Playing Russian Roulette with Pittsburgh?
Devin Zugates

Las Vegas, Nevada, is the sin capital of the United States. Nevada is one of the oldest states in the U.S. to legalize slot machines; it is also the most corrupt. Las Vegas is a city where harlots, the homeless, and even once respectable business men and women who have lost everything, roam the streets; all victims to the glitter and glamour of the city's nightlife. Today, casino industry leaders have seen their sights set on a new state that has just entered the slot circle. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has just passed a law to legalize slots. The industry anticipates Pittsburgh being the biggest gaming market the United States will see for some years. The state has fourteen available slot licenses that are already being looked at by the casino industry.

What does this mean for the citizens of Pennsylvania, particularly those who live in Pittsburgh? Could this replace Pittsburgh's current image with one of sin and corruption? Will our fair city soon be consumed by greed, money, and power, lost in a sea of flashing lights and ninety-nine cent shrimp cocktails? It is highly unlikely. While corruption and greed have affected Las Vegas, legalized gambling could actually help this city. Not only will the slot licenses boost tourism to Pittsburgh, but the money in taxes received will help bring our city out of debt.

Those who are up in arms against the idea of bringing slot gambling into Pittsburgh believe it will bring with it a gradual decline in the city's beauty, raise the crime rate, and put us further in debt. There is a sentiment that in time, Pittsburgh will undergo a metamorphosis, changing it into a city not unlike Las Vegas. Las Vegas was built on gambling. Because of its blue-collar nature, Pittsburgh should not have such a dependency on gambling. The developments will book performers such as comedians and musicians. In essence, the casinos will become hotspots for vacationers and day-trippers alike. Another point misconstrued by the opposing side is their opinions on how we can do away with Pittsburgh's debt. Without a dramatic change in fund-raising, the city's debt could worsen over the years. And currently the prospects found in slot-casinos may be Pittsburgh's only hope toward financial salvation.

The best plan of action is to accept the license graciously. The pioneering journey into the slot-casino industry will benefit the city far more than it will damage it. The massive boom of tourism combined with overwhelming relief of being taken out of debt far outweighs any negative effects slot-casinos could have on Pittsburgh. If there is any better method than introducing a multibillion dollar organization with a high percent tax intake to the city, I would like to shake the hand of the one who finds it.

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What is our Vision?


This is the first article of a series.

Be Thou my Vision, OLord of my heart,
Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art,
Thou my best thought, by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.

Dallan Forgaill, Eighth Century Irish Poet.

I usually begin my scripture course with a reflection on vision, the vision of life which we hope to live by. While a Christian lives by the Spirit, I see the purpose of the Bible, which is the gift of the Church, is to help us clarify what the Spirit is really saying to us in the midst of the turbulence of life and the many voices which clamor for our attention. In particular I love to tell the story about an expert in time management speaking to a group of business people and, with an illustration which they would never forget, challenging them to examine their vision of life. He began by placing an empty glass jar on the table in front of him. Then he produced about 12 fist-sized rocks and carefully placed them one at a time in the jar. When the jar was full and there seemed to be no more room inside, he asked his audience: “Is the jar full?” and everyone agreed “yes.” “Really?” he replied as he reached under the table to lift up a bucket of gravel. Next he proceeded to dump in some gravel and to shake the jar so that pieces of gravel could work themselves down into the spaces between the big rocks. Then he once more asked the group: “Is the jar full?” “No,” came the answer in chorus. “Correct,” he again replied, as he reached down to pour in a bucket of sand. Next he proceeded to dump in some gravel and to shake the jar so that pieces of gravel could work themselves down into the spaces between the big rocks. Then he once more asked the group: “Is the jar full?” By this time his audience was more cautious. “Probably not,” some of them answered. “Correct,” he replied as he reached down and lifted up a bucket of sand, which he proceeded to pour into the jar to fill the spaces between the rocks and the gravel. Once more he asked the question: “Is the jar full now?” “No,” came the answer in chorus. “Correct,” he once more replied, as he reached down to pour in a pitcher of water (or beer) and began to pour it in until the jar was filled to the brim. Then he looked at the audience and challenged them: “What is the point of his illustration?” One cheerful student insisted: “No matter how full your schedule is, there is always room for beer!” Another replied that no matter how full your schedule is, if you try really hard you can always fit in some more things. No, said the teacher, none of these is the key point. The truth of this illustration teaches us about life’s vision in that if you don’t put the big rocks in first, you will never get them in at all. Thus the urgent takes over from the important in life. If you put the sand into the jar first, there is no room for the pebbles or the rocks. Likewise, if you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff, you will never have room for the things that are really important to you.

My conviction is that there are three “rocks” which are essential to a healthy vision: Our kind of God, God’s World and Our Mission.
**Sports Develop Character**  
**Nick Balara**

Parents always want the best for their children and to keep them out of trouble. So, most parents sign their children up for a sports team. Parents do this so their children will not hang around the streets and get in trouble. Down the road, if their child continues to play sports, he will build strong and good character. There are many skills such as goal setting, time management, determination, and mental toughness that a person needs to develop good character, and sports provides people with these skills.

When a child is younger, he really does not realize how beneficial playing a sport can be. Sure, he knows he will be able to go to college and possibly get a scholarship; but he does not realize how it develops him as a person. The first skill it develops is goal setting. A child does not realize that when he is young and says things such as, "I want to play for North Carolina when I go to college," that he has set a goal in his mind. He may not reach that goal, but he is still setting goals for himself.

Another aspect of good character that is developed by sports is time management. Playing a sport makes a person schedule their day accordingly. While playing a sport it is key to find time for classwork and the homework that goes along with it.

In order to reach a goal a person sets for himself, he needs something that will motivate him to reach that goal. That motivation is called determination. In order to win a game or make a certain team, athletes need determination. Determination can be taken off the field and applied in everyday life toward goals a person wants to accomplish.

The last skill a sport provides is mental toughness. If an athlete is injured in a game, or is so tired he feels he can not run anymore, metal toughness comes into the picture. The athlete will tell himself that he can do this and he will find a way to get it done. This also can be used in everyday life. If a student has a project to get finished and feels he can not do it, the student should use the mental toughness he or she had on the field and employ it to complete the project.

Now after looking at goal setting, time management, determination, and mental toughness, it may be easier to understand how sports develop good character in people. In order to develop good character while playing a sport, the athlete has to take those skills and use them the right way. If he does, he should have no problem developing good character.

**Smoking: Expensive Habit?**  
**Michael Behan**

The cost to light up has continuously become more expensive, as legislators raise the cigarette tax in an attempt to balance the state budget. Tobacco products have increased 52 cents per pack due to the new law. During an interview with the *Havre Daily News*, Janet Barnhart was quoted saying, "Just because I choose to smoke, I don't feel I should be punished for it. I feel that they are targeting me as a smoker. If they are going to raise taxes, they should put them on something that everybody uses.” This is exactly how I feel towards this subject.

It is ludicrous that the legislature would raise taxes on cigarettes instead of something more common to the population, such as gasoline, or something that is used daily by a majority of the population. I feel they are targeting smokers and making us feel we should be punished for choosing to smoke. What ever happened to the freedom of choice? We are being punished for a choice we make. This will not necessarily even help the state budget, because it is so expensive to smoke now some people will just drop smoking and tobacco products all together.

The government is punishing smokers when they could just be raising taxes a little bit on more things that are common among people. I do not think this attempt to balance the state budget is going to be successful because people that would normally buy cigarettes, but are not completely addicted, are not going to buy them anymore. It is basically a waste of time for them to try to raise the taxes on cigarettes.

