

SEE IT MY WAY

Oh, she's just being Miley

I'm not the most fashionable person you've ever met. My favorite colors are blue and brown. I don't like to wash pants (I like my corduroys to feel like pajamas). Oh, and also a significant percentage of my T-shirts are leftover junior high gym wear.

In short, I don't purport to know much of anything about fashion. But every once in a while, some ladies I know — and, yes, this includes my mother — bust out the girly magazines and I can't look away. I am especially entranced by fashion photography, which, in some cases, is just a hair shy of pornography.

It's no surprise, then, that I managed to catch wind of the fiasco surrounding the semi-nude Vanity Fair photos of 15-year-old child star Miley Cyrus.

Cyrus, who plays the title role in Disney's Hannah Montana, is nothing short of a phenomenon. Her concerts have brought in tens of millions of dollars. Last winter, to score concert tickets through an essay contest for her daughter, one woman pretended that her husband died in Iraq.

"We did whatever we could do to win," the woman told a local television station.

Clearly, Miley means business. Literally. With the world's spotlight comes some sweet opportunities, and posing for Vanity Fair with famed celebrity photographer Annie Leibovitz behind the camera is certainly one of them. It was an offer too difficult to pass up.

The photos in the May issue, which comes out today, include one of Cyrus covered only by a silver bed sheet. Couple that with her rapturous dark hair and pursed red lips, and she'll probably make some teenager very happy.

But that's just it. Some teenager is not really the target demographic of Vanity Fair. According to their press kit, 93 percent of Vanity Fair readers are over 21. Miley's reaching out to a whole new audience, even if a bit prematurely.

While she's still a pre-teen heartthrob, Cyrus has an image to protect, which makes this a silly decision on her part. As soon as she slipped off her shirt during that photo shoot, she should have been ready for calls from the Christian Coalition and the like. After all, someone has to watch out for the seven-year-olds who litter their bedrooms with Hannah Montana merchandise.

The parents of these children



JONATHAN JACOBSON

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will rave and rant about another girl gone wrong, another role model tainted and deflowered. And there's no doubt that Cyrus has a long list of predecessors in that arena.

But the reality is that the kids will never see the photos unless they pick up their parents' copy of Vanity Fair. Cyrus' partially naked body exists now in a world completely divorced from her Disney personality.

What's being felt right now, with all the media commentary and the message-boarding, is the push and pull of Cyrus' two disparate personalities — and the expectations associated with each — trying to reach equilibrium.

"I feel so embarrassed," Cyrus said in a statement to People magazine.

That's strange. She didn't seem particularly embarrassed in the photographs. Even stranger is that her parents — her father Billy Ray is the man who brought you "Achy Breaky Heart" way back in 1992 — attended the photo shoot and were unfazed.

Leibovitz released a statement claiming that Cyrus and her family discussed the photograph and the context with her before the shoot. So everybody had some idea what they were getting into.

The coup de grace is that every party involved will actually benefit from this uber-scandal. Vanity Fair will sell more magazines because people are interested to see the buzz. Miley Cyrus is going to make some new fans, even if they aren't quite in her age range. Annie Leibovitz — as if she needed any more publicity since last month's racially charged "King Kong" Vogue cover — will sign some more contracts.

If this really is Miley Cyrus' fall from grace, it could definitely be a lot worse.

Jonathan is a senior in English and rhetoric. He wishes he had not called Miley Cyrus' hair "rapturous," but it's too late.

Editor's Note: Jonathan is this year's recipient of the Raymond Clamage Award in recognition of being the staff member who contributed the most to the progress and quality of The Daily Illini during the 2007-08 year.

You didn't play Frisbee on the Quad?

Graduation is the first day of the rest of your life, by which I mean "Ha ha, you have to be an adult now." Not that I would know. I got my Political Science degree in 2006 but began law school that fall, so I've staved off adulthood at least until I get my Juris Doctor in 2009, and possibly until after medical school and barber college.

But if you're an outgoing senior, you should be proud of yourself that you showed up to class often enough to not fail out. No one understands better than me how hard it is to crawl out of bed every morning at 2 p.m.

You've done a lot in your time in college. For instance, you ignored every single list you've seen telling you the 10 or 50 or 3,517 things to do before you graduate. I remember reading one of those lists my first day here back in 2002. "Climb the Alma Mater," it said. I opted instead to drink beer at my fraternity. "Catch an improv comedy show at the Union," it said. I opted instead to drink beer in my apartment. "Drink beer at Kams," it said. I opted instead to drink beer at bars that don't smell like pee and death.

