Running on Empty

The Gas Shortage Inches Toward Wisconsin

Yet, real or contrived, the crisis situation is beginning to inch itself toward our area.

By Bill Reinhard

For the last few months, news concerning the gasoline crisis has carved headlines nearly every day in newspapers across the country. Thus far, area residents are seeing the oil crunch only in terms of higher prices, but increasing numbers of cities are seeing gas lines and pump closings. Nobody seems to rule these scenes out as a possibility for Wisconsin at some point during this summer.

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With Student Government's approval of the largest budget reserve in this school's history last December, a raise in the portion of segregated fees paid by UWSP students to fund student activities, which funds SGA, hardly seems warranted--unless we look toward the future.

A strong SGA reserve is an essential safety measure to provide for any future emergencies, and is an excellent foundation upon which to work allocations to student organizations. The members of SGA and the Student Program Budget Analysis Committee (SPBAC) for the past several years should be commended for establishing a workable budget which takes the future into account, but their efforts should not stop with the management of their own budget.

Approximately 30 student organizations submitted budget proposals to SPBAC for consideration last year and the budgets of several student organizations were cut sharply because of poorly composed, even illogical budgets. The accounts of many student organizations were also in overdraft at various times over the last semester.

Obviously not all of the leaders of student organizations are trained in the area of efficient budget management, but SGA does have the reserve funds to present a comprehensive budget workshop which could teach the organization leaders the mechanics of good budgeting, taking the future's enrollment predictions into account.

UWSP offers courses in Fiscal Policy and a wide range of courses in the Accounting area. Instructors in these fields might be willing to assist in such a workshop as well as SPBAC members and university administrators in the Internal Audit Department.

A slight increase in the student activities portion of segregated fees for the 1980-81 school year could easily replace any reserve funds spent on such a workshop. An increase as small as a dollar or two would not burden the students that heavily.

All UWSP students contribute to segregated fees and in doing so they are entitled to the maximum programming benefits that this money allows. If efficient budgeting skills are possessed by all student organizations, increased and more comprehensive programming would most probably result in spite of allocation decreases due to predicted slackening enrollment.

We urge the members of SGA and SPBAC on campus over the summer to investigate the possibility of a budget workshop early next semester, and to draft a resolution calling for an increase in segregated fees to cover any expenses. This increase would also provide for increased SGA reserve investments, which draw interest, and make increased funding available for student organizations and special "one-time" requests from student groups.

SGA has maintained a strong budget with an impressive reserve over the past several years, and hopefully now they can provide the means for all student organizations to follow those steps.
To the Pointer,

On behalf of the older adults of Portage County, I would like to express the appreciation of the Portage County Commission on Aging to The Pointer, the Vets 550 and the fraternal organizations on campus for their enthusiastic support of the benefit picnic held at Iverson Park on April 28th to raise funds for the new senior center facility which we hope will become a reality in the very near future.

It is often remarked that the University and the remainder of Stevens Point are two separate entities, that one does not mix well with the other. We can certainly attest to the fact that this old idea is a myth.

When the organizers of the benefit called upon UWSP students and groups, the students came through.

We deeply appreciate the support, enthusiasm and effort expressed by the university community to the needs of our older citizens. They, and we, thank you most sincerely.

Patricia Stade
Director

To the Pointer,

I am very dissatisfied with your lack of coverage of women's sports. The articles have been inconclusive and few and far between. Why is it that The Pointer still considers women's sports secondary to men's? And if this is not the case, why is there not equal coverage?

For instance, what is going on with women's track?

Track season has been going on for at least a month and there has been very little printed. Volleyball is another sport which received very little coverage. I was very interested in how the team was progressing, yet there was again, very little printed.

This, of course, does not only apply to women's track and volleyball, but to the other varsity sports women compete in: swimming, field hockey, basketball, tennis, not to mention women's intramurals.

The Pointer should give the women as much pre-season and seasonal publicity as the men receive for their sports.

I feel it is time The Pointer gets with the times and gives women the coverage they deserve. One way of doing this, is to have a woman sports writer.