I am a smoker who does not plan on quitting until I have to and I do not feel that I should be punished for choosing to smoke. It is absurd that we smokers are being punished for having the freedom to choose what we want to do with our lives. I agree with how Janet Barnhart feels in that they are targeting us as smokers, and it is not reasonable or acceptable. Cigarettes are getting way too expensive, and raising the cigarette taxes is violating our freedom of choice.
Electoral College
Francisco Buxareo

Every four years in the United States of America, there is an election held to determine who will serve as the head of the executive branch. In the year 2000 the election was very close. Candidates Al Gore and George W. Bush had both been campaigning hard for months. In other democratic societies the candidate who has the largest number of popular votes is named the head of state. In 2000, however, Bush won the presidency. In the United States the people do not directly elect the head of state, the Electoral College does.

There are a few problems with keeping the Electoral College. First, just because a procedure has been around for a long time and it works does not mean that is the best way to do it. For example, slavery was used for hundreds of years as cheap labor. Slavery was effective and it was around a long time but that did not make it right. The same goes for the Electoral College. The point of a democracy is to have an educated public that can participate in government. When a person is unable to decide on a candidate for themselves the solution is for that individual not to vote. Not every person has to vote in a democracy, only the people who feel they know enough about the candidates should participate in the election. The Electoral College completely misrepresents the people and destroys small parties. Some state constitutions require a simple majority to appear on the ballot. Another point of democracy is for all people to have a voice. Two parties cannot represent the entire population of this nation. The Electoral College kills small parties and forces people to vote for one of two parties that may not properly represent them.

The Electoral College is not democracy. It is appeasement for the masses so they think they have a voice in government. The Electoral College is an outdated system made for an uneducated people. It misrepresents the population and gives too much power to too few. It limits the election to two parties making it impossible to create a diverse society. The only way to fix the problems this system creates is to replace it with a system that determines the chief executive by popular votes, not by electors.

Positive Role Models?
Domenic Capolupo

Where have all the good guys gone? Are there no heroes left in the world to right the wrongs of society? It seems like that nowadays. Our very own economy is on the brink of collapsing. Our governing powers might not be fair in ruling over the nation and its proceedings. Who is left to be a role model for the upcoming generations? Many people are still searching for that someone. A good role model starts working from the bottom and reaches the top of the success ladder, or always does what is good and tries to help as many as he can. For me, that person is my father, Pat Capolupo.

Other than my father, very few people can say they learned an entirely different language at the age of sixteen. This is a major accomplishment for anyone from another country. My father has a work ethic like no other. Since coming to America from Italy, he always worked as hard as he could to help provide for his family. He worked his way through college and law school. Every step of the way, he paid for it by working a full-time job.

Now he is a lawyer, working from nine to five, which alone is a hard profession. On top of that, my father also manages a farm. He is constantly moving from six in the morning to seven at night. I can barely manage the schedule I have now. It is almost impossible for me to imagine the amount of stress my father goes through every day. I would surely break from the pressure. There are not many people who can do what my father does on a daily basis. He works both physically and mentally to the extreme, every day of his life.

Of all the people that I have met throughout my life, I can easily say my dad is the hardest worker. No one can inspire me more to do the right things and achieve my full potential in everything I do. Going through my college years, I do have someone to model my life after and motivate me to perform to the highest levels — my father!
Career for a Day
Caitlin Collins

If I had the opportunity to pick any job in the world to have for one day, I would not choose to be a doctor, a lawyer, or even the president of the United States. I would love to be a member of a Broadway orchestra. Lawyers and politicians are influential, but it is not the type of influence I want to have. Music influences people; it can make you happy when you are sad, or it can make you sad. Music stays with you — long after a movie or show ends you can still remember the songs or music that was played.

Live orchestras, such as the ones used on Broadway, are an assembly of the world's best musicians. Practice is constant until the music is perfected, and the beats are synchronized with the actor's cues. Musicians have to emote feelings the same way actors have to, but they have to express it through an instrument. Through experience I can say it is not always the easiest thing to do. Being a pit orchestra member is a high stress job, as people pay good money to be entertained, and it is the musicians' job to exceed the audience's expectations. Think of how boring movies and theatre would be if there were no music. Star Wars' Darth Vader would not be as intimidating if not for the "Imperial March." Horror films would not be suspenseful if not for the lone, shrill violin shrieking in the background. Musicals such as "The Phantom of the Opera" would not have as much of an impact on its audience if it were not for its world-renowned orchestra.

"Music stays with you..."

Although orchestras are usually appreciated, they are vastly underestimated. People do not usually recognize the fact that without the music, they would not have enjoyed the show as much. I would like to experience a job that has a positive effect on people while remaining unintrusive. While the arts have many exciting careers, I suspect I will become something far less exciting than a member of a pit orchestra on Broadway.

Tsunami Disaster
Josh D’Ambrosio

December 26, 2004, is a day that many Indonesians will never forget. Thousands of people died after a violent earthquake centered near northern Indonesia generated massive waves in the Indian Ocean that crashed into coastal areas all across south and east Asia. The earthquake caused 4,500 km-wide waves that traveled through the Indian Ocean for over seven hours, according to CBS. The waves moved at great speeds, making it nearly impossible for any civilians to evacuate or even pull themselves to safety. This natural disaster has caused many heartbreaks for many families and has put a big hole in their economic system.

Material damage to the community is replaceable, but lost family members are not. The young children and adults who lost family are heartbroken and cannot be easily comforted. As ABC News broadcast what was happening in Indonesia, the death toll soared into the tens of thousands.

"Perhaps we will never know the exact scale of the human casualties," Indonesian President Susilo Bambang said. There have been many programs to help the families in need and the United States government has already contributed over four billion dollars to the families. Channel 4 News quoted a woman in her thirties who lost her daughter in the tsunami. "I could not imagine losing my only child to this natural disaster — it was like she was here one day and now gone forever," she said, as tears were streaming down her face. Every grieving family is having the same feelings, and there are now many companies and people contributing to Indonesia.

The tsunami has demolished the economic system in south and east Asia. The total estimated damages were over $23 million, according to CBS News. For such a poor country as this, the damages came as a shock. Everyone in the United States and around the world needs to contribute to one of the funds to help restore Asia.

The most unexpected natural disaster of the century has left many without homes, without family, and with nowhere to go. We cannot change the past, but we can make an impact on the future. Only by contributing can we hope to bring the community back to some sense of normalcy.
Does Violence on TV Influence Violence in Society?
Ana Echenique

Throughout the years, society has tried to blame the cause of violence on different things. First it was music, then drugs — now it's movies and television. The reason members of society blame the entertainment industry is because they do not want to take responsibility for their own actions. The cause of violence is not music or television, but the actions of the parents of those who commit crimes. There are different things that can be done to minimize violence in society.

Family and education are the base of every child's life. If all a child sees in his home is violence between the parents, if the parents abuse the child, or if a child sees his parents doing drugs, the probability is that the children will be violent when they grow up.

True, television is currently showing more and more violence, but it all comes back to family and education. The parent should also educate the child, telling them that it is not real life; violence should only happen on movies or television.

There are many things we can do to stop violence, or at least lessen it. We have to stop blaming it on unnecessary things like music and television and start taking action. The government should take action by creating more programs in school to educate youth about the harm of drugs and what could happen if one is involved in criminal or violent behavior. Another thing I feel could work is creating more after school organizations where the children could be involved in sports, after class tutoring, and other activities. I think if we keep the youth off the streets for a longer time by putting them in a safe and fun environment, they would not become involved in drugs and crime.

High School Athletics
Nick Fisher

In the United States today, athletics are a major part of growing up for children. When student athletes reach the high school level, it is considered a big deal in some parts of the country. Alumni take pride in their high schools, and if a high school team can win a state championship, alumni may want to donate money to the school because they see good things happening and they want to be a part of it. The athletes on these high school teams also might have the ability to get an athletic scholarship for college, which would be beneficial for their families if they do not have money. Although emphasis may have been put on high school athletics, there are good reasons for it.

“When student athletes reach the high school level, it is considered a big deal in some parts of the country.”

The major states in the country where much emphasis is put on high school sports include Texas, California, Ohio, Florida, and Pennsylvania. In these states, such pride is put in their high school athletes because many of the country’s top athletes come from these states. People expect winning, and that rubs off on the athletes. That expectation makes them train harder, and by the time the game comes around, it makes them perform at a higher level for their fans. The fans love this. Some high school games are bigger that those on a college level, such as a state championship or a big rivalry game.

