

PERSPECTIVES

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Starting the new year with a bang ... or a splat?



Giovanni Salemina/Emerald

Columnist reflects on life and death as he careens into 1999.

New Year's Eve. 11:50 p.m. Absolute darkness. "Highway to Hell" blaring on the radio. The dial displays some alien AM frequency as the AC/DC anthem screams out of the speakers, penetrating every micro-cleft of my numbing body. As the tune sucks through my cerebellum I quiver and jam the foot to the crumbling floor; full throttle, hammering my way up the blackness of the freeway. Gunning across Interstate-5, I realize that I am amid the beautiful sea range and the snowy Cascades, in the valley ... of death. And white like the snow on the mountains are the lines that are viciously vacuumed, like a supersonic Hoover, as the car darts along the endless slab of straight tar that vanishes in the distance.

Another New Year is nigh and desperation takes over. The engine is a lulling drone, the road is a lazy straight line, but the pain and fear won't go away. Solution? More speed. And as the foot presses against the floor, the speedometer needle creeps farther and farther to the right. The legal limit exceeded by many, many digits. The car continues to frenziedly devour the white lines that disappear as the ground below is over taken by the explosive speed. And as I fly my car through the deserted valley, I come across the inevitable:

The explosion of a naive, road-crossing raccoon splatters animal blood and fur on the cracking windshield. The wiper, faced with the lack of water, spreads the nocturnal beast's remains on the stained glass as if it were butter on toast. Vision is now completely shut off. Even so, the needle continues its defiant crawl toward max speed.

Oh God, another year. Is it worth it? And you may be thinking: "How dare you question our almighty Lord in whose sacred hands reside the power of deciding the destinies of all living things in this world?"



Vince Medeiros

Well, I dare question it, indeed! And I tell you readers, it's not worth it! Enough of all this anguish and torture that have tormented my mundane existence for the past several years. Can't take it anymore. And the upcoming year promises to be even more hellish. Twenty credits sadistically await me this term, ready to destroy every attempt I might make at having a little bit of a life. Plus there's work — a freaking drag. The campus night life has been as exciting as sex with an aged, haggard prostitute, and my once-treasured stack of porn has become too old to comfort my misery. Not much hope there. So, as the road bends, I go straight. A precipice looms ahead. I'm probably going to die, exploding on the ground below, the glow visible for miles, and my body reduced to an amorphous mass of bloody mince — my lifeless head writhing as the last muscles finally cease to move. But as I get closer and closer to my doom, I suddenly ease my heavy foot and slam on the brakes in a desperate attempt to halt the inertia that will lead to my inevitable fate. A horrendous shriek ensues as the brakes burn, trying to fight the violent rotation of the tires. Just inches before the abysmal cliff, the wheels finally pause. Jeez. Close one. But I thought I should give 1999 a bit of a chance.

Vince Medeiros is a columnist for the Emerald. His views do not necessarily represent those of the newspaper.



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