Sue Zwicky

With the article were two pictures of people playing the new games. One activity shown was the huge earth ball being thrown in the festival. A people-pass type game was also illustrated.

I think everyone had a great time.

Diane Irwin

Editor's note: The cutlines that appeared under the New Games photos in the May 10 issue of The Pointer were in no way meant to offend women, or any members of the Wisconsin Loose Naturalists.

Letters Policy

Letters should not exceed a maximum of 250 words. Longer letters will be allowed at the discretion of the editor. All letters must be signed. Names will be withheld upon request. All correspondence must be received no later than Monday afternoon for publication the following Thursday. Letters may be dropped off in any of the Pointer mailboxes (University Center, DePauw, CCC, and COPSI) or may be sent directly to:

THE POINTER
113 CAC, UWSP
Stevens Point, WI 54481
Is now accepting applications for the following paid positions:

Artists
Features editor
Assistant Features Editor
Reporters

students should apply at The Pointer Office
113 Communication Arts Center

Application deadline:    July 6, 1979
Twenty-four hour visitation still pending

By Bill Reinhard

Twenty-four hour visitation, an idea long debated on the university campus, has a chance of being implemented in a limited form during the upcoming school year. According to the president of the Student Government Association, Robert Borski, around-the-clock visitation may become a reality during the second semester.

The university administration has set down guidelines that any proposal must follow in order to have a chance of approval. Included among these limits are the fact that it must be in an upperclassmen hall, with unlimited visitation only on the weekends.

Even with these limitations, Borski explained that the chances of approval are somewhat tentative. "This could all change if we get a new chancellor, or even if we don't get a new chancellor," he said.

The selection of a new chancellor would probably mean new ideas that could easily halt or delay any implementation of the program. Additionally, if Acting Chancellor Ellery is selected as chancellor, there is always the chance that he could change his feelings of consent to the proposal.

A committee was selected during the past school year to formulate a plan for the 24 hour visitation program. The committee met three times during the last semester, and those members who are in the Stevens Point area this summer will meet, research, and gather information.

After the committee completes what it believes is a workable proposal, 24 hour extra training which may be needed for RAs involved in visitation will still have a long way to go before it is implemented. In addition to approval from the chancellor, it must go through various committees, including the Student Affairs Committee, and Faculty Senate. Thus, the committee must carefully take into account every aspect of this idea, including such problems as the possible need for extra training which may be needed for RAs involved in visitation still will have a long way to go before it is implemented.

The entire proposal should be completed by early October, according to Borski, in order for the proposal to go through in time for implementation at the outset of the second semester. He would like to see it done as soon as possible, but cautions, "We want to make sure that the safety factors aren't ignored in favor of expediency."

Faculty and staff promotions announced

Promotions were granted to 36 members of the faculty at UWSP and 11 people on the teaching staff were given tenure.

The action was taken in Madison at the monthly meeting of the UW System Board of Regents.

Advanced from associate professor to full professor rank, highest designation for a teacher on campus, were:
- Stanley Carlson of the mathematics and computer science department; Stephen Taft and Robert W. Freeman of biology; Hamid M. Hektam of psychology; Wayne Leland of the psychology; Robert F. Price of foreign language and comparative literature; William Skelton, history; Betsy J. Allard and Darvin L. Miller, education; Judith Herrold, health, physical education, recreation and athletics; William Witt, communication; and Jay H. Cravens, natural resources.

Promoted from assistant to associate professor were:
- Thomas Bloom, English; John Curtis and Steven Van Horn, biology; Gilbert Mages, mathematics; Jan J. Seller and Michael Morgan, foreign languages and comparative literature.

Donald J. Patton, English; Thomas Rowe, psychology; Bruce Sherony, economics and business administration; Virginia Fish; Robert Wolenisky and Kirby Throckmorton, sociology and anthropology; Ruth Conose, home economics; Robert Hille, business education; Jon Borawicz, Marjorie Gerson, Charles Goo, Donald Greene and John Thomas, music; Gary Fountain, art; Daniel Hohlman, communication; Neil Parker and Norman East, business education; Charles Lesher, sociology and anthropology; Virginia Kirsch, both of English.