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Summertime and the Living’s Easy...

Mackenzie Fries

I took a psychology class once, and I was told that people’s moods could change with the weather and the seasons. If it is really cold outside and snowy, people are often tired and unenergized. On the other hand, when the weather is warm and sunny, people tend to be more active, wanting to be outside and do things. I definitely agree with that. I absolutely hate the winter and hate having to walk around outside in temperatures 20 degrees below zero. I hate that my pants get all wet, and when they dry, they have those ugly salt marks on them. Once winter is done and over with, then comes summer. Oh, how I love summer!

Some of these high school sporting events can attract twenty thousand fans. In all, sports teach athletes about life and how to better themselves for real world situations.

The chance to get money for college also inspires student athletes to play to the best of their ability, because they know this could help out their families if they are not as fortunate as others. When kids know they need money to go to college, they rely on their athletic ability to get them there by training and playing harder. Coaches and scouts from colleges are always scouting and critiquing them on their playing abilities, so athletes always want to perform at their best at all times. The main reason there is so much emphasis on high school athletics is because these kids need higher education, and, for some of them, the only way they are going to get it is earning a sports scholarship.

Although high school athletics are emphasized more than ever before, it is all for good reason. If a player is good enough, he could get money for college and better his education. In addition, if a high school is producing state championships and winning records on a continuous basis, the school could reap the benefits from increased alumni support. Much growing up and learning about life is done through high school athletics, so it is a good thing such an emphasis is put on sports.

Summer is for sure my favorite time of the year. For one, it means no school, and that is a great thing. It also means warm, sunny weather. It means the sun does not set until 9 p.m. It means everyday is spent at the wave pool and nights at someone’s house hanging out outside. My perfect summer day would be to wake up around eleven or twelve and immediately begin planning my day. My friends and I would then all meet up at Waterford Landing (an apartment complex that is in between all of our houses) and head off to the pool together. The girls would hang out by the pool getting our beautiful summer tans, while the guys played some dumb, immature water games that guys of any age just cannot help but play. Then, after a few hours, we would all head home to rest up for the long night ahead of us.

“Summer is for sure my favorite time of the year.”

After we would all finally decide on something to do, all the girls would get together at someone’s house, get ready, choose our outfits and wonder what the night was going to be like. There was not always something fun to do every single night, but we all tried to make the best out of it. It was summer – we had nothing to get up for, and we all had a blast when we were together. Eventually, after all the phone calls from the boys wondering where we were and why we were taking so long, we would leave and head over to our friend’s house where we always met. The best nights, however, were not the ones that were planned out. The best nights were when we had nowhere to go and hung out together – all of us – and just chilled out at one of our houses. That way we could act however we wanted because we all knew each other. It did not matter; we would never judge one another. Then, when it was about three in the morning and everyone was about to fall asleep, we would leave to go home only to sleep and wake up and do the same thing all over again.

One of the most important reasons I love summer so much is because I feel like my friends and I are all so much closer. We never have to worry about school and can hang out together whenever we want. I love my friends, and I cannot wait to spend this summer with my friends from college now and make new memories with them. I will always have those amazing high school summer memories and funny stories, and I will never forget how much fun I had.
**Who’s Your Daddy?**  
Steve Fuchs

Every once and awhile along that road called life, a person has an epiphany, a vision, a moment where everything becomes clear. For me, becoming the parent of a thirteen-week old German Shepherd has been one of those experiences. For the first time in my life, I am able to understand the woes of parenting. Consequently, I have found a deep respect for my parents. I do not mean to compare myself to a dog, for that would be an insult to the dog. A dog listens much better than I do, or so I have been told.

Growing up, I took my parents for granted. I expected food, clothing, housing and love from them, simply because I thought it was their obligation as parents. Giving them a hard time, I would stay out late at nights and get into trouble, both in and out of school. Selfishly, I never stopped to think about my parents. I never thought about the nights they stayed awake waiting for me to come home, or the days they spent working to ensure that I would grow up properly with a good education. I was later disappointed to find out my parents were not hiding a money tree, and they had worked for everything they gave me. I repaid their kindness with greedily opened hands.

Parents are the first to forgive, but they are also the first to be hurt. Parents interpret their child’s failures as being their failures as parents. There is nothing more painful than hearing your parents say, “We are not mad at you, just disappointed.” I would much rather have angry parents than disappointed ones. My parents have forgiven me more times than I would like to remember, and I have repeatedly repaid their absolution with disappointment.

I beseech all children, no matter the age, to go home and hug your mom and dad. Thank them for bringing you into this world and caring for you. Thank them for the times they forgave, and thank them for the times that they did not forgive. Unfortunately, it took me nineteen years and a puppy to finally understand what my parents have gone through. Whenever my mom is particularly displeased with me, she will curse me, saying, “I hope that someday you have a child just like yourself.” But unintentionally, she was right — I would be so lucky to have a child that loves and appreciates me as much as I do my parents.

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**Leaving Someone Special**  
Ronnie Lee Garvin Jr.

Coming to Duquesne University was a big challenge for me. This is because I left my lover, Juliet Ross, back home in small town Eureka, South Carolina. I started dating her in the beginning of the summer in 2004. As soon as we started to date, I had to come to Duquesne University to be in a program called the Spiritan Division. I had to leave not just her, but my family as well on June 30. When I finally got to Pittsburgh, it hit me. My life with my girlfriend is on pause, but I know I will still love her.

People ask me, “How do you love this girl so much, if you have only been dating her for a month and a couple of weeks?” I always reply, “I just do.” She has all of the qualities that a man wants in a woman who would be the mother of his children someday. People say I need to think about this, because there are going to be many girls at college and I will not see her for months. I always tell them if you love someone more than anything, then distance only matters to the mind, not to the heart. Being separated is an examination for us. It tests us to see if we love each other, and so far everything is going well. A part of us remains wherever we have been.

I am really tired of thinking about relationships. I just want to settle down and live happily ever after. Thinking is the hardest work there is, which is probably the reason why so few people engage in love. To fall in love is awfully simple, but to fall out of love is simply awful. I know I must be in love because no matter what I do, all I think about is her.

There are so many definitions for the word love. To me, love is a passionate attraction and feeling of desire that overwhelms a couple upon seeing each other. Love is like an eternal flame, and once lit, it will continue to burn for all time. When I first saw Juliet, I felt an intense feeling of tender affection and compassion for her. There is no safety net to protect against attraction. When I got the opportunity to ask her out, I did. My mom told me that a missed opportunity is never lost, because each time I drop one, somebody else picks it up. This is why I hurried and asked her out. I did not want to give anyone else an opportunity to date her. When I got to see Juliet
A Good Parent

Caitlin Hanna

I have two very different parent types. My father is the strict but lovable parent, and my mother is the easy-going, understanding type with a hidden rough side. My father laid down strict rules that I had to follow from a young age, or I would be punished. My mother, although she had almost the same rules, let me get away with much more and would rationalize with me rather than punishing first. I believe that these are all important attributes of a parent.

I believe that a strict set of rules to be followed is necessary for a parent to give a child. It shows that the parent loves a child enough to set good standards for him. Although a child might not notice at a young age, as I did not, following through with those rules and setting punishments are just as important as setting the rules in the first place. When a parent does not follow through, the child learns how to cheat the system. Any further rules that are set will not be taken seriously.

Being understanding and open with your child is important too. My mother was, and still is, always good at knowing when something was wrong and confronted it properly. My mom let me know when I was young that our relationship was open, and anything I came to her about, unless it was really serious, would not be followed by punishment. When a child comes to a parent with a problem, and when the parent's first reaction is to punish the child, the child learns not to go to the parent first. Even now, if there is a situation in my life, no matter what the topic, my mom is one of my first confidants. This willingness to listen teaches children not to rely on undesirable people or places for comfort and gives them the knowledge that they always have someone.

