a . . . a son of a bitch!").

University Professor Phillip Zelikow documents another important case in his recently published book, *Kennedy Tapes: Inside The Whitehouse*. At one of the nation's most tense moments during the Cuban Missile Crisis, American citizens anxiously awaited a peaceful resolution to the conflict. When negotiations were final-



# URES IN HIGH-FIVE

## new holiday

by Conor Lastowka and Wynn Walent

ized, an ecstatic John F. Kennedy leapt to his feet and demanded that his brother Robert give him a high five, "Up high!" As Castro watched sullenly from the seat across the table, the two Kennedys engaged in a touching display of brotherhood.

When JFK's life ended tragically only months later, Robert began his tearful eulogy by recounting this very episode, and by imploring the American public to never forget his brother and the causes that he held dear to his heart. Lyndon B. Johnson, however, misinterpreted this plea for a National High Five Day, and we got stuck with the Great Society instead. So goes the history of America. By the time Robert "Up High" Kennedy was gunned down several years later, his brother's utopian vision was all but forgotten.

Granted, neither of these two episodes ever occurred. But it would have been cool if they did. In fact, there are countless examples of political high fives that *could* have been really badass:

- Reagan and Gorbachev brought the Cold War arms race to a crashing demise with one of the more thunderous high fives either world power has ever seen.
- East and West Berliners exchange a Pyramus and Thisbe-esque high five over the wreckage of the Berlin Wall.
- Every single televised awards ceremony involves the honoree walking out of his aisle, giving all of the other dignified guests down the line a high five, in the style of the introductions at the baseball All Star Game.
- The conflicts raging through the Middle East conclude peacefully with the Arafat/Sharon high five, with a supplementary 180-degree windmill arm motion to meet on the flipside.

Hopefully, this will occur center court at game seven of the NBA Finals, and with any luck, it will be in Philadelphia, presided over by noted statesman and Philly resident Bill Cosby. And for obscure reference's sake, we'd like to point that Theo and Cockroach undoubtedly were one of the greatest high five duos of our modern time.

When we make these claims about the high five being the greatest possible interaction between two people, we are of course, idealizing the high five. The poor high five does exist. There may be a noticeable lack of a solid sound or the participants may be left off balance and awkward afterwards. The missed high five is, of course, something that never happens between two respectable people, but there are the clumsy versions of the "successful" high five. The "fingers to palm" and the "fingers to fingers" both result in the almost silent, painful to watch bastardization of the high five.

But even though the bad high five is a sobering experience, even the bad ones can help restore one's faith in humanity. The most recent and blatant example of a man who had no right to give high fives (and yet did so) occurred two summers ago at a Steve Miller Band Concert. A member of the band, identified to the audi-



ence only as "Buffalo," had the role of playing the all-purpose token instruments. Buffalo was clearly an in-law of Steve Miller's who was desperately in need of summer employment. So, the band let him play the tambourine, maracas, and probably even that wooden fish with ridges across its back that was in every elementary school music classroom.

When the band came back on stage for their encore, Buffalo showed the most exuberance and intensity of anyone on stage. He ran onto the stage, giving every member a high five. He even climbed onto the platform where the keyboard player was elevated, and performed a jumping high five. You could just imagine the sheer reluctance of the other legitimate musicians in the band to engage in this sort of display every night, begrudgingly slapping him five and passionlessly exclaiming "Boo-yah Buffalo . . . Boo-yah . . ." And there's something special about that.



five. There was drinking involved months ago when it was first mentioned, and drinking has been an integral part of every subsequent planning phase. National High Five Day is, in its original form, simply a funny idea. But, with your help, April 18th can become much more. It will be a day when grudges are forgotten, superficial judgments of strangers are abandoned, and unlikely friendships are formed.

If there is a God, April 18th will be a sunny and glorious day. There will be plenty of Frisbees, wiffle balls, sundresses, and smiles. There will be free lemonade, good music, and lots of high fives on the Lawn. You are officially invited to the celebration. I hope to give high fives to friends, strangers, awkward acquaintances, and whoever else is willing to receive them. But most of all this is my hope: I hope to be on the Lawn that day, lemonade in hand, and to witness two people that I have never seen before exchanging high fives. The moment that this occurs, the holiday will be a success.

Upon seeing this, I plan on approaching the co-author of this article and to describe in detail the high five that I have witnessed. I imagine that at that moment, a reassuring breeze will approach from the South Lawn, we will take celebratory sips of lemonade, and exchange knowing looks of contentment. I think you know what will happen next. I hope that you will be a part of it.

CONOR LASTOWKA and WYNN WALENT are third years who secretly long for the days when grab-ass was an appropriate way to say hello.



Calling for a national day to recognize the high five is a risky maneuver, we understand. It sets us up to absorb the scorn, derision, and countless dirty looks of people we don't know and who probably wouldn't like us. But this is a small price to pay for something that you believe in.

We do not claim that the creation of this holiday is completely derived from a "pure" admiration of the high