WWSP broadcasts through the summer

Radio station WWSP-FM at the UWSP will broadcast throughout the summer except for a two-week break during August, student operators report.

Chris Richards, junior communication major from Stevens Point and president of the WWSP-FM broadcast club, is serving as summer station manager, reports that 90 FM will be on the air from noon to midnight every day until June 11, when the schedule will be increased an additional five hours, beginning at 7 a.m. The staff will take a vacation August 14-19, and the station will be broadcasting on August 20.

Richards says this is the first time in three years the station has continued operating throughout the summer.

WWSP is manned during the school year by a staff of approximately 60 students, who have extended operating hours to 20 per day with three 24-hour broadcasting days. Ninety FM has earned a reputation during the past year for being on the air more than any other student-run station in Wisconsin, Richards adds.

The staff has chosen Chuck Roth of Janesville as station manager for the 1978-80 school year, and Richards will serve as program director. Robin Wisener of Fremont is the public relations director, Kevin O'Brien of Madison is music director, and Tim Pearson of Hoffman Estates, Ill., is news director. Sports director is Ed Karshna of Harvard, Kelly Girard or Cudahy is continuity director, and Tom Jones, 605 Wilshire Blvd., Stevens Point, is the business manager.

Richards predicts that WWSP's transmission power will be increased to 5,000 watts within the next three years, giving it a strong signal for 30 to 40 miles. The station currently reaches about 15 miles from campus.

UWSP alumni named President of UW-System

The new president of the University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents is an alumnus of the Stevens Point campus and a member of its foundation board of directors.

Herbert Grover, Monona Grove, was elected to the presidency last Friday, defeating Dr. Ben Lawton, a Marshfield surgeon, 9-7 on the first ballot.

Grover succeeds Edward Hales, Racine attorney, who is leaving the board after serving as its only black member for two years and will continue in that capacity.
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Wisconsin may t

Cont'd from cover

The controversy surrounding the gasoline crunch is public knowledge. On the one hand, the large oil companies, the U.S. Department of Energy, and the most scientific experts are preaching the lack of oil is a very serious problem which cannot be ignored. This suggests the lack of gas will not go away near future and is preaching a joint conservation.

The opposing side is made up of some politicians, public figures, and then overwhelming view of the public at large believe the shortage is nothing but a ploy by the oil companies. Polls show that the nation's citizenry no longer feels energy problems are minor, only that the major factors in the situation. These include the oil producing nations, the companies and the government.

Yet, real or contrived, the crisis situation is beginning to inch itself toward our area. Wisconsin energy officials have stated that Wisconsin no immediate danger of a gasoline shortage, some indications are pointing in this direction. Around the Stevens Point area, local stations are reporting large reductions in allocations from their distributors. So reported an average of a ten percent reduction this month from last. This can general...
added to other reductions in the past months. Bob's Texaco Station, 3424 Church St., reported that they "should have no trouble" holding on to a gas supply if the travel situation remains constant. Yet this could all change with either a travel increase or another supply reduction.

An employee at another local station predicted that the stations with the lowest prices in the city will not have any gasoline on hand by the end of the month.

With all the pessimistic reports coming from both governmental and industry sources, are area motorists cutting down their amount of driving? The answer to this seems to be an unqualified "no." Traffic flow seems to be remaining constant according to Sgt. Tom Wanta of the Sheriff's Department. In addition to this, the amount of out-of-state vehicles traveling through the state seems to be high. "I was up North (on a recent weekend)," said Wanta, "and I couldn't believe the amount of cars from Illinois." The State Patrol in Wausau concurs with Wanta's reports of continued high traffic in the state. They do not see a slowdown in the traffic amount in the near future, either.

"We feel that it's something to look for in the future," said one officer there, "but thus far travelers have been prepared."