I think another good quality for a parent is to have fun with the child. Both my mother and my father have embarrassed me many times for the sake of “fun” — all within reason, of course. This helped me realize that they too are humans. It also helps our relationship when I don't mind spending time with them because we can have fun. Although I do have two different parent types, I think it is important to be well rounded in both strictness and fun.
Music and its Power Over America

Chris Katchmar

Since the time of its origin, music has influenced American people in practically every aspect of their lives. Many would agree that music is a major part of who we are and who we want to become. With this tremendous power music holds over all of us, music controls the mood of American society today. Therefore, musicians should be doing everything in their power to deliver a positive message in the music they create.

Currently, musicians are writing songs about things they believe are appealing to society. Sadly to say, contemporary society has a strange attraction to sex, drugs, violence, money, and power. Musicians have made these negative subjects into something that is now acceptable in today’s society. This is causing much controversy to concerned people. Because music sets the mood of America, and with such negative messages being delivered, America is not getting a positive mood. Now that people are starting to realize the great effect music has on society, I feel that many people are going to begin to change.

Fortunately, not all musicians are delivering a negative message to the listeners. There are many musicians such as Kanye West, P.O.D, The Juliana Theory, and many others whose main reason for being in the music industry is to deliver a positive message while still entertaining their audience. Many people are impressed with these artists because they are not just thinking about the profits they can make; they are trying to make a difference in America. Musicians have realized that many small problems in society could be fixed with a change in music. We are now seeing many attempts from artists to better the message they are trying to deliver in their music. The three artists mentioned have shown everyone that sex, drugs, violence, money, and power are not necessary topics for a hit song.

Setting a positive mood for America will do many great things for our country. Cutting down on crime, drug abuse, greed, and premarital sex would be one of the most remarkable things that could happen to our country. With less of these problems, America would be a safer and happier place for everyone. It is important to recognize that while music does hold a great deal of influence over society, it is not the only medium which tells people how they should think, feel, and act.

Ads Today

Ryan Klutch

Advertising affects everyone every day. It is impossible to avoid the bombardment of advertisements, from movie previews and television commercials to logos on clothes. Even DVDs, without previews, have products placed in nearly every scene. The hero of the movie makes sure he drinks plenty of Dr. Pepper before he goes out and gets the bad guy. The ultra cool sidekick makes sure everyone knows he likes Adidas shoes and Ray-Ban sunglasses. We are constantly being bombarded with catch phrases and pictures every day.

Today’s youth are growing up with hundreds of television channels and millions of billboards speckled on every road and highway. We have already been exposed to so much advertising that not every ad we see has any great effect on us. In order to effectively target youth, advertising schemes must continually be changed. Another thing that must be taken into consideration is who the target audience should be.

One thing that advertisers need to consider to effectively target my generation is the music that they use in the commercial. For instance, in the iPod commercials, the music they use is new and usually appeals to a large audience, not just a specific group. Jet and U2 have both been effective and also successful as a result of these commercials. Jet is fairly popular among our generation, but the U2 commercials do not leave middle-aged people out either.

The stars used in commercials also have a great effect on whether or not the advertisement reaches the appropriate audience. For instance, Nike would not want to have Arnold Palmer in their newest ad. The majority of Nike wearers are not from Palmer’s generation, but closer to Tiger Woods. So, Nike hired Tiger as a spokesman.

When casually watching television, most of my generation tunes out the commercials. In addition to having catchy popular music to get them to pay attention, it never hurts to throw in some color. A commercial in black and white would not be wise if a company is trying to target younger kids. Bright colors, such as the ones used in the iPod commercials, are most likely to draw a viewer’s eyes.
to the television. It is a known fact that our eyes are more drawn to these colors than browns and dark blues. Using bright colors helps to attract the audience.

The ultimate example of the combination of these three strategies to attract young consumers is the iPod commercials. This line of advertisements uses new music, celebrities such as Bono, and bright colors in the perfect combination. As a result, it is clearly visible that these products are absurdly popular, especially among college students. The white headphones sticking out of the pocket have almost become a fashion statement as much as the iPod has become a tool for organizing music. Their popularity will continue to grow because they effectively target consumers that are drawn to their product.

What Are the Essential Characteristics of a Good Parent?
Kristalyn Lewis

A good parent is difficult to define. Every individual is different; therefore, individual viewpoints vary on what makes a good parent. One's viewpoint may differ because of social and economic status, as well as environment. Yet there are some fundamental characteristics that one should possess in order to be an effective parent. A good parent has patience, understanding, and provides support. Becoming a good parent and raising a good child does not happen overnight. In parenting, one must go through a series of trial and error to understand the best method of parenting a child. A good parent has great communication skills, listening to and relying on the feedback from the child in order to better teach and discipline them. A good parent gives his or her child words, or pearls of wisdom, to live by, thus enabling the child to make good choices. Most importantly, a good parent knows when to let go. When the parents allow their child to make mistakes, the child begins to learn the importance of survival and learns from his mistakes.

A good parent is also creative, and enjoys laughing and playing with his or her child. For example, in elementary school, instead of buying a fancy lunch box for me at the beginning of the school year, my mother would buy small brown paper bags and every morning she would draw cute little girls and write love notes to me. It was quite special because it showed that she cared enough to take time out of her hectic mornings to write me little messages to start my day. A good parent should be engaged in every aspect of his or her child's life.

“A good parent has patience, understanding, and provides support.”

Being a parent is a selfless job — there is no “I” in parent. Parenting is a team effort, consisting of parent, or parents, and child. Good parents who are patient, creative and understanding are very hard to come by. Such parents are living, breathing, and walking diamonds that should be cherished forever.

Epitaph
Kristalyn Lewis

Since the tender age of six, I was left to live in a one bedroom apartment
With my grandmother whom I love and hate
I used to ask my mom “Why don’t you love me?” “Why don’t you want me?”
They loved someone else more than me
They used to take him to the park and buy him ice cream, comfort him
During the thunderstorms, and tuck him into bed at night
They spoiled him rotten to the core
Mom and Dad were consumed by his very presence as if no one else mattered
Including me
So I spent many years resenting mom and dad
No matter how well they treated him, their little baby boy loved no one but
Himself, he was a user, he stole lives and…
He stole mine
Mom and Dad named their little baby boy Cocaine.
Essential Characteristics of an Effective Leader  
Mike Martik

Throughout time there have been many good and bad leaders in the world, and they have shown us how to be a successful leader. Strong personality traits play a key role in a natural leader, because people always want to do everything the leader will say. Leaders are people to whom many others look up and whom they will try to model themselves after. They will also have a strong following who believe everything the leader does is the best for them.

Hitler, Josef Stalin, and George W. Bush – all of these men were successful leaders at some points in their lives. Hitler had one of the biggest followings of any leader throughout time, but his leadership was for a terrible reason – to eliminate a whole race. Hitler had millions of people believing everything he wanted done was the right answer, and eliminating the Jews was the ideal thing for the Germans to accomplish. Josef Stalin was a fascist dictator of Russia and killed many people that did not agree with what he said. Many people in Russia believed he was a good leader because otherwise they would be put to death. One of America’s many great leaders, George W. Bush, lead America through one of the hardest times: September 11. He brought the country back from being on the defensive and put us on the offensive by trying to eliminate all of the terrorist forces.

Many people look up to the great leaders throughout the world because they feel these leaders have something strong to offer. Leaders put themselves at the head of everything and will persuade many people into doing what the leader instructs them. Hitler said he could offer the Germans the perfect race, and many people believed him, thinking he would make their country much stronger. All of the great leaders of the world have something to offer the masses, usually an insight into a view that the leader believes should be accomplished.