The most talked about, and least performed, item on those lists is always "Play Frisbee on the Quad." Whoever writes these lists is convinced this is something normal college stu-



SCOTT GREEN

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dents actually do. In a school of more than 30,000 students, on any given afternoon there are exactly three people playing Frisbee on the Quad. I suspect it is always the same three people, and that they've been out there every day since 1975. They've been doing it since the days when your parents never played Frisbee on the Quad.

But graduation isn't a time to fixate on the lame stuff you didn't do. It's a time to reflect, mainly on why 27 different people bought you a copy of Dr. Seuss's "Oh The Places You'll Go!" But you can also reflect on some of the finest (drunk) moments of your life. If you're embarrassed of how many of your best college memories happened while you

were intoxicated, you're probably mature enough to handle the real world. If you're proud, you either have some growing up to do and should take an extra year, or you didn't drink enough and should take an extra year.

Regardless, you soon-to-be graduates have one week left on campus, and you'd better enjoy it, because after that you're moving back in with your parents. You will rediscover all the wonderful aspects of your hometown, or at least the ones you can see from the drive-through window at your job. Ha ha, I am just kidding, unless you are a philosophy major.

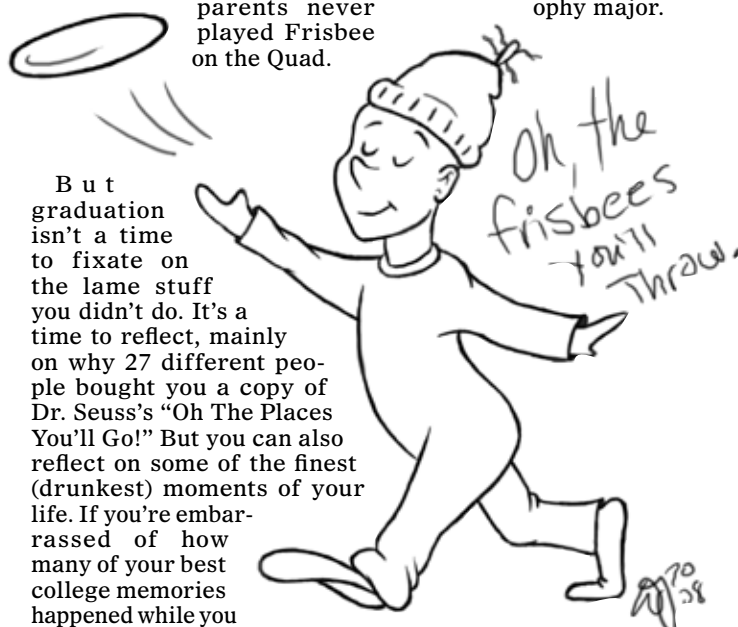
In reality you are probably moving into a tiny, big-city apartment that you can't possibly afford. But don't worry about that! If they turn off your heat, you can burn your extra copies of "Oh The Places You'll Go!" for warmth. You will go from being very important — say, as a respected past social chair of your fraternity — to the lowest on the totem pole at whichever company thought your GPA was on a three-point scale.

The milestones of life are ahead of you now. You will find the right person, get married and have children, though possibly not in that order. There will be bills to pay, mouths to feed and parole officers to lie to. You will no longer have to listen to your parents.

Of course, you will wind up listening to them anyway, out of both habit and a fear that, without their expert guidance, you might say something to make your grandparents disinherit you.

It's exciting to head out, no safety harness, just you against the world. It will be what you make of it, and you can achieve your dreams. Just like it says in that classic Dr. Seuss book, "One Fish Two Fish Red Fish Blue Fish."

Scott is a second-year law student. He dedicates this column to his sister, Amy, of whom he is very proud.



GUEST COLUMN BRENDA KAY ZYLSTRA AND MARGIE MATHEWSON

The anatomy of true cooperation

A few weeks ago, Brenda Kay Zylstra wrote a column explaining the Pregnancy Resource Forum, a project initiated by the Illini Collegians for Life (ICFL) and co-sponsored by UIUC campus National Organization for Women (NOW). Zylstra and Margie Mathewson, NOW's President, discuss what they learned from this improbable pairing.

Brenda: From the start, my group wanted a broad spectrum of campus units and organizations. We wanted to expand beyond the typical pro-life allies of Republicans, Catholics and Evangelicals. This project has a much broader scope. Furthermore, a genuine pro-life philosophy should necessarily entail caring for quality of life beyond birth. In my introductory e-mail to Margie, I asked for her and NOW's help as ICFL strove to make real progress on this campus for women, an underlying premise of both groups' philosophies.