Beyond the reports that there is no reduction in the amount of traffic are additional reports that speeds of automobiles remain over the speed limit. "Once the pack starts moving," said Sgt. Wanta, "they pretty much go around the same speed." He estimated the average speed at 60 miles per hour. "It certainly isn't 50 like the governor wanted," explained Wanta. The state patrol observations were similar.

The state and federal governmental officials have pounced on the energy bandwagon as well. Much activity is being generated in both Madison and Washington in response to the situation. Sen. Gaylord Nelson last week called for a project, similar to that used during World War II, to be used for development of synthetic oil from coal. State Sen. Clifford "Tiny" Krueger (R-Rhinelander), announced plans recently to work with members of the private sector in order to prevent a severe impact on Northern Wisconsin's tourist industry by the gasoline crunch.

Governor Lee Dreyfus has asked the federal government to look into the possibility of the oil companies holding back the supplies for their own monetary gain. Dreyfus has also taken action within the state. He sent an emergency order to all Wisconsin oil companies two weeks ago requiring that the companies disclose their records. Rep. David Helbach (D-Stevens Point), has paid the Republican governor an underhanded compliment by telling The Pointer, "I don't think Dreyfus is doing a bad job with energy."

Major action is being taken in the state legislature. The assembly recently passed Assembly Bill 711, which grants the governor emergency powers to counteract problems. Rep. Helbach voted in favor of the measure and expects the Senate to pass it soon. Helbach also mentioned that the governor wants a more comprehensive bill which details his power, although such a bill probably will not be passed until October.

And so goes the gasoline battle from a stateside view. Whether it is a conspiracy or a crisis remains to be seen, but most experts agree that if the oil problem is not a present danger, it is almost certain to be one in the not-too-distant future. Thus, perhaps a scare such as this would actually put the country in a frugal energy state and avoid tomorrow's consequences. Yet, by the looks of it, consumers are ignoring the crisis, driving a lot, driving just as quickly, and paying more and more for that privilege.

Yet, who can really place so much blame on these gas burning skeptics. Energy Secretary James Schlesinger recently stated that although more crude oil was available last month, less was processed. Rep. Helbach told us he felt skeptical because of this, and for this and other reasons the public certainly is. One thing remains a certainty: Whether bona fide or corporate-made, this oil crisis doesn't show signs of ending soon. More likely, signs declaring "Out of Gas" will show up before an end is near.
Elderhostel ----

Higher education
without age limitation

Three courses tailored
specially to interest older
students will be offered in an
"Elderhostel" program July
15 to 21 at the University of
Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

Twelve public and private
colleges and universities in
the state are associated with
Elderhostel which is being
held this summer in 30 states
for any adults age 60 and
above.

Participants pay $115 per
weekly session which covers
lodging in a dormitory,
meals, tuition and special
extracurricular activities.

At UWSP, the three courses
to be offered are "A Study of
Parapsychological Phenome-
na" with psychology
professor Dennis Tierney;
"Adventures in Ideas" with
philosophy professor David
Peters; and "Enhancing
Your Lifestyle — Reducing
Stress through Aerobic
Exercise" with physical
education instructor Mary
Lou Biddlestone.

Tierney and Peters both
taught in the program last
summer when it was being
offered for the first time at
UWSP, and rated the sessions
among the most interesting
they've ever conducted.
Older students, they
explained, who have a
storehouse of lived
experiences can spark good
discussions. Peters added
that it would be a good
investment for units of
government to provide
financial incentives for older
students to attend
universities because of the
benefits that would accrue to
their much younger
counterparts.

This summer's programs
in Wisconsin will be offered,
in addition to UWSP, at
Carthage College in Kenosha,
Mount Senario College in
La Crosse and UW
Campuses in Eau Claire,
Green Bay, Madison,
Milwaukee, Oshkosh, River
Falls and Superior.

Information about the
Stevens Point program and
registration is being handled
locally by Barbara Farlow
assistant director of
extended services, in Delzell Hall. She
may be contacted by phone, letter or in person.