A strong following is a key aspect in the role of the leader. All of the greatest leaders in the world had millions of people doing everything they asked, without hesitation and regardless of whether it was a good or bad decision. An effective leader will have his followers doing everything the leader instructs. The many effective leaders throughout time have shown us that they all have natural leadership ability that creates a following of many people.
A Country of Self-Sacrifice
Matthew R. Merson

After September 11, 2001, the world’s view on freedom was not as warm and cozy as it once was. With the current situation the country is in, it has become necessary to call the bulk of the United States Armed Forces to war. With many of the American men and women serving the country in Iraq, it is difficult to imagine the situation the men and women had to and have to go through. The self-sacrifice, along with the emotional and physical pain that starts the second one agrees to defend the country, is something no man or women can describe...unless they have been through it themselves.

After I interviewed a good friend of mine in the United States Army, I learned what actually happens in the first nine weeks of boot camp. Those nine weeks are broken up into three phases called the Red, White, and Blue Phase. Each phase is unique in its own way, and each phase is mentally and physically demanding. A normal day for a soldier in boot camp starts at around 5:30 in the morning and ends around 9:30 at night. The day consists of rigorous exercise and conditioning, as well as specific training in several areas. Soldiers have little personal time for themselves.

A common observer may not notice the mental strain this situation creates in soldiers. During these nine weeks in boot camp, a soldier has only two phone calls home to talk with family for no more than twenty minutes per call. Each soldier has nothing more than letters sent by friends and family to keep in contact with the outside world.

There are no words that can fully describe the sacrifices college-aged men and women make when putting on the service uniform and reporting for the first day of boot camp. It is a bravery that is like no other. The level of respect we have for these young Americans should be enormous and should never be taken advantage of by any one. The respect is necessary because without their bravery and commitment, we as a country would not be able to enjoy the freedoms we take for granted today.

Partners in Crime
Erica Moody

Applying to Duquesne University was not the hard part of the college process. The part I thought was going to be difficult to handle was the roommate situation. If we did not have the same interests, we could try to be a part of each other’s activities and could then live together without any problems. When I found out that Shonte Cook was going to be my roommate for the 2004-2005 freshman year, I was excited.

During the summer, my track coach was telling me that I would not have a problem with a roommate, because she was going to be on the track team, just like me. I knew that I would not have any problem. When he told me my roommate was going to be Shonte, I was so relieved. I knew Miss Cook from high school, because we always used to see each other at the local track meets in the Pittsburgh area. I knew Shonte and I would have something in common — track and field.

Over the summer, when we each got our roommate and dorm papers, we called each other just about everyday to figure out what we wanted in the room and how stuff would look. We were on the same page about everything. We knew we had to have a refrigerator and a microwave, because we both love to eat. Food was not an issue either. Television, a DVD player, a stereo, and computers are what we both use to entertain ourselves. Besides the room, we developed a common bond. We are always together, like twins. People get us mixed up sometimes. Even our own parents confuse us for one another. We are not together on purpose; it is just the way it happens. We both run track, have the same interests in things, and enjoy each other’s company. The funny thing is, Shonte is quiet and collected, whereas I am loud and bubbly. Somehow, it was a great personality match. In order to make situations work, you should have someone who is not exactly like you, so things do not clash.

I have no regrets rooming with Shonte Cook. She is trustworthy and I know exactly who to go to if I am having a bad day. I would not change anything about her, so things do not clash. I love the fact that she is quiet. I need someone like that in my life to settle me down sometimes. I hope throughout these next four years of college, Shonte and I will continue to be roommates and create an even stronger bond between us.
Italian Campus

Joe Nist

This past semester, my parents took a week-long trip to the new Italian Campus of Duquesne University. They were accompanied by some of my father’s fellow alumni: Italian Campus directors, Father Sean Hogan, and President Dougherty and his wife. While in Italy, they had the opportunity to explore the new campus, visit the ancient ruins, and make some new friends. When they returned, they raved about their trip and had many stories to tell about their travels. They suggested I spend a semester over in Italy. For some time I had been considering it, but it now seems even more appealing than ever.

I made an appointment to meet with Dr. Roberta Aronson, the Executive Director of the Office of International Programs. My parents spoke highly of her, and after our meeting, I could see why. She was informative about the campus and the way the program works. The desires that I had about the campus were now greater than ever. I asked her for two copies of the application on the spot.

The second application was for my roommate, Bill Miller. I have been good friends with Bill since first grade. Back then, he and I shared our first locker ever together. Now, we have found ourselves sharing our first college dorm room together. He and I considered going to Italy together to complete the spring semester of our sophomore year in 2006. We turned in our applications and anxiously awaited our acceptance e-mails.

On February 14, Valentine's Day, the e-mail came, and I was ecstatic! All I have to do to remain eligible to attend is maintain a 2.75 GPA, which will not be a problem. There are several reasons why I am looking forward to this trip. I have always wanted to visit Europe, and on the weekends, students are permitted to leave campus to tour Europe. I will definitely be doing that. Also, I look forward to living in another culture for an extended period of time. I think it will be a good experience. Bring on the Italian Campus!

An Obsolete Intake of Breath

Elan Pavlinich

When I awoke the other morning, I dressed the way they told me to. I took my SUV to school. I fell into line and feigned a face of interest for no one to notice. No appetite for dinner, I chose the number one, and went to the address I had memorized to watch my idols televised. As the chemicals digested, I took some pills to fall asleep. Though in the twilight I found no dream, I awoke suddenly and restlessly, with a scream, choking on the absence of myself.

That next day, I went out into the places of people. Nobody seemed to see something had replaced the “me.” This flesh—it moves mechanically. I thought I was clawing out, breaking from beneath the skin. No longer able to assert myself, the worms have started from within. Like morphine in the bloodstream, I have lost all feeling—not so much euphoria but more like asphyxiation. Who is going to save me, if I cannot save myself? You—the maker of all of this—distraction from destruction? No one here is worthy of infatuation. Quit confusing affection with infection. Stop consuming me.

“Who is going to save me, if I cannot save myself?”

I entrusted the antidote to myself. He didn't take it, though I think he got scared and ran away; the pieces of shrapnel have led me to believe that he is no longer with us. Jam what is left of me down through the plughole when I am no longer visible in the shards of the mirror. I enforce detachment, I like to fall apart. Slipping in, without a heroine, but it stills this beating heart.
The Freedom of College

Ryan Posey

When I was a senior in high school, all sorts of people would tell me how much freedom there is at college. I started to get sick of all this freedom talk, but now being a freshman at Duquesne University, I know these people were not lying and I can do whatever I want to do, whenever I want to do it. If I want to, I can do my homework later and go out with my friends. However, with the discipline I learned from my parents, I was able to find the balance of getting my work done and still being able to go out with my friends. When I am out, I always have to make decisions of what I believe is right and what is wrong. I believe, for the most part, I seem to pick doing the right thing because I have very strong morals. Knowing this, I try to remember the advice I received from my older brother, Robert, and my parents.

In my family, I believe I am lucky because I always had my older brother and sister to look out for me, and I could talk to them about any problem I faced in high school. Between my brother and sister, I believe I received the best advice from my brother, Robert. Robert is four years older than I am, so when I was in grade school, I wanted to be like Rob. I thought Rob was perfect because I would always see him and his friends having a great, sober time at my house. When they were at my house and when I was in eighth grade, Rob would let me hang out with him and his friends. I thought I was the coolest eighth grader because of it. I always told myself when I reached high school, I would go to be like my brother. I could have a good time without being involved in drugs and alcohol. I was able to recognize the difference between right and wrong at such a young age because of the examples I learned from my brother and his friends. I believe because I realized this early, I was ahead of my age group and could bring my knowledge of right and wrong to college.

Another reason I was able to understand the difference between right and wrong was the guidance I received from my family. My father would tell me stories of his days as a teenager. He rebelled against his parents because he did not have a close relationship with them like I do with my parents. Because I am so close to my parents, I was able to talk to them about anything and they would always help me without yelling and without the ton of questions most parents would ask their children. I believe I have such a close bond with my parents because we always ate dinner together and talked about our day. Also, it was known every Sunday we would get together, go to church, bond there and then go out to breakfast together, just the five of us. Doing these little, but important, things with my parents made me realize they do so much for me, and the least I could do for them in return is to stay out of trouble. I never wanted to see a sad look on my mother’s face, and I always kept this in the back of my mind when I was in a situation and needed to decide between right and wrong.

