

EDITORIAL

Memorial Stadium great for new memories

At issue:

New renovations are impressive and actually live up to the hype.

The Daily Illini
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No construction project this summer was the subject of more speculation than the long-awaited overhaul of Memorial Stadium. For months, the lights shone brightly onto First Street as workers toiled on the \$120 million rejuvenation. It was anybody's guess if it was on schedule and if it wasn't, how many days it was behind.

But Saturday, Illini fans got to see the inauguration of the new Memorial Stadium, right on schedule. And gosh darn it, they pulled it off.

The biggest fear of many Illini fans was that Memorial Stadium might end up like the new Soldier Field in Chicago, which was so drastically altered that it lost

its historical designation status in 2004. Bears fans continue to derisively refer to it as a "spaceship."

Fortunately, Memorial Stadium has not garnered such criticism. In fact, designers have gone out of their way to make sure that no one who visits it will leave without a deep sense of the University's history and the memories that hundreds of thousands of Illini made.

State of the art facilities including the largest weight room in the country and a brand new artificial turf compliment the aesthetics and also give Illinois the competitive edge that other schools have long enjoyed.

But perhaps the biggest improvement is how much better the views of the field have become.

True, this may be small comfort to those of us who remember Block I at the 40-yard line. But the redesigned interior now gets rid of many obstructions that allow more people to properly enjoy the game.

However, the one disappointment with Saturday's game was not the architecture. As Illini legends made appearances during breaks in the game, the unveiling of the refurbished stadium was dampened by empty seats. On the first home game of year following a season that ended with a Rose Bowl appearance and in a newly rebuilt stadium, the student section was not packed.

Of course, the excuses vary. Family in town, sleeping in, too

much tailgating; the list goes on. But that's still not a good reason to have one of the most supportive student sections in the country less than full on opening day.

The designers of the new Memorial Stadium have gone to great lengths to honor the team and the University with a facility that should be the envy of the Midwest.

But Illini fans need to do their part to honor the team by making it not only a sellout every game, but by actually showing up or handing off their ticket to someone who can.

That way we can start laying the foundation for a whole new generation of Memorial Stadium memories.

CONCORDE ON KING'S LAWN

Time-traveling in a Pringles can

The following is the first in a series of columns chronicling my summer galivanting around Europe.



HENRY SOONG

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I'm fascinated by airplanes. The idea of an oversized tin can, tin wings attached precariously, ferrying hundreds of people across continents seems slightly ludicrous. I always worry right before take-off that the laws of physics might suddenly realize our incredibly designed flying machines aren't capable of flight after all and take back the sky. Yet time and time again this summer, I hopped aboard giant Pringles cans and they all managed to take flight.

As it turns out, from Chicago to London, and from London to airports all around Europe, the challenge of travel lies in navigating public transport, not the sky. My poor parents'

The good news is in: Flying alone for the first time, I managed not to get lost.

ardness offered me a glass of cranapple juice. That's another thing I love about flying: flight attendants. Watching them click and unclick their seatbelts, gesture to the drop-down oxygen masks and pretend to inflate their life vests in synchronized unison, I sometimes forget I'm watching a safety demonstration and imagine them as dancers in some sort of ridiculous musical.

But what I love most of all about airplanes is the idea of time travel — and I say this

without the influence of any mind-altering drug. Hurling across the sky at hundreds of miles an hour, passengers aboard airplanes essentially time travel as they cross from one time zone to another. For example, it took me eight hours to fly from Chicago O'Hare to London Heathrow, but because Greenwich Mean Time is six

hours ahead of Central Standard Time, I landed in England fourteen hours after I left Chicago. As if by magic, my eight hour flight not only transported me from Chicago to England, but also whisked me six hours into the future.

The idea sounds frivolous, I know. But I find it amazing that I can leave Paris at 3:00 p.m. and land in London at 3:15 p.m. and spend 75 minutes in the air. I find it amazing that I can log eight hours from London back to Chicago and arrive in just two hours.