It's one thing to say,
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and have fun doing it.

If you have worked in the
girl scout program and
want to give leaders
practical support, call
the Girl Scout Office now
and ask about becoming
a leader trainee.

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women who lead our
children in Girl Scout
troops need to be led
themselves. They need
experienced youth work-
ers to help them organ-
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projects encourage coopera-
tion and creativity.
If you have experience
in working with children,
you can share it with
Girl Scout leaders. For
more information: call the
Girl Scout Office at 341-
5223 or 423-6360.
Newly elected United Council of Student Governments President Tim Fleming announces his two appointed members to the 1979-1980 staff. They are Mark Gottstein as Administrative Director and Kim Kachelmyer as Legislative Affairs Director. Fleming comments, "I'm very excited about how the year will progress with two staff members such as Kim and Mark. "He added that their education and outlook in student rights fits well with two staff members such as Kim and Mark. "They have been quite active in campus and community politics in the past. She served as Vice President of the Wisconsin Student Association during 1977-1978. Through concerted statewide outreach efforts by United Council, she believes students' rights can be heard and protected."

Mary M. Williams has resigned her position as special assistant to the chancellor at UWSP to become administrative assistant to Governor Lee Dreyfus. She assumed her duties in Madison June 18 with an office in the capital. She has been active in community affairs and involved in local political affairs in the past.

Kim Kachelmyer is also a recent graduate of the UW-Madison. She too has been quite active in campus and community politics in the past. She served as Vice President of the Wisconsin Student Association during 1977-1978. Through concerted statewide outreach efforts by United Council, she believes students' rights can be heard and protected."

Some of the nation's leading spokesmen in the field of lifestyle improvement will present major addresses and conduct classes during the fourth annual Wellness Promotion Strategies Workshop, July 22 through 28 at UWSP. The event will focus on the family unit with a special invitation extended to parents and their youngsters. A university residence hall reserved for families, area camping information, baby-sitters, and entertainment for children will be available to participants, as well as separate residence facilities for individual attendees.

Nutritional menus, relaxation periods, work-out and recreational facilities and nightly entertainment also will be provided.

Co-director Fred Leafgren, Ph.D., UWSP Division of Student Life, and Bill Hettler, M.D., UWSP Health Services, have arranged for "healthful activities" for children and adults during the workshop.

Registration fees are $35 for one day and $150 for five days. Lodging costs are $5.50 per night for shared rooms and $7.50 per night for a private room, and meals are $50 for the week, beginning Sunday evening. Graduate, undergraduate and continuing education credits are available. Registration materials may be obtained through Fred Leafgren, Detzel Hall, UWSP, Stevens Point, WI 54481."

Robert F. Balas, head of the School of Communicative Disorders at the university, has been chosen president-elect of the Wisconsin Speech and Hearing Association. Balas was elected to the position by voting members of the association, and his appointment was announced at the organization's spring convention in Madison in April.

The association is made up of professionals in the areas of speech pathology and audiology, associate members who have an interest in speech, hearing or language, and student members enrolled in a university program in the field.

A UWSP professor will be exchanging his home, car and even his job this fall with an educator from England.

Thomas E. McCaig of 2102 Arbor Vitae Lane in Fover, will be spending the fall semester on the faculty of West London Institute in suburban London while his duties at UWSP will be handled by Professor Hugh Papworth.

UAB SUMMER TRIPS
THURSDAY, JUNE 28
To Milwaukee And Summerfest
Allman Brothers Reunion Band Mainstage

Cost: Summerfest Ticket $3.00 And Transportation To And From Summerfest $5.00. Total $8.00.
Leave in front of Univ. Center at 8:00.

SATURDAY, JULY 7
Afternoon: Brewers vs. Detroit Tigers
At Milwaukee County Stadium
Evening: Waylon Jennings
Summerfest Mainstage

Cost: Brewers Ticket $5.00, Summerfest $3.00, And Transportation To And From Milwaukee $5.00. Total $13.00.
Leave University Center 8:00.

