

STAFF COLUMN

Traveling provides perspective

You first discover you know absolutely nothing about the world when you travel. When you gain new insights, you have to deal with them appropriately, knowing your eyes have been opened.

I was educated that way this summer. While traveling, I saw just enough worldwide news to find out I know nearly nothing.

I was fortunate enough to take a 2-month trip to Europe this summer with others from Gaylord College. We learned how they view us and saw the world through their window.

The trip showed me how closed off we Americans are from world news coverage. We learned more than John McCain's favorite Sunday meal and Barack Obama's latest suit purchase.

I wondered what to do with this realization.

I am a writer, so I write about it. But how can you tell someone who thinks they're standing in the light that they are really being left

in the dark? That the light and everyone else left a long time ago?

I guess this is my chance.

Friends, we are being left in the dark when it comes to worldwide news coverage.

Do you know what is going on in Africa? What country is next to Darfur? What type of government Russia has? Or why we still can't go to Cuba?

Half of these questions I didn't know the answer to.

My history teacher was a basketball coach with a tic who was also half-deaf. He was a great man, but we cheated every time his eyes were closed.

Little did I know I was cheating myself. Sometimes the thrill of getting away with something overshadows the consequences of what you are actually getting away with.

So, then what do we do to keep people from being as uninformed as I realized I am?

First, let's hope to God our public officials didn't have same history teacher I did.



SARAH
HILL

Second, let's educate ourselves and make up for the areas in which my school — and maybe yours — lacked.

Google "world news" and see what happens. Try the UK-based Web site guardian.co.uk and see what they're writing about. Find what suits you and check it out often.

If we are going to vote or interact on a college campus, I we need to choose to engage with the news about what's going on in the rest of the world.

You can't pretend the gray hair's not there. I've told you to look in the mirror. Do what you want with that information.

Now, don't get me wrong, I'm not saying traveling will turn you gray, but it might turn you sour toward the way things are being run around here.

For me, it was world news coverage.

It could be different for you. Find out, and do something about it.

Sarah Hill is a journalism junior. Her column will appear every other Monday.

YOUR VIEWS

Something wrong with 'brown'

I will forgive the quip about Al Gore or the argument against ethanol in Monday's column 'Nothing wrong with brown.' Mr. Gore blurs fact and opinion like any politician, and ethanol is a poor attempt at a feel-good measure that does little to address climate change in the long run.

However, I must point out the inaccuracies presented as science in this column, specif-

cycle. The climate system takes ten or more years to respond to even the strongest forces, so the net effect of solar energy changes is almost nil.

Far from being "grand divas," these factors do very little to explain the kind of changes the earth has seen in the last two centuries. Skepticism has its place in science, but there is a big difference between healthy skepticism and blatant denial.

— DAVID SHERMAN,
METEOROLOGY SENIOR

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Secondly, the "Go Green" revolution hardly recommends turning all of your lights off to the point where you cannot see or even purchasing a hybrid. It is more the idea of a consciousness about how much energy you use.

Why not open some blinds rather than turn on all the lights, or ride your bike more frequently rather than buy a new car?

Thirdly, very few of our technological advances have resulted in more harm than good.

Students face 'deep, dark forest' of adventure

In college, we are learning about a lot more than what's in our textbooks and in our classes.

We are learning about life.

In my beginning sociology class, we have just begun to examine the institution of college, and the entire idea is fascinating to me.

A university campus is like a utopian microcosm of the world. There are many different layers to the campus, and the dynamics are intriguing once they are truly thought about.

Sociology is the study of human society and social behavior. Sociology examines the groups and social institutions that people form.

College, college students and the college atmosphere have been the subjects of sociologists for years.

There a some reason for this.

When a student is asked why he or she is in college, the acceptable answer is often, "To learn, get a degree and get a job."

But what we really learn here at the university is so much more than that. The lists of completed courses on our transcripts hold something in between the lines of class names.

That something is life.

It's like our parents drop us off at the dorms that first day and say, "We've taught you everything we could."

We are hormonal. We are naive. We are young. We have energy. We are still optimistic. We are, in the blink of an eye, given a doorway to freedom.

They drive off and suddenly the dorms and college become a deep, dark forest full of adventure, mischief and a raw sense of wholesomeness.

It really is amazing we survive under these circumstances. We are confronted with real issues here, by ourselves, for the first time.

We deal with money issues, internal issues, external issues, drugs, sex, alcohol, religion and all kinds of other odd temptations.

We are thrown in the deep-end and expected to drown and swim all at the same time.

We learn more than the birds and the bees here. We learn how to control the birds and the bees of our human nature. We learn what can happen when we don't.

We learn firsthand why we were taught drugs are bad when we see what harm they can cause to ourselves or to a friend.

We learn to question everything we've ever thought or been taught. We are encouraged by our surroundings to experience life first hand.

Through it all, we are expected to survive.

We are given a grace period of reflection in college.

Not