

weird Like Me

(Welcome to Clark)

By Nicole Imbraccio

This campus is full of freaks. Look out onto the Clark campus and you're guaranteed to see a myriad of sub-cultures and fringe-groups. There are Hippies hanging out in trees; Punks smoking cigarettes outside the UC; socialists passing out literature in the concourse; Bisexuals, Lesbians, Gays, and Transgenders coming out of closets; Jocks lifting Volkswagens at the fitness center; and at night some Goths, black like a murder of crows, can be found milling in circles.

Uncomfortable with the native population? Transfer.

For all the Clark reputation that the Admissions Office fabricates and shoves down the throats of prospective students, they continue to ignore the fact that Clark is well-known as being far on the banks of the American University Mainstream's shore.

In my freshman year I was having lunch with a friend in the dining hall when an older woman in a career suit approached our table. She informed us that she was writing a book on Worcester colleges and universities and wanted some student input. We agreed to help. She only had one question: "Why did you chose Clark?"

I didn't know how to answer it. I could have answered all sorts of crap that would have the Admissions Office knocking on my door offering me the position of "Poster Child." "Everyone here is really..." I attempted to search for a politically correct and ultimately vague word, when my

friend completed the sentence for me with "a complete freak." The woman's eyes enlarged with an expression of "Excuse me?" My friend elaborated, "in high school they were not the popular kids, they had a few friends from the marching band, and played Dungeon's and Dragon's on Friday nights. They didn't fit in then and they wouldn't fit in at any sort of baseball-cap college like Holy Cross where you can't even sit on the lawn. But at Clark we fit in because we accept each other for what we are, because we are all sort of the same... in a really different way."

Personally, I have never played Dungeon's and Dragons. But, I was a product of thirteen years of Catholic School Education and admission to Clark was my escape route from a suburban hell complete with Happy Blonde Girls driving Saabs acting as Satan's minions. Name a phase of rebellion, I went through it. Therefore, I arrived at Clark as a mosh pit of angst from my Punk phase, heaps of hipness from my Mod phase, and impending depression from my Goth phase. At Clark no one cared. Now, that can be seen as a problem labeled apathy. But it can also be viewed as a solution called tolerance. Clark students couldn't give a toss about your phase because they are too busy going through their own. And if you want to see, for example, what the whole Goth scene is about, a Clark Goth will offer you his own jugular vein. If you decide that the nocturnal

lifestyle of inner pain is not for you, he'll still be your friend and lend you a clove cigarette from time to time.

We don't even have a football team. How pathetic of a school are we compared to, say, Notre Dame? But then again, I would rather manually imprint license plates for the entire state of New Jersey than go to that school. "We have no football team" translates to the high school freaks as: you will not be tortured and ostracized, you don't have to run with a ball and drink a keg of beer to have friends, and everything that you hated about high school doesn't exist here. Even the Jocks that we do have are tinged with freakiness: Clark is a division-three school. We're not tops in athletic competition and so athletes are given the chance they may not have had in high school—contributing to Clark's secret new motto: "Suddenly, you're cool."

So, here we are at the dawn of another academic year, and this time around the sun is shining directly in my face. One more year to go for me and I am out into the real world. Scary, not because I am unprepared for a job. Scary because I am thinking about all those assholes from high school that are joining the work force with me. I've been living happily, safe from their harm, in Main South Worcester. But I think that this time around things will be a lot different. This time around I know that I'm okay. •