Margie: When I received Brenda's e-mail, I discussed the possibility of working with ICFL with the rest of my group and

we agreed to let her come speak at one of our meetings on behalf of ICFL. Since it was my first semester as president, I was especially tentative about making sure we were upholding the ideals of NOW. We weren't initially certain this project fit those ideals. Furthermore, this is almost certainly the first time campus NOW has worked with any pro-life group.

BKZ: I came to a NOW meeting. I spoke for an awkward five minutes, tried to smile a lot, and got a lot of blank stares. On my way out, I called ICFL's president and told her I had bombed.

MM: While Brenda was at the meeting, I tried to remain neutral, because I very much wanted to work by consensus with my group. But when she left, I advocated for working with ICFL. Though we were still slightly wary, ultimately this project seemed to be a worthwhile endeavor and a rare opportunity in finding common ground. The fact that ICFL was reaching out to us, and that Brenda had the guts to come to our meeting really impressed us.

BKZ: So (to my surprise), NOW

agreed to work with us. We knew their support would give our project enormous momentum. Pro-life and pro-choice college activists working together? More than a few times I heard someone jokingly say we'd see peace in the Middle East first; certainly hyperbole but reflective of the culture in which we live.

MM: The PRF was quite a success, and both groups are committed to following up and continuing this alliance next year. In retrospect, NOW was very happy with how carefully ICFL treaded the line when working with us. They took care to be respectful of our differences while emphasizing that which we have in common. Giving them our name and support was a bit of a risk and they could have very easily misrepresented us — intentionally or not — but they always were very honest and transparent about what was happening.

BKZ: Likewise, we knew that NOW was going against the status quo by linking their name with ours. They didn't have any particular reason to trust us, and perhaps a few reasons to think us suspect, but Margie always gave

me the benefit of the doubt in our communications. When it came down to it, one of the strongest lessons I learned from this entire project was that I would far rather work with people who passionately disagree with me than those who apathetically agree.

MM: This was a great reminder that sometimes the labels we give ourselves wall us off from people for no good reason. Abortion is still an important cause for both sides; we haven't lost anything there. But it shouldn't, and didn't, define our interactions on this project. And because we were able to set that aside, we forged a relationship between our groups which is both lasting and groundbreaking.

BKZ: Already the PRF was three weeks ago, and graduation looms for many members. But those who remain behind will continue working together to implement the changes necessary for helping women on this campus. Once we got past the semantics, once we met face-to-face and started talking, all the misgivings seemed silly — we have so much in common, after all.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Science has not disproved religion

In his column, "Science, Religion and New Internationalism," Othman O'Malley contends that modern science and rational thought has liberated humanity from the false and destructive ideologies of religion. In doing so, Mr. O'Malley has committed a common mistake; assuming that science has disproved religion. It is not only untrue but impossible for science to disprove religion as they operate in two entirely different and distinct spheres. The problem that typically occurs is when religion makes unnecessary divine associations with old science and then clings desperately to them as a matter of faith.

Science's role is to describe, categorize and articulate the natural world; that is, the world presented to our senses or subject to reasonable inference based on those senses.

Religion, on the other hand, is the stuff of the soul. It teaches us how to live with each other as not merely social, but spiritual beings and directs our reverent attention to the splendor of God. Moreover, religion gives to humankind something which no scientific breakthrough or Hobbesian social contract ever could; a source of purpose and hope; a knowledge that existence does not end in death and a firm expectation that ultimately all injustices will be redressed and that redemption will be brought to the afflicted.

Thankfully, this comforting and inspiring world view is more than simply a security blanket which the irrational or unedu-

cated cling to. It is a substantial, defensible, believable and logical system capable of satisfying both the most rational mind and the most hopeful heart. While space limitations deny sufficient treatment of the theist case, suffice it to say that atheism is by no means the consensus of the real scientific community and that the curious can find legitimate theistic scientists (Francis Collins, etc.).

JAY GEYER
Sophomore in LAS

Online comment disrespectful

A person calling herself/himself "Martha" posted an online reply to "Remembering Acevedo" (April 28) saying that she/he meant "no offense," but "there's no point in praising somebody paid from ALL STUDENTS' money becoming the 'advocate' of CERTAIN STUDENTS, based on extrinsic, non-academic factors."

Here are my responses.

I wonder why "Martha" limits her/his potential audience to the relatively small number, like me, who read the unpublished, anonymous e-replies to the daily letters.

It's disrespectful, not to say shocking, for somebody to use the occasion of Cathy Acevedo's untimely death to criticize the University for using "ALL STUDENTS' money" to become "the 'advocate' of CERTAIN STUDENTS, based on extrinsic, non-academic factors."