Now since I am at Duquesne, five hours away from my brother, sister, and parents, I keep the advice I received in my youth and always try to make my family proud. I believe having a bond with my family and never wanting to do anything to hurt them keeps me out of trouble and helps me make the right decision when I am in a difficult situation. I would never change my relationship with my family for anything. It is important for every college student to have bonds with their family. Through this bond, they will stay out of trouble and always understand the difference between right and wrong.

My Opinion on College Life

Maggie Powell

I am sure that everyone has a different opinion on college life. I love college life. In high school, my parents watched me so closely that I did not have the chance to grow. In college I will have that opportunity. I must make choices on my own that can affect me forever, and that will make me mature.

Another aspect of college life is the school work. Although the work is more than in high school, I am able to learn subjects that I am interested in. While attending high school, I was given a strict schedule for the four years that I was there. In college I am able to choose the classes that I want to take, instead of someone else picking them for me.

When interviewing my friend, Erica Moody, she felt that college is much better than high school because she has better experiences. In college she can be herself, without having to worry about acting differently. She also will receive a better education because of the different professors and the many choices she has. College life is definitely better than high school life.
Divorce, but Why?

Amy Ruffolo

Divorces are becoming more common with each passing year. Recent statistics show that 50 percent of all marriages will end in divorce. In the United States, the average time before divorced people remarry is two and a half years. There are many causes for divorces these days, but the major ones are affairs, children, and money. All of these causes basically come from marrying too early or too young. People who rush into marriage because they are think they are in love should slow down and realize that marriage is something that should last forever and not something just to do because they think they are ready. Nowadays people are getting married younger and younger and not really thinking about what is best for them. People make choices to get married, stay married or become divorced based upon what they believe are the best available options for them.

One major cause of divorce is affairs. Affairs happen either from boredom, selfishness or confusion. People that have affairs while dating should not get married because they are not ready and too immature to make that final commitment. Because divorces are becoming more common each year, people seem to think it is normal to get a divorce. Marriage is something that is supposed to last forever, and one should wholly give himself to his spouse. Marriage is not something that people should take lightly and do more than once. Affairs are heartbreaking too, because the one that truly loves that unfaithful partner, gets hurt and has trouble trusting their next love.

Another possible major cause of divorce is children. Children might cause the divorce because they do not get along with one another and the parents are constantly yelling back and forth about what is right and wrong. Maybe one spouse does not want to have a child and wants his spouse to give it up for adoption or get an abortion. Before two people get married, they should settle what they want to do about children and what they agree and disagree on before having them.

The final major cause of divorce is money, one of the biggest problems in marriages today. Some people spend more money than they make and end up bankrupt. Others will make more and not tell their spouse the truth in order to spend the money on other things. Even the slightest bit of struggle can cause an argument. Before a couple gets married, they should be financially stable and able to cope with all the new changes of being married. People should not get married so young because it is expensive and there are two people to care for, instead of one.

In conclusion, divorces are developing into more of a normal occurrence. People are getting married and divorced again and again. This is absurd, and people should try to wait until they know they have found their soul mate. An individual should marry the person with whom he will never get bored, know he will be financially fine with no matter what, know what his spouse thinks about children, and know both will be faithful. Marriage is a big step and couples need to take more time to know and live with each other before making the big step.

Going Home

Liz Santone

When I entered college I was eager to be on my own for the first time in my life. Leaving home was not a big deal considering I only live twenty minutes from school. I have an older and a younger brother with whom I have always had great relationships. Since I have been away from them, I have come to realize how much my family means to me. My older brother, who is twenty, has been away at school for three years now. With only a two-year age difference, we have always gotten along well. Once I entered college he began to treat me like an adult. Now that I am in college my older brother and I have a different bond and we can hang out together. Because I look up to my brother so much, it means so much to me that he treats me like an adult.

My younger brother became a freshman in high school this year. I, like my older brother saw with my development, am now beginning to see my younger brother grow up. I have an older and a younger brother with whom I have always had great relationships. Since I have been away from them, I have come to realize how much my family means to me. My older brother, who is twenty, has been away at school for three years now. With only a two-year age difference, we have always gotten along well. Once I entered college he began to treat me like an adult. Now that I am in college my older brother and I have a different bond and we can hang out together. Because I look up to my brother so much, it means so much to me that he treats me like an adult.

My younger brother became a freshman in high school this year. I, like my older brother saw with my development, am now beginning to see my younger brother grow up. It is important to me to help him grow into the great person that I know he is. I enjoy going home simply to spend time with him. I have much more respect for my parents and I now realize I took for granted the things they have done for me over the years. I greatly value the relationship I have with my parents.

Family in general is something that I hold close to my heart. I love being so close to home because it allows me to maintain a great relationship with my family. Every Sunday, I visit my grandmother and it means the world to me that I am close enough to do that.

Despite being so close to my family, I am still away from them. Since I have been in college my attitude towards my family has been positive and loving. I would never change the closeness I have with them for anything.
Senses
Megan Schmotzer

Today in society, many people take their senses for granted. Imagine not being able to touch, see, smell, taste, or hear. Unfortunately, there are people who are deprived of some or all of these five senses. If I were to choose one of these senses to give up, I would choose not to be able to smell. Having the senses of touch, sight, taste, and hearing are very important things to have.

Sight is a key asset to have in order to get around today. I cannot imagine being blind and still functioning in the world. When I see blind people, I give them all the credit in the world because of the way they still make themselves accessible. I cannot imagine being unable to see what is in front of me, what I am wearing, who I am talking to, or what anyone looks like. Without sight, I would be unable to fall in love at first sight, like some people do. Also, being able to read is a gift we are given. Fortunately, people who are blind have the opportunity to read Braille type.

Another key asset is being able to hear. Being able to hear people talk to you, listen to music, and talk on the phone are just a few key things that we use our hearing for. Without being able to hear, it would be difficult to drive because of emergency vehicle sirens and railroad crossing sounds that need to be heard. Just being able to hear someone say “I love you” is very rewarding. Although not being able to hear, a deaf person still has the chance to communicate through sign language and can still get a message across.

Taste is vital in order to enjoy food and to experience the flavor of something. I cannot imagine being without the ability to taste my mother’s home cooking and enjoy all the meals that I eat. If I were not able to taste, how would I enjoy what is prepared for me? It would be awkward not knowing what something tastes like when eating it.

Touch is also important in order to know where you are going and what you are doing. I could not live well without being able to touch anything. For example, not being able to feel a hug or touch an animal would be alienating. Also, using touch is a way of getting around and experimenting with new things.

If I had to choose one sense to give up, it would be smell. Yes, smell is an important sense to have because of the way things are expressed, but it would be the easiest to live without. Although I can not imagine not being able to smell my grandmother’s chocolate chip cookies or my mother’s apple pie, I would be able to sacrifice smell rather than another sense. Not being able to smell is not a big deal. In fact, it can be beneficial to not be able to smell the bad things such as garbage, body odor, or bad odors.

When a sense is lost, one learns how to cope and to survive by other methods. Not having a sense offers a different perspective that most people who have all five senses do not understand. I feel that of these five senses, not having a sense of smell would be the easiest with which to cope.

Teens and Suicide
John Simmons

Why do teens contemplate suicide? As the third largest cause of death between the ages of 15 and 24, the adolescent suicide rate has tripled since 1960. This is the only age group in which an increase in suicide has occurred over the last three decades. While there are approximately 10,000 reported teen suicides every year, it is estimated that the number of teen suicides is actually three to four times that number when unreported deaths and “suicide equivalents” are added. The teenage years are a period of instability for just about everyone. Teens are learning new social roles, developing new relationships, getting used to the changes in their body, and making decisions about their future. When they are looking for answers, they may feel like no one can help them, making them feel quite alone.

