

Spend the summer in Vegas

Humor is, without a doubt, the best genre in summertime. Books that promote both laughter and thought are excellent when sitting in the shade of the backyard with a nice cold beer.



Jan Montry
Reporter

Speaking of beer, nothing better portrays mind-altering substances and "bad craziness" than Hunter S. Thompson's "Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas: A Savage Journey to the



Photo Illustration by Adam Jones Emerald

Heart of the American Dream." Published by Rolling Stone in 1971 and adapted into a movie in 1998, "Fear and Loathing" is a journey into the mind of America's greatest social journalist as he travels to Las Vegas, taking drugs and generally causing havoc. In the book, Thompson portrays himself as Raoul Duke, a "doctor of journalism" sent to cover the Mint 400 race and a district attorney's conference. Along with him is his lawyer, Dr. Gonzo, who is equally crazy.

The greatest aspect of "Fear and Loathing," aside from Thompson's wildly entertaining "gonzo" journalistic style, is the mix of humor and insight that Thompson uses to show the beauty of an entire generation. He describes the '60s drug culture throughout the book as he rambles Las Vegas in a drug-induced stupor. The imagery and colors Thompson uses to paint this picture are amazing, albeit hard to comprehend unless the reader is fa-

miliar with his quirky writing style. A small tip with "Fear and Loathing": Do not watch the movie first. Viewers will be confused and shocked. Let Thompson tell his story through the written word before attempting to comprehend the work visually.

Fans of "Fear and Loathing" may also enjoy "Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72" and "Hell's Angels." If drugs and journalism don't sound interesting, try the classic "Catch-22," another book that blends dark humor with an important message: War may seem necessary to some people, but ultimately it makes no sense.

Written in 1961 by Joseph Heller, "Catch-22" follows an airman in World War II named Yossarian as he struggles to answer the war's profound and philosophical question: Why are people trying to kill me?

Yossarian ponders this question as he deals with hilarious charac-

ters, such as "Major Major Major Major," and invents interesting ways to spend more time in a military hospital.

The name of the book also has importance. Throughout the story, Yossarian encounters many "catches," usually used to keep him in the war. For instance, a military rule states that an airman can be grounded (excused from flying missions) if he or she is crazy.

The airman can only be deemed crazy, however, if he asks a military psychiatrist to ground him for being crazy. And any airman who asks to be grounded is obviously not crazy, since "a concern for one's own safety in the face of dangers that were real and immediate was the process of a rational mind."

That's a Catch-22.

Contact the reporter at janmontry@dailyemerald.com. His opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the Emerald.

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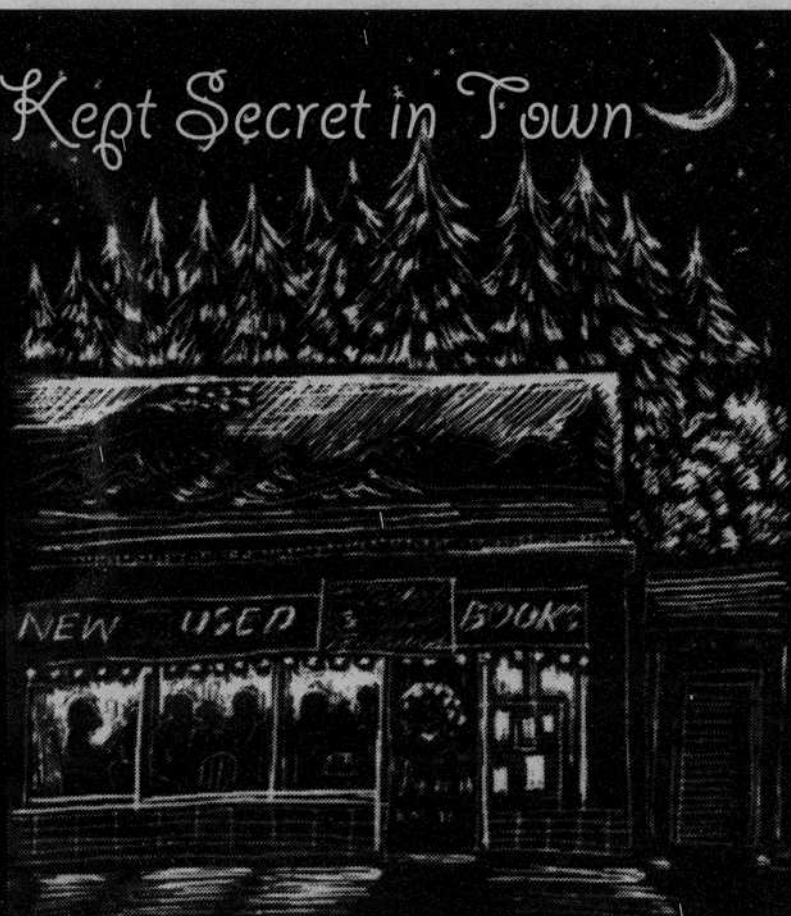
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