

Finding love in the midst of hardship

By Riley Eubanks

It's a travesty.

Our planet is dying. The Walgreens at Ferguson, Missouri is still on fire. The toxins from the World Trade Center collapse, which killed nearly 3,000 and affected millions, also caused volunteers and firefighters to get cancer. Perry hasn't beaten Southport in football since 2010; Children go to sleep at night hungry.

It's a travesty, yes, but it can be overwhelming when all considered at the same time.

According to the American Psychological Association's survey titled Stress in America, 30 percent of all teens reported sadness or depression as a result of stress.

This might be attributed to the fact that American teenagers, 73 percent of whom have a smartphone according to the Pew Research Center, have access to more information at a quicker speed than any other generation.

Janet S. Storm, a licensed social worker and family therapist who has her own practice in Greenwood, said that the modern teen is under more stress than any other previous generation.

"The world has many more challenges and temptations than in past years," she said. "Negative influences include more variety of substances that can be taken, access to more negative things on the internet and violent video games."

Mere minutes after a con-

firmed active shooter at the Pulse Night Club in Orlando, FL on June 12 last year, adults and youth alike were able to follow live updates from on-hand reporters and police dispatch twitter accounts. From the first breaking report to the attempted apprehension of the shooter to the confirmed kill count and nation-wide request for blood donations, America followed along in a freakishly rapid succession comparable to the speed volts shot through the human body after a hit from a defibrillator.

As a result of being forced to comprehend the true nature of the world at such a young age (an honest-to-God privilege, it can be easy to forget that having access to all this technology and knowledge is a privilege), teenagers may often forget the core values that may seem obvious to a seasoned adult.

For example, when I started watching South Park as a first grader, I fused my morals with that show rather than going out and having real life experiences with my family and friends. I thought that life was about having supernatural adventures with a mechanized Barbra Streisand dinosaur instead of fishing with my grandpa and going to church when in need of spiritual guidance.

Storm points to situations where both parents are forced to work as a cause for increased stress for the child.

"The demands on parents have increased which transfers to a need for more independence for the children. Children can become anxious due to the expectations of them both at home and at school. They often have no positive outlets for their stress," she said.

When attempting to understand complex subjects such as death, institutionalized sexism and racism, economic injustice and war -- all at the same time, all before they are even able to drive -- a teenager can easily forget simple albeit important lessons taught at a young age, values such as love, honesty, compassion and empathy. This can give way to travesty.

During my sophomore year of high school, a friend showed me Moulin Rouge. I was appropriately overjoyed by the colors, the music, the emotion and the indisputable message of love, a necessity all-too-forgotten during time of dire circumstances.

"All you need is love" is a snippet of advice (first coined by The Beatles) that is echoed by Ewan McGregor repeatedly throughout the film.

Perhaps the only travesty any of us can commit is forgetting that message.

This article is dedicated to the life of Amber Hafer. It was truly a blessing to have known her. The love she expressed to everyone she met, of all of her family, was boundless.



Ball State University's Kinghorn Hall is one of the newest residence halls on the Muncie campus, offering single and double rooms, as well as apartments. At Ball State and at many other colleges, students are required to submit a housing fee or deposit months before they move into that room or apartment (Photo by Travis Lee Hardin, Creative Commons).

Colleges bill new freshmen excessively early

By Hannah Gunnell

A letter from Ball State University comes in the mail, discussing all the different dorm buildings I can stay in and telling me to apply now. I grab my Chromebook, my only working computer, to fill out the application. Boom -- there goes \$125 for a deposit fee. I haven't even started my college year yet, and I'm already paying for it.

Despite being awarded a near full ride to BSU, I scrambled to come up with \$125 for an application for housing that I won't occupy for nearly four months. I am dependent on that scholarship to make it to Ball State, and I know plenty of other students are sweating and saving for college tuition and housing in the fall too, dependent on fast-food jobs, scholarships, government financial aid and graduation gifts.

During this college application process, my mom often said to me, "Wait until I get paid;" or "Wait until the child support hits" before we had sufficient money to pay the fees and still have money left over for groceries.

Other universities also charge housing deposits, some more expensive, some less expensive, some refundable, and some not. Why should college freshmen be required to pay these fees when we are already paying thousands of dollars to attend these schools?

Freshmen at most universities are required to live on campus. This in mind, the purpose of the housing deposit is to put pressure on incoming students to decide where they want to live sooner -- on campus or not -- because the sooner one applies the better quality dorm they may get.

This is an effective tactic for sophomores, juniors and seniors, who have the option to live in apartments off campus, but for freshmen who are already required to live in a residence hall anyway, this doesn't make sense.

Many of us don't have that kind of money to spend. In fact, according to the College Board website, two thirds of full time students applied for student loans.

On top of that, many of these incoming freshmen just paid off fees for their high school. I don't have an extra \$100 or so to fill out the application fee because I just paid for my high school cap and gown.

Don't get me wrong, I'm looking forward to attending Ball State next year, and its campus is beautiful, and it has an excellent journalism program, but many of us just don't have the money. Universities should make their required applications free so students can put that extra \$100 or so toward other necessities, like buying textbooks or food.



By Ian Haggerty

As we barrel down the highway of life, we often look for some kind of destination. Graduation, our next big project, the next batch of cafeteria mashed potatoes; these are all significant enough landmarks for us to view as more than blurs outside our windows.

Many people believe that there is no final destination other than death. However, on our road trips, we pick up and leave behind many different things. Small pieces of ourselves can die or be born despite our continued existence. I, for example, can attest that my days of acting, wrestling and writing this column are over. The absence of these activities is like a vacuum in my schedule; I feel an odd sense of finality with regard to these activities.

In rummy, a gambler discards and picks up cards in order to improve his hand. As we exchange pieces of our lives, we hope to move towards an existence which better represents ourselves.

I wish you all the best of luck in finding your destinations.