Teenagers experience strong feelings, confusion, self-doubt, pressure to succeed, financial uncertainty, and other fears while growing up. Teenagers probably commit suicide because there is too much pain in their lives. When confronted by pain, they can do one of the two things: move from the pain, or learn to cope with the pain. While some teenagers learn to cope with the pain, others attempt suicide. Suicide among young people has increased nationwide in the recent years, and it is important that everyone become aware of the major causes, symptoms, and methods of preventing suicide itself.

Suicide is not a genetic disease, but rather the result of a series of events that are depressing or stressful. Without depression, most people would not attempt to take their own lives. Depression plays an essential role in almost every suicide attempt. The person feels bad for himself and everything seems to be going the wrong way. Depression is not just sadness. Depression is a mild form of mental illness, which can be permanent or temporary. It can be simple things like the loss of interest in usual activities. Depression can
include self-pity, shame, and envy. All of these things play a role in depression one way or another. Depressed people absurdly exaggerate many things in their lives just for the attention it brings them. Envy, another cause of depression, has two aspects. In its primary sense, envy is the experience of pain when a person sees that someone else has something desirable, which he would like. Envy is also the experience of pleasure, when the person who has that desired quality suffers misfortune.

Liger
Thomas Slosky

The lines between two species are, by tradition, drawn when they cannot reproduce productively. The offspring of a male lion and female tiger are known as liger. This idea seems to baffle some people. Although they rarely meet in the wild, lions and tigers are still closely related enough that they are able to interbreed, and in captivity they occasionally do.

A liger is a gigantic tiger/lion animal that is usually told as a mythological animal. A liger could be found outside the city of Singapore, described as a giant brown beast. A liger was known before as an Asiatic lion, but there are only 200 ligers left in the Gir forest. The liger is the world’s largest cat, sometimes larger than either of its parent species. An average male liger weighs over 900 pounds and measures almost 12 feet.

The reason why they are called a liger is because the father was a lion and the mother was a tiger. If the circumstances were reversed and the mother was a lion and the father was a tiger, he would be called a tigon. A fully grown tigon is usually less than 350 pounds. Ligers are not sterile, and they can reproduce. If a liger were to reproduce with a tiger, it would be called a titi, and if it were to reproduce with a lion, it would be called a lili.

“A liger is the world’s largest cat.”

Ligers are not created in the wild. Ligers are a result of captivity. It is rare that a lion and a tiger would breed in the wild, as they do not meet frequently. When they do, a fight often results. The line between two species is slim in the case of lions and tigers.

How Do You Expect Your College Education to Change the Rest of Your Life?
Vicky Sokol

College is a new chapter of our lives when we try to become whatever it is we expect of ourselves. College has a profound impact on people for various reasons. For the first time in our lives, we are on our own. We are given freedom that most of us do not know how to handle. However, it is education that will completely change our lives for the better and eventually shape us into the people we strive to be.

In high school, teachers had to deal with parents and the school board in order to direct and guide us into making the right decisions. Teachers taught us facts and the basics of history, English, math and science, while strictly following the curriculum. They left no room for discussions or questioning of the learning material. We were taught to think and act the way they thought was right.

In college, the education is not nearly as narrow. We learn about history, English, math, and science, but in a new way that always leaves open questions. This education leaves open the possibilities of discovering a new, unexpected way of thinking. At first, college is scary, and the things we are taught leave a million questions that can cause some students to become nervous and confused. College forces us to think “outside the box” and explore unfamiliar areas. We learn about things that are true that we do not want to believe, and we start to learn to believe things we hoped were untrue. Because of college and the new perspective it offers on life, a student thinks more about what he truly believes and values. College forces students to come up with their own reasoning and questioning of their beliefs.

College has already influenced my thinking, the choices I have made, who I truly am, and how I want to live my life. Before, I was unsure of certain issues, which I know my high school teachers left out. College has shaped me into a stronger individual with more powerful beliefs and a more widespread knowledge of many subjects. My horizons have widened on the cultural aspects of the world.

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A MESSAGE TO THE OPPRESSED

Michael Stewart

A sad man once lived, spending his days in misery complaining of what opportunities life had denied him. The man complained that he grew up poor, his parents mistreated him, and he had a black cloud of bad luck that followed him all around. He would always talk about how unfair life was. He said that no man before him or after him could ever imagine such adversity.

The word “opportunity” carries a certain connotation. Most view it as a favorable or suitable occasion. Opportunity seems to come along entirely too rarely. Adversity, however, is a part of our daily lives, whether we like it or not. There are challenges around every corner, no matter where you are. It is hard not to notice that some people seem to face more adversity than others. Is this fair? Is an individual who faces more adversity fortunate or unfortunate?

Consider, for example, two men who both grew up and turned into extraordinary doctors. They are both great individuals who help and serve the community. These men are completely equal in status, except that one of the men faced great adversity growing up. Upon examining these men to decide who has led a better life, the man who faced greater adversity would be a stronger person. Is it fair to say one man has led a better life when they are the same in the end? Probably not, but this determination will still be made by most who view the story.

Adversity equals opportunity. Every challenge one faces is simply another opportunity to improve. Those who are truly unfortunate are the ones born into the situation in which adversity cannot reach them. Such people never have a chance to prove themselves. This being said, the oppressed are those who are truly fortunate. They have the opportunity to lead a superb life. Those who wallow in the misery of their misfortune are really just wasting a valuable opportunity, an opportunity that is perhaps more valuable than whatever advantages life initially gives to others.

FOUR OBSTACLES TO OVERCOME OR
FOUR EXCUSES TO FAIL

Aaron Strader

Throughout life, God gives one hurdles to leap over. These hurdles can trip, cause a fall, or even hurt. When life’s hurdles arise, one can either lie down and admit failure, saying, “If that hurdle was not there, I would have done this, I should have done that -- I could have been great.” My high school English teacher used a cliché that has been embedded in my mind: “Excuses are monuments to nowhere.” The other option is to get over, under, around, or through that hurdle and use the finish line to fuel me through the rest of the obstacles life may reveal. The race is not over yet.

That is the philosophy I am going to use during the spring semester, because I have four obstacles that I need to overcome to reach my final goal. The obstacles that I must conquer are attending college full-time, performing well on the football field, and working part-time, all while being a loving father to my newborn son, Raion Amont Strader. Overcoming any of these obstacles to gain my long desired success is not going to be easy, but I know I will not let failure be my way out of the race. I will overcome these hurdles in my path.

Last semester was not an easy path.

During the fall semester, I thought I was ready to be a father, go to school and to work. I was sadly mistaken. The stress and pressures of doing well academically and athletically while dealing with a pregnant woman proved to be too much for me to handle. I felt like I was running a 100-meter dash in the mud with 200 pound weights on my back, and I could only watch other racers accelerating past me on a clear track, even though I knew I was faster. I was greatly discouraged by the fact that my peers and siblings were performing better than I was in school, especially when I knew I was capable of doing what they did or even better. I was frustrated. I always used the excuse that I had more distractions than other students. I did not even try to work harder to compensate for my distractions. As a matter of fact, I started to slack off. I guess I wanted people to feel sorry for me. I soon found out that grades have no mercy. So instead of trying to run faster and harder, I jogged and became very lackadaisical. I should have been studying more, turning my work in early, and using better time management skills, but I did not. My final G.P.A was a 2.2, and I had an incomplete. I basically cracked under pressure like a car windshield that was in a 100 mile-per-hour car wreck, and after that semester I realized it was time for me to start picking up the pieces.
Ever since I was little, my favorite football team has been the Pittsburgh Steelers. I have watched them on television and hoped that someday I would actually be lucky enough to get tickets for one of their home games. Years passed, as did games, and I never saw the Pittsburgh Steelers play inside Three Rivers Stadium or Heinz Field. Then, along came the 2004-2005 season, which soon became Pittsburgh’s fairy tale season of defeating two undefeated teams in a row. From that point on, I told myself, “If the Steelers get into the AFC Championship game at home, I am going to do whatever it takes to go.” The Steelers beat the New York Jets in a stunning overtime game, and from then on, the stage for the AFC Championship game was set. The moment they won I started looking for tickets. Finally, Sunday, January 23 arrived, and my friends and I could not wait to get down to the field. As soon as we woke up, we got ready for the game, making sure to wear many layers of clothing because of the frigid cold. After that we went to eat a huge breakfast to make sure we would not be hungry later on. Following breakfast, we went to my friends’ room and made a sign that said “Pittsburgh Can’t Be Stopped!” The sign was a play on the call letters of the station broadcasting the game. When we were finally done with the sign, it was time to go to the stadium. We put our tickets securely in our pockets like they were gold nuggets and caught a ride down to Heinz Field.

