



BY BRIAN KUTCHENRITER

'Check it off before you check out'

It seems like there's never enough time each day to accomplish everything I would like to do. It seems like these minor shortfalls compound over time, leaving me with a list of things that I would like to do but never seem to get the chance to accomplish.

The list starts with the little things, like finishing a landscaping project around the house, or organizing the closet full of bowling trophies and old junior high school report cards. Toward the bottom of the list I see a few larger items, like travel destinations I'd like to see and new skills I would like to learn.

I don't feel as bad knowing that many have such a list, and most people have just as much trouble completing the tasks on them as I do. Many simply procrastinate when it comes to achieving their aspirations, and the items on their lists remain nothing more than unfinished desires.

An unfinished list of hopes and dreams was the topic of the 2007 movie *Bucket List*. The movie is about two terminally ill men who, upon learning what little time they have left, decide to accomplish things written down on what they call "the bucket list." The name itself implies the purpose of such a list: things to be done before death.



Bartel

In terms of life achievement, death doesn't have to be the only motivator. Thanks to a Green Bay man, there is now an alternative form of motivation. Brian Bartel, a local entrepreneur, has started a website called ReaperList.com. Bartel's intent is to give people a place to share their goals with others and to see the goals of others themselves, as well as provide a written reminder of an individual's personal life goals.

According to a press release about the site, Bartel states: "Other social networking sites like MySpace and FaceBook try to be all things to all people. ReaperList.com will continue to be about what you'd

like to do, who else wants to do it, who has done it, and who can help you do it. And the edginess of the Grim Reaper is a constant reminder that you'd better get moving."

I decided to check the site out myself. At the heading of the home page is the ReaperList.com logo with the slogan "check it off before you check out" beneath it. The corner of the page displays a graphic of the Grim Reaper holding his own "reaperlist."

The site is fashioned much like other social networking sites, asking for a user profile to be created upon joining. The site promotes privacy by only asking for and displaying a user-selected screen name, and asks for minimal information such as an e-mail address. Once a profile is created, the user can then list items on their own personalized "reaperlist." A user can select items from categorized lists or input unique individualized items. The site then displays them for other users to see.

The items that were on ReaperList.com user's profiles ranged from learning all the words to REM's "It's The End of The World as We Know It" to experiencing weightlessness during a space flight. Some of the items contain user remarks.

So what exactly is the point of ReperList.com? According to Bartel, he developed it last summer as an alternative to reading life achievement publications.

"Back in June of '07 I started daydreaming about the idea," said Bartel. "There were so many 'Before I Die' books out (*1000 Places to See Before You Die*, *50 Places to Golf Before You Die*, etc.) and I thought, 'What's the use in one person you've never met telling you what to do with your life? Then again, what's the use in writing your own life to-do list without anyone to hold you to it?' I thought an online interactive tool would be a great idea. The idea started to grow, and I decided I would expand my limited web programming knowledge and slowly develop the site as I learned, sort of as a hobby."



Similarities to ReaperList.com and the movie *Bucket List* can be found, however Bartel claims his initial plans for ReaperList.com predate the release of the film.

"I had the site laid out in HTML (a relatively simple language) when I discovered there was a movie coming out called *Bucket List*. I decided to scramble to get the site completed before the movie came out, and I enlisted the help of two friends. One friend from Madison knows PHP programming and how to set up MySQL databases. Another friend from Green Bay works as a photographer and graphic designer. We got it done, and we've been riding the *Bucket List* wave ever since."

As for Bartel, he too has his own list that he shares on the website.

"My to-do items include 'become fluent in French,' 'build a Habitat for Humanity home' and 'learn to roll a kayak.' I've also included stories about my completed items including 'sail a tall ship,' 'visit Paris' and 'complete a triathlon.' But the site isn't intended only for travel and adventure. I've also included 'stop biting my nails' as a to-do item and 'get married' as a completed item."

The next time I pull out my life's to-do list, I'll remember that that others like Bartel are working at the same goal: check it off before you check out!

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Happy Hour M-F
3-6pm
 Mexican Beers \$2.50
 Rail drinks \$2.50
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