Sign up deadline Thursday July 5 at the Student Activities Office.
GETTING BOMBED

And other swell things to do this summer

1. GET BOMBED

Despite the aforementioned abundance of available summer activities, you are going to discover that, once in awhile (six or seven nights a week), the only thing you really feel like doing is making tracks to your favorite House of Swill and scarfing one cold, foamy ale after another until you throw up. This is perfectly natural.

Knocking down three or four quarts of beer will squelch your thirst, make you see things in a different light, and put you mercifully to sleep on those 112 degree nights. There are some dangers, however.

Here are a few things you should never try to do after consuming several vats of beer:

(a) jumping jacks
(b) count out the toaster
(c) impersonations
(d) try to knock drinks out of people’s hands by tossing your hat like a frisbee
(e) tell complicated jokes
(f) make long distance phone calls to old pals
(g) perform sexually suggestive mime routines in front of policemen

2. GO SWIMMING

I’m sure you’re all familiar with this one. On that hot, steamy afternoon, there’s nothing quite like hopping down to the beach, hurling your award-winning form into the water, and practicing your breaststroke, sidestroke, and sunstroke.

Don’t overdo it, though. The water is our friend, but friends can be real bastards sometimes. Don’t go right into the drink after a heavy meal, stay close to the shore, and never take a nap in more than six feet of water.

3. WALK AROUND WITH HARDLY ANY CLOTHES ON

This is an activity which all women should take up as soon as possible. The advantages of ultra-casual attire are obvious—you’ll stay cooler, you’ll be able to do your laundry more than once every five or six weeks. There is also a good chance that you will find yourself being approached by large numbers of strange men who are not interested in permanent relationships. Your body will be on constant display, and some men (only the really shallow ones) may take this as an indication that you are “on the market.” You can discourage such crude advances by insisting on discussing Einstein’s Unified Field Theory with every man who tries to pick you up. If this doesn’t work, there’s nothing that says you can’t pack a rod.

4. GET A SUNTAN

Why anybody should want to lie out under the sun with cocoa butter all over them and get their skin pigments all excited is beyond me. Still, getting a tan seems to be a popular activity, so here are a few handy tips for turning brown:

(a) It isn’t too hot out.
(b) Drink plenty of liquids before, after, to replace lost body fluids.
(c) If you’ve been to the beach, be sure to wash all the sand off your moving parts, if you know what I mean. (Ouch!)
(d) There is an unlimited supply of sex in each of us, so there’s absolutely no reason to save any for the long, cold winter ahead.

5. HAVE SEX

Ah, yes. Sex is popular year-round, but in the summer, it takes on new dimensions. A couple days of warm weather, halter tops, and itsy-bitsy bathing suits, and everybody’s hormones are ready to roll. Try to keep in mind these important facts about summer sex:

(a) You can actually kill two or three hours every day, just by sitting down and figuring out what you want to do. To help you speed things up, I’ve listed a few SAMPLE FUN-FILLED DAYS below. Just match the numbers in each sequence with the activity on this list.

SAMPLE FUN-FILLED DAY No. 1: 3, 6, 5, 1, 3, 1, 5, 1.
SAMPLE FUN-FILLED DAY No. 2: 1, 3, 4, 8, 5, 1.
SAMPLE FUN-FILLED DAY No. 3: 4, 7, 1, 5, 6.

And here’s a really swell one:

REALLY SWELL SAMPLE FUN-FILLED DAY: 5, 7, 5, 7, 5, 7, 5, 1, 5, 1.

See how easy it is? I hope this little exercise has been of some interest to you, but don’t quarrel the masses out there. If you find you still aren’t having a good time, give me a call and I’ll come over and straighten you out.

6. GO GROCERY SHOPPING

You don’t have to buy anything, but most big supermarkets have air conditioning. Go with a friend, and take turns wheeling each other through the frozen foods section.

7. TAKE SHOWERS

Never try to dry off in the bathroom after taking a shower—it won’t work. The more you scour yourself with the towel, the wetter you get. Trust me. Go into another room and stand in front of a fan. Or—run down the street waving your arms.