Since when is implementing diversity on campus an "extrinsic, non-academic" factor, and since when is it reprehensible for

the University to use the resources of all its students in order to advocate for diversity of every kind for every student on its campus, and which benefits the entire academic community?

I worked with Cathy, I admired Cathy, I respected Cathy, and I liked Cathy. She deserves much better than having her life's work sullied in this callous manner by someone without the courage even to identify herself/himself. Requiescat in pacem, Dear Cathy.

CHANA BURSTZYN
University Employee

All hail Israel

Why is it that the rest of the world hates us? Is it because of our freedoms or democracy or is it more likely that it is because of our foreign policy?

Why is it that every time a politician runs for office he or she must prove that they are 100 percent pro-Israel and pay lip service to get elected in the U.S.? Why must Clinton, McCain and Obama have to bend over backwards to please another country to get elected in the U.S.? As the world's superpower shouldn't we be a fair referee?

If we think we are a fair referee, why does the U.S. have the most unbalanced news coverage and dialogue of the Palestinians-Israeli conflict? Even Israel has better coverage of the Palestinian side than we do.

If we are for peace, then why do we make pathetic peace negotiations?

Why didn't Israel move back to the 1967 borders (West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem) and give Palestinians the right to

return or compensation and be done with this conflict?

If the Israelis act on the Arab League peace initiative, then every Arab country would recognize Israel and open their borders for trade. Why when Israel has almost 80 percent of Palestine do they want more in peace negotiations? Why in every peace deal ever offered does the U.S. and Israel take more Palestinian land in the West Bank and Jerusalem? These lands contain the Palestinian's water resources and make an unfairly split of the Holy city.

Why are Palestinians denied the right to return or compensation after 60 years while Jews anywhere have a "right to return"?

When Americans can understand these questions we will understand that people do not hate America, they just hate our foreign policy and do not take our moves towards peace seriously.

JON YOUAKIM
Senior in MCB,
Member, Students for Justice in Palestine

Men's center letter was funny

The recent letters to the editor bashing the Men's center piece in the letters to the editor section need to stop.

I feel so bad that people cannot see the humor of the article. The letter was funny, even girls laughed at it.

If you can't get the humor, that's too bad.

The world is full of sarcasm and jokes. College is supposed to prepare you for the real world.

The real world is not a fairy tale where everyone gets along and is politically correct. Take a joke!

CHAD KARECKI
Senior in LAS

A start to fixing the tuition problem

With the rise of tuition becoming an increasing concern at this university it is clear that the university needs to start thinking about cutting certain expenses in order to keep tuition down and maintain the quality of education.

Therefore I have come up with a short list of 10 things that can be cut or done in order to help lower tuition at this institution:

1. The Quad Cam, did the university actually pay for this? Do they pay to maintain this? Does anyone really care if we lose this?

2. Do not re-elect Blagojevich, I think this is a no brainer

3. Allow more students into the university, more students means more money, duh

4. Quit spending money on expensive and ridiculous projects, i.e. assembly hall renovations, and instead put that towards Lincoln hall or Gregory Hall renovations

5. Ad Revenue: the next time I walk down the quad I want to see billboards for Coca-Cola and Nike all over the place

6. Can we sell or rent out Mumford house? There is money to be made in real estate, maybe not now but the market will bounce back

7. Stop handing out ugly T-shirts at convocation. I remem-

ber the ugly T-shirt I got back when I was a freshman, and oh boy do I wear it everyday.

8. Allow students the option of which of the many and random fees they would like to pay. I know there is a refund, but the information on that is so vague that most students just ignore it. With my plan we can save the students money right away

9. Do not offer book buybacks at the Illini Union bookstore, let the privately own bookstores like T.I.S. and Folletts take the hit

10. Learn from the homeless and collect cans and bottles, the University can take these and sell them for 5 cents a piece which will turn into \$1 million

By doing these ten things tuition rates at this university are sure to drop in no time.

JOSEPH MOWERY
Senior in LAS

Thanks for event contributions

I am writing to publicly express my gratitude to everyone who assisted with and/or attended the recent benefit for the Fuyang AIDS Orphan Salvation Association at Boardman's Art Theatre.

Your kindness and generosity is most genuinely appreciated.

I would especially like to acknowledge the contributions of members of the University of Illinois New Life Volunteering Services organization (Mr. Pratik Pandya) and Kappa Phi Lambda (Ms. Catherine Suh).

R.L. CAGLE, PH.D.
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