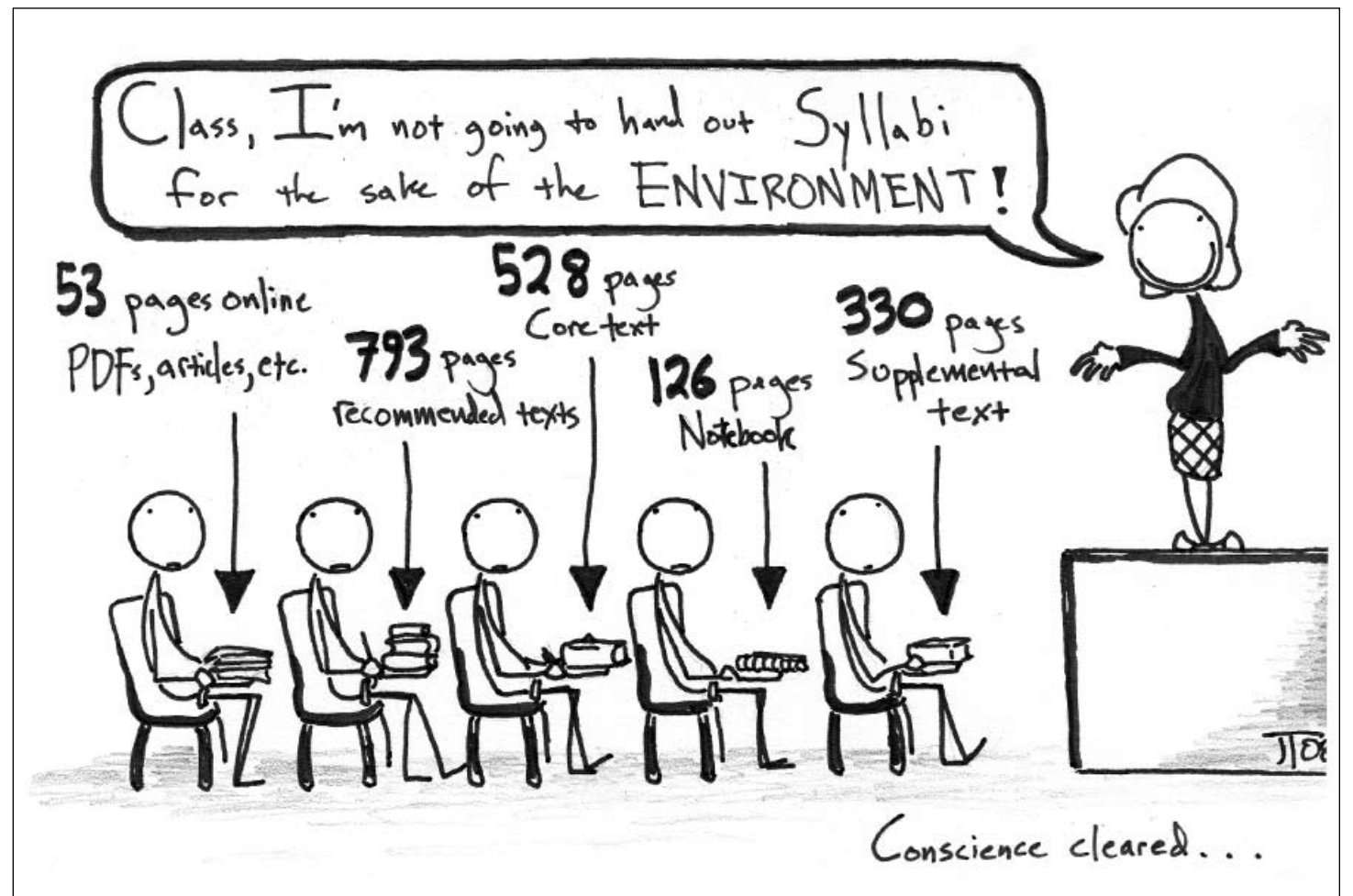
The British TAs threw a farewell party for the Americans on our last weekend in Cambridge. The theme, "Flight of the Concorde," seemed fitting as we celebrated the end of a summer that existed hours into the future before it could in America.

We traveled forward in time to get to England, and traveled backward to get back to the United States.

Think about it. Aren't airplanes fascinating?

Henry is a sophomore in business. He wants to fly in a plane so fast, he'll land before he even takes off.

EDITORIAL CARTOON JAKE THOMPSON, THE DAILY ILLINI



A PIECE OF PIE

Sex appeal has its downsides

Movies, games, the Internet and the media in general are becoming more sexually explicit as the years go on. And it's not surprising that it's becoming more sexually explicit in the favor of men.

There are countless magazines, calendars and billboards advertising some sort of product with a half-naked, seductive woman standing on the side. But rarely do I ever see a billboard with a half-naked man, unless it's Calvin Klein and there also happens to be a half-naked woman hanging off the guy model. And when was the last time you saw a wholesome celebrity? Hilary Duff? Wait, no. Sorry, that was a few years back...

Not only are these billboards, magazines, movies and celebrities advertising a certain image of sexiness to sell a product, but they're also sending a message to men and women on how we women should look and how we should act. The wrong message, if I do say so myself.