8. DRIVE AROUND REALLY FAST IN A CONVERTIBLE

Try going on a convertible picnic. Pack a lunch, take along plenty of cold beer, and zoom around all day with the wind blowing in your face. Driver’s license holders won’t be able to keep up with you. Sound like fun? You bet.

Finding a convertible might be a problem, but in a pinch, any car can be made into one if you can get your hands on the right tools. A blowtorch and six sledgehammers ought to do it. (Note: It is always a good idea to ask the owner’s permission before “converting” his automobile.)

9. FIGURE OUT WHAT YOU’RE GOING TO DO

You can actually kill two or three hours every day, just by sitting down and figuring out what you want to do. To help you speed things up, I’ve listed a few SAMPLE FUN-FILLED DAYS below. Just match the numbers in each sequence with the activity on this list.

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SAMPLE FUN-FILLED DAY No. 2: 1, 3, 4, 8, 5, 1.
SAMPLE FUN-FILLED DAY No. 3: 4, 7, 1, 5, 6.

And here’s a really swell one:

REALLY SWELL SAMPLE FUN-FILLED DAY: 5, 7, 5, 7, 5, 7, 5, 1, 5, 1.

See how easy it is? I hope this little exercise has been of some interest to you, but don’t quarrel the masses out there. If you find you still aren’t having a good time, give me a call and I’ll come over and straighten you out.
Woody leaves his heart in Manhattan

MANHATTAN

Reviewed by Bob Ham

Troubles, you think you have troubles? If you want to see a bunch of people with their lives getting tied up into tiny little knots, just park yourself in front of the new Woody Allen movie.

The movie is Manhattan, and messed up people is what it's all about. The central figure in this neurotic little crew is Isaac Davis (Woody Allen), a TV writer with a 17-year-old girlfriend named Tracy (Mariel Hemingway), a best friend named Yale (Michael Murphy) who's having a conspicuous affair with a high-strung writer named Mary (Diane Keaton), and a lesbian ex-wife (Meryl Streep) who's writing "an honest book" about their marriage. Not only is Isaac's life a mess, but it's about to be blown into bookstores all over the country. It takes Allen about five minutes to establish this scenario.

And then things take a turn for the worse. Isaac quits his job to write a novel — a heroic act which he regrets instantly and dumps Tracy for Mary, who dumps him to go back to Yale.

We follow these affairs through one delightful comic situation after another, in places as familiar as the bedroom, and as offbeat as the eerie lunar surface of a planetarium. There are leads of laughs, but most of them come back to haunt us when we begin to see how miserable everybody is becoming. Allen has gone beyond parody here, even beyond the bittersweet nostalgia of Annie Hall. In Manhattan he draws blood. We laugh, but we can see ourselves in the same situations, doing the same things, and coming away with the same wounds.

Manhattan is, without a doubt, Allen's most beautifully filmed. Gordon Willis's black and white photography softens the Manhattan backdrops into lovely, sentimental postcards, and the Gershwin tunes romp through the movie like a big, wet, friendly dog. Allen's on-target characterization comes with these background elements to create a perfect blend of romanticism and realism.

The acting is exemplary. Streep is relentlessly obnoxious as Allen's ex-wife. Keaton is Mary is so wound up that we feel like calling in the bomb disposal squad to defuse her. Mariel Hemingway absolutely radiates sweetness and innocence, and the scene where Isaac dumps her is a genuine heartbreaker.

The finest performance in Manhattan comes from Alan himself. He is absolutely wonderful throughout, but he reaches new heights during the film's more somber moments. Near the end of the movie, he runs across town to try to win Tracy back, and finds her six months later in a London street. He drops his pride at her feet and tells her that in six months, she'll be a different person — that the things he loves about her might be destroyed. She tells him that, "not everybody gets corrupted," and Allen's face shines with a heart-tugging, Chaplinesque blend of sadness and resignation because he knows better.

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