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WRITE TO US

CompassStaff@hotmail.com

CALL US

451-4826



STAFF

Editor-in-Chief: Rosemarie Cote
Managing Editor/Layout Editor: Mike DeVine

News Editor: Jason Gerhard
A&E/Features Editor: Peter Verry
Sports Editor: Shaun Morash

Copy Editor: Christie Cafariella
Business Manager: Sharon Khan

Staff Photographers:
Austin Miller, Jason Gerhard

Staff Writers: Dan Carpio, Joel Maler, Brian Schultz

Contributing Writers: Joy Marie Virga, Natasha Jackson, Frances Torres, Maggie Amoroso, Ana Vlasic, Cherie Maniaci, Brian Mingus

Staff Advisor: Darren Johnson

Notes From the Managing Editor's Desk

By Mike DeVine
MANAGING/LAYOUT EDITOR

Last Wednesday, I walked into the Compass office carrying a 30-pound mini-fridge, which I had brought up from my car almost a quarter-mile away. I walked into a room jammed with people I had never seen before - all ready to pounce on me about something about the paper that either needed changing, removing, adding, or some combination of the three. While still carrying said 30-pound refrigerator on my shoulder, I sat down in a broken office chair next to an upside-down milk-crate.

Under the crate, a local alley cat that had somehow wandered into our office the day before was looking lazily up at me. We had spent the previous day trying to lure him out from behind a desk with some cafeteria tuna. But I guess he had read the article in our last issue about the cafeteria's health code warnings, because he refused to come out until we finally lowered the crate around him from above and moved him out of the corner earlier that morning. I finally set the refrigerator down next to Compass' crate (Compass being our unofficial name for the cat), and began yelling at perfect strangers. Thus began another day in the life of the Compass' Managing Editor.

Never let anyone tell you that working on a newspaper, any paper that's worth its weight in recycled newspaper, is easy. Even working on a paper that isn't worth its weight in used napkins is challenging; perhaps even more so, because not only are you putting in long hours on a weekly basis to maintain a constant flow of new content, you're doing so while being told by people you've never met before that you're not working hard enough. Well I've got a rebuttal to all the naysayers: of course I'm not working hard enough. No one is. But that's the point. If we felt we were working hard enough then we wouldn't be doing our jobs right. That's just the nature of the bleesky beast, and it's a fact I've grown to accept during my time spent here at the Compass.

My whole experience has basically come down to taking baby steps in one direction or the other. At the begin-

ning of last fall, we had no advisor, no official budget manager, and no link to our publisher, while the advertisers were rapidly jumping ship from a publication that hadn't printed a single issue in the last three months. From that point all the way until now, it's all been about baby steps. We found an advisor: Baby step forward. He's not on our campus: Baby step back. We finally printed our first issue of the semester: Another baby step forward. It was the middle of November: Another baby step back.

Fast-forward four months and several hundred baby steps later, and we come to today: the third issue of the sixty-eighth volume of the SCCC Compass. Plenty of things have changed: we have an advisor, we've gotten more ad revenue through three issues than we earned all last semester, and we're coming off of our biggest issue in almost a year- 20 pages long and crammed full of content. We've taken some pretty large baby steps since the low point several months ago... but we still have plenty of ground left to cover.

There were several glaring spelling errors in the last issue, due in large part to the fact that we had no dedicated Copy Editor. We misnamed an author in one story, and misrepresented the subject of another. And perhaps worst of all, we completely omitted our entire comics section. Yeah, we're real bastards.

Frankly, I don't like to look at all the things that are still several more baby steps out of our reach; I prefer to look at what steps we have taken, and which ones are on the horizon. Just this past week, we hired a new Copy Editor, a new A&E Editor, and several new faces showed up at our last meeting, in part thanks to our new flyers, which we had plastered across campus. And whether those new faces were excited or engaged, I couldn't care less; all I see is another small step forward for the paper, and everyone who's put countless hours, buckets of sweat, and miles of baby steps into it.

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