At the end of the game, my friend Brian’s sister, Julie, called us and asked if we would like meeting the players after the game. As it turned out, Julie’s boyfriend is the head security guard at Heinz Field, thus granting us access to anywhere we wanted to go. Brian called Lawrence (the head security guard), and Lawrence told us to meet him in front of Gate B in twenty minutes. We rushed out of our seats and went to meet him. We saw him across the street and ran over to him like kids running to a candy store! Lawrence took us into the players’ parking lot where we got to meet and see the players! I could not believe what was happening. I thought I was dreaming! As the players were making their way to their cars, I got to talk to Ben Roethlisberger, Joey Porter, Kendrell Bell, Kimo Von Oelhoffen, Tommy Maddox, and many other players! Although they were not really in the mood to talk, what did we care? This was a once in a lifetime opportunity! Not only did we talk to them, but we also got to take pictures of them and see all of their big fancy cars. This was an experience I am never going to forget!
getting better handling, without a driver who is capable of driving at higher speeds the safety features will not help. However, automobile safety features only help the people inside the automobile and this puts the drivers at ease. The only problem with this is what happens to the occupants of the other cars involved in a high-speed accident who might not have all the modern safety features. So until the skill of all drivers increases dramatically, having a higher speed limit is just asking for more crashes, more injuries, and more fatal accidents.

Battle Between North and South
Nicole Vasquez

In my life I have had the great privilege of living in both the northern and southern parts of the country. I enjoy both very much, even though they are different from each other. I have resided in both Pittsburgh and Orlando, Florida. Both have different qualities that I enjoy. Pittsburgh is where I study and I have many friends. In Orlando, I have my family, so choosing between the two is difficult.

If I had to choose between the two, not taking into consideration the people that I had in each, I would have to choose Florida. I love the South because of its weather. The weather has an impact on people’s personalities and attitudes. When the sky is bright blue and the sun is always shining, how could anyone not be happy? In the South, the beach and the pools are available everyday. The shopping is different, and many more stores are available, compared to Pittsburgh. Overall, I find myself happier every day when I wake up to the warm weather. I feel that there is a greater variety of entertainment to be found as well. There are many amusement parks available to everyone, and the tourist attractions are huge.

This all does not mean that Pittsburgh does not have anything to offer. There are many things about Pittsburgh I enjoy that I cannot find in Florida. The main thing has to be the food. I love the food up North. There is no such thing as a good pizza shop in Florida. When I come here, I have so many to choose from. There are many more original restaurants, compared to the South’s chain restaurants. When I am at school, I find myself eating a bigger amount of food, all being delicious. There is also a greater local pride in the City of Pittsburgh compared to Orlando. I like that because it shows just how happy people are of their origin.

I enjoy both cities a great amount, and both have different things to offer to me. It is great to know that I have the opportunity to live and experience both the North and South, and when I am older, I will always visit both and keep a part of each in my heart.

Should College Students Be Required to Attend Class?
Jay Yedlowski

Colleges have different rules and regulations for attending class. Some colleges allow students to miss only two to four classes a semester unless they have a medical excuse. Other colleges do not care if one attends class because it is up to the student to decide whether or not they fail. Personally, I feel the second option is a more effective method.

Duquesne, for example, allows a student to miss only four classes. If a student misses more than four, his grade will drop. I do not believe that a student should be penalized because of attendance if he knows the material. The student’s grade should be based on his knowledge, and not on how many classes he attends.

Taking tests is a major part of the college experience. If the student does well on his test, he has shown he has an understanding of the class. It is my opinion that if the student has an understanding of the class and does well on tests, he should pass the course that he has paid for without penalty. If the students pay for the class, it should be left to his judgment whether or not to attend.

“Taking tests is a major part of the college experience.”

In conclusion, students should not be required to attend class. They are paying for the courses in which they are enrolled. Also, if they have an understanding of the class and achieve good grades without going to many classes, they should not be penalized.
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**Playing Russian Roulette with Pittsburgh?**

Devin Zugates

Las Vegas, Nevada, is the sin capital of the United States. Nevada is one of the oldest states in the U.S. to legalize slot machines; it is also the most corrupt. Las Vegas is a city where hooligans, the homeless, and even once respectable business men and women who have lost everything, roam the streets; all victims to the glitter and glamour of the city’s nightlife. Today, casino industry leaders have their sights set on a new state that has just entered the slot circle. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has just passed a law to legalize slots. The industry anticipates Pennsylvania being the biggest gaming market the United States will see for some years. The state has fourteen available slot licenses that are already being looked at by the casino industry.

But what does this mean for the citizens of Pennsylvania, particularly those who live in Pittsburgh? Could this replace Pittsburgh’s current image with one of sin and corruption? Will our fair city soon be consumed by greed, money, and power, lost in a sea of flashing lights and ninety-nine cent shrimp cocktails? It is highly unlikely. While corruption and greed have affected Las Vegas, legalized gambling could actually help this city. Not only will the slot licenses boost tourism to Pittsburgh, but the money in taxes received will help bring our city out of debt.

Those who are up in arms against the idea of bringing slot gambling into Pittsburgh believe it will bring with it a gradual decline in the city’s beauty, raise the crime rate, and put us further in debt. There is a sentiment that in time, Pittsburgh will undergo a metamorphosis, changing it into a city not unlike Las Vegas. Protesters firmly believe that planting casinos in places such as Station Square, the Waterfront, and Century Three Mall, which are three main eye catchers of the casino industry, will bear rotten fruit, breeding such evils as drug trafficking and money scandals. They feel there must be a method whereby legalizing slot gambling can be used to raise Pittsburgh out of debt. In addition, those opposed to slot gambling believe that the city's debt is not a serious enough issue to resort to such matters as building resorts for gambling. They say that the state's licensing fees and taxes will leave operators with only enough funds to build slot barns as opposed to attractive resorts. They have come to the conclusion that high operating costs and taxes on the casinos are not adequate to make a profit from the construction of casino-slots in Pennsylvania.

What the opposition overlooks, however, is what some would like to call the blatant obvious truth. I feel it is unlikely that Pittsburgh can become the “Las Vegas” of Pennsylvania. Pittsburgh was once the nation’s leading manufacturer of steel, due to its access to the valuable three rivers running through it.

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**Question:** Will our fair city soon be consumed by greed, money, and power, lost in a sea of flashing lights and ninety-nine cent shrimp cocktails?

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**Answer:** Las Vegas was built on gambling. Because of its blue-collar nature, Pittsburgh should not have such a dependency on gambling. The developments will book performers such as comedians and musicians. In essence, the casinos will become hotspots for vacationers and day-trippers alike. Another point misconstrued by the opposing side is their opinions on how we can do away with Pittsburgh’s debt. Without a dramatic change in fund-raising, the city’s debt could worsen over the years. And currently the prospects found in slot-casinos may be Pittsburgh’s only hope toward financial salvation.

The best plan of action is to accept the license graciously. The pioneering journey into the slot-casino industry will benefit the city far more than it will damage it. The massive boom of tourism combined with overwhelming relief of being taken out of debt for outweighs any negative affects slot-casinos could have on Pittsburgh. If there is any better method than introducing a multibillion dollar organization with a high percent tax intake to the city, I would like to shake the hand of the one who finds it.