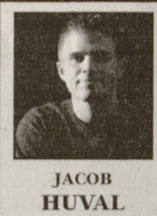


The Fantastic Few

Gaining super powers would ease lives of overwhelmed, overworked students



JACOB HUVAL

The hustle and bustle of day-in, day-out responsibilities and schedules grows to be overwhelming to many students. Duties and assignments multiply like collie rabbits, except no one enjoys it. The days of old — of 30-minute blocks of cartoons and action figures — escape us with every Xeroxed syllabus, roll call and seating assignment. By the third week of classes, many students feel like Indiana Jones in a Far East marketplace. Voices call out for undivided attention, hands grope for our recognition and restitution.

It is in the midst of this mad carnival of reading assignments and library spelunking expeditions that students yearn to find some means, some manner to better handle the steaming load of biodegradable "busyness" known as college.

The easiest solution to servitude? To many the most ready solution is alcohol.

Yet even the inebriated know that the genie in the bottle can only do so much to dampen the day. Something more is needed, something from those lost old days of youth.

It is understandable if by now students are scratching their heads, wondering how to find someone willing to complete their biology exams for them.

Upon further thought, one draws ever nearer to that sought-after cure-all: Superpowers.

While not a motion entertained by many students, superpowers would undoubtedly solve any number of scheduling problems and make life generally more bearable. Of course, some might hold such ideas to be ridiculous fantasy and immature escapism fit only for plathering, suckling children. Indubitably, the superpower sentiment has its critics, its doubts sceptique, unwilling or perhaps unable to accept such infantile notions. But the idea itself is quite mature and well-grounded in reason, you bunch of doodie-heads, or tete a' doux-doux.

By using their superpowers, students would help society not only by preventing and correcting horrible accidents, but also by making their learning environment more attuned to their individual, personal needs. And if X-ray vision in a coed dormitory does not help society... well, it doesn't exactly hurt society, does it?

The future job market will be honed to a seamless perfection through superhuman feats of skill, global crises will be solved by unprecedented ingenuity, and

maybe... just maybe, there will finally be enough parking for everyone on campus.

Students' ventures into the competitive world of industry and business will enjoy tremendous success. Job interviews will proceed with unheard-of smoothness.

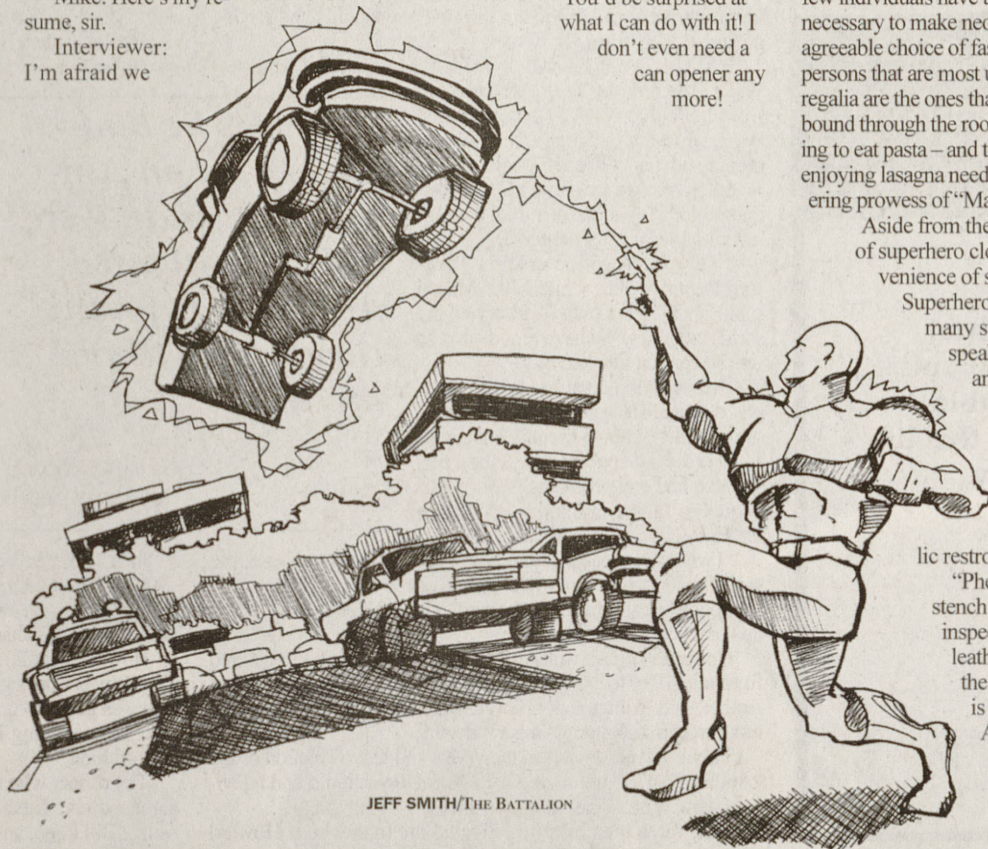
Mike: Here's my resume, sir.

Interviewer: I'm afraid we

only thing one would receive if bitten by a radioactive spider would be a cantaloupe-sized iridescent blue boil. But even that has its uses...

"And now I've got superpowers!" "I dunno. It looks like a funky melon to me."

"You'd be surprised at what I can do with it! I don't even need a can opener any more!"



JEFF SMITH/THE BATTALION

do not have any positions available for you, young man.

Mike: (turns green and doubles in size, flipping over the desk) RAAARGH!!!