We've grown up in a society where we want to look like our celebrities because they encompass the beauty that everyone fawns over. I'm sure I'm not the only one who's taken a picture of someone famous to the hairstylist and said, "I want THAT!" I even remember buying a stud-dent belt back in the day when Avril was my hero. And now, it's



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no longer just a matter of wanting a celebrity hairstyle. But if you don't look like that famous sexy someone, you're a nobody!

WHAT? Exactly. And today's society is taking it to the extremes. You have to have the body, the look, and so much more. Plain and simple, you have to be sexy. It's almost expected. And we all know looking sexy is not plain and simple.

I'm sorry, but I'm not about to go traipsing about outside half-clothed (because I saw it in that magazine!) to get a guy's attention, but these billboards and ads in magazines make men actually expect women to do that, and some women do. Just go out to Green Street at night. Or to, let's say, some frat party. The girls spend hours getting ready and looking cute, and the guys are nice enough to shower and put on a shirt! WOW, it's almost impressing.

But I have to admit, we're all adults here, and if you are influenced that easily by an ad, billboard or a magazine so much that you take your clothes off

and dumb yourself down to get a date, well... that's your problem. And if that's your biggest problem, I suggest match.com. Or better yet, forget the payment subscriptions and hit the library! Or a bookstore! There are tons of guys there! (Trust me, I've looked-I even found one at Walgreens!)

But come on ladies, there are much better things to do with your time than to spend hours on end getting ready for a party where guys will just treat you like a piece of meat. Tell me, since when did intelligence become a hush-hush sort of thing? If you've got it, flaunt it. Right?

I'm not saying it's incredibly attractive to whip out your dictionary at a party, but if I pass by another Lauren Conrad wanna-be, I just might die.

For goodness sakes, you don't have to change yourself to get a guy's attention. And if you think you do, then exactly what kind of guys are you interested in? You don't have to lower your standards or your expectations.

It doesn't matter who you're looking to date, what you wear, or how late you stay out on a Saturday night; it only matters that you respect yourself. Now is the time when DVDs, games, movies, celebrities and the media are pressuring you to change. Now is the time to stand up for yourself.

Respect yourself. Surprise people: be who you are and love it. Don't conform to society's image of sexiness just to get a date. Prove that you're more than just a piece of meat. Do it for yourself.

Annie is a freshman in broadcast journalism, and she actually did bring her dictionary to a party once.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Ayers column elaborate concoction

I am writing in response to Dan Streib's piece on the imagined connection between the Weatherman group and Obama. First of all, Streib himself states that Obama "obviously does not seek" a communist transformation and that "nothing has been found" linking Obama and Ayers.

The rest of the piece is an elaborate concoction of how they can possibly be linked and how McCain can use this

slander to win in November. The saddest part of this is that Streib seems to think it is okay to win the election by exploiting this kind of malevolence in spite of zero evidence of the alleged tenuous connection between Obama and Ayers.

The fact that such columnists have to try so hard to connect Obama to other disgraced people in order to attack him only shows how impeccable Obama himself has been, compared to McCain who has made 'blunders' as often as he has deviated from any prepared text in front of him.

Given that such slander has largely substituted fact-based real issues in such columns as well as in the media in general, may I suggest one more that Mr. Streib can possibly use?

A random online post alerted me to how 'Obama-Biden' almost rhymes with 'Osama Bin Laden.'

This can't be just a coincidence, can it? Surely, it should be God's way of alerting ye' all! Amen to that.

VENKAT MARUTHAMUTHU, graduate student,

Ayers' positive influence

The article posted in today's Daily Illini about Obama's relationship with Bill Ayers is ridiculous and, despite the writer's intentions, has an air of satire. There is nothing to be taken seriously about it. "[A]n unrepentant communist terrorist?" Really? Slow down Joseph McCarthy. Do you know anything about Bill Ayers? Such as: he teaches at UIC in the education department. He's responsible for founding the Chicago Annenberg Challenge, which raises money for schools, and is a program Ayers

started and Obama was chairman for. The committees Obama and Ayers worked on were for education. That doesn't sound so horrible, does it? A presidential candidate working on programs with other qualified people to support education is now something to frown upon? Ayers' achievements in Chicago, as a teacher, writer, and activist in the community are extraordinary. In fact, Obama's associations with Ayers only make me more likely to vote for him in the coming election. Ayers is an intelligent man who not only has incredible ideas but also has the initiative

to put them in action. If he were not, he would not hold the positions he does at UIC or in the Chicago-area. If you would take the time to do some research instead of libeling people with opposing opinions, then maybe you would see that as well. The reason the association between Obama and Ayers has not been brought to attention is because it isn't negative. You do not have to condone Ayers' past, but it is ignorance to act like he has not been a positive influence since then.

JEANINE RUSSELL, sophomore in LAS