Interviewer: Then again, I think there may be a bright future for you in the Reform Party after all!

Students' studies will also change dramatically. Fields of study and concentrations of practice will expand to include newly available options. One might be an electrical engineering major with a shooting-ice-from-fists minor. Another may prolong his schooling so that he may attain a doctorate in "bending metal bars in half," previously known as "construction science."

Most superheroes/heroines receive their powers in some bizarre, accidental way. Spiderman was bitten by a radioactive spider, the Incredible Hulk was zapped with a gamma ray, and Superman's parents had a little too much tequila at the company Christmas party. While these origins of superpowers work for the comic book world, they cannot readily apply to real life. The

Seven Dwarfs and your least favorite bodily function (note: They cannot be the same)

6. Poke a stranger in the stomach

7. Multiply the number of times you are punched with the number of shades of color Michael Jackson has been (note: If one is merely maced, repeat step 5 and perform step 6 to yourself twice if on Monday, thrice if on Tuesday, five if on Wednesday and so on; unless it is Thursday, in which case you must then consume 1/3 of your weight in cheddar)

8. Erase everything and just be "Mr. Frustrated," or, if step 7 was carried out, "The Frommage Mirage"

Now help me into these pants, will ya? I hardly fail me, that is the source of the bad smell. Fortunately I am in my superhero disguise and will not have to explain myself, especially since men do not talk in the men's room."

fail me, that is the source of the bad smell. Fortunately I am in my superhero disguise and will not have to explain myself, especially since men do not talk in the men's room."

Jacob Huval is a sophomore English major.

Hey, kids! Want to know how you can find out your very own superhero name? Too bad. Here it is anyway. Get a pencil ready for: THE SUPERHERO NAME GENERATOR

1. Write down your mother's maiden name

2. Turn all "b's" into "d's," or "e's" into "r's," and erase the last two letters.

3. Spill chili onto paper (note: Make sure it is beanless. Otherwise repeat step 2, substitute "f's" for "d's," and may God have mercy on your soul)

4. Wipe chili off and read smeared name in mirror

5. Write this new name down. Next to it, write the name of your favorite of

the Seven Dwarfs and your least favorite bodily function (note: They cannot be the same)

6. Poke a stranger in the stomach

7. Multiply the number of times you are punched with the number of shades of color Michael Jackson has been (note: If one is merely maced, repeat step 5 and perform step 6 to yourself twice if on Monday, thrice if on Tuesday, five if on Wednesday and so on; unless it is Thursday, in which case you must then consume 1/3 of your weight in cheddar)

8. Erase everything and just be "Mr. Frustrated," or, if step 7 was carried out, "The Frommage Mirage"

award voted by 700 comic artists around the world.

Despite the success, Schulz struggled with depression and anxiety, according to his biographer, Rheta Grimsley Johnson. But the struggle only improved his work, she found, as he poured those feelings of rejection and uncertainty into the strip and turned Charlie Brown into Everyman.

"Rejection is his specialty, losing his area of expertise. He has spent a lifetime perfecting failure," Johnson wrote in her 1989 book, "Good Grief: The Story of Charles M. Schulz."

Schulz himself left little doubt about the strip's role in his life.

"Why do musicians compose symphonies and poets write poems?" he once said. "They do it because life wouldn't have any meaning for them if they didn't. That's why I draw cartoons. It's my life."

SCHULZ

Continued from Page 4

for 42 years. "He's going to be missed and will clearly never be replaced."

The famous strip — with its gentle humor spiked with a child's-eye view of human foibles — had one particularly endearing trait: constancy.

Year after year, the long-suffering Charlie Brown faced misfortune with a mild, "Good grief!" Tart-tongued Lucy handed out advice at a nickel a pop. And Snoopy, Charlie Brown's wise-but-weird beagle, still took the occasional flight of fancy back to the skies of World War I and his rivalry with the Red Baron.

The strip was an intensely personal effort for Schulz. He had had a clause in his contract dictating the strip had to end with his death — no one could imitate it.

While battling cancer, he opted to re-

tire it, saying he wanted to focus on his health and family without the worry of a daily deadline.

His last daily comic ran in early January, and the final farewell strip appeared in newspapers on Sunday. Old versions of the strip will continue to be published.

The last strip showed Snoopy at his typewriter and other Peanuts regulars along with a "Dear Friends" letter thanking his readers for their support.

"I have been grateful over the years for the loyalty of our editors and the wonderful support and love expressed to me by fans of the comic strip," Schulz wrote. "Charlie Brown, Snoopy, Linus, Lucy... how can I ever forget them..."

It ended with his signature.

Schulz was born in St. Paul, Minn., on Nov. 26, 1922, and studied art after he saw a "Do you like to draw?" ad.

He was drafted into the Army in 1943

and sent to the European theater, although he saw little combat.

After the war, he did lettering for a church comic book, taught art and sold cartoons to the Saturday Evening Post. His first feature, "Li'l Folks," was developed for the St. Paul Pioneer Press in 1947. In 1950, it was sold to a syndicate and the named changed to Peanuts, even though, he recalled later, he didn't much like the name.

"Peanuts" made its official debut on Oct. 2, 1950. The travails of the "little round-headed kid" and his pals eventually ran in more than 2,600 newspapers, reaching millions of readers in 75 countries.

Although he remained largely a private person, the strip brought Schulz international fame. He won the Reuben Award, comic art's highest honor, in 1955 and 1964. In 1978, he was named International Cartoonist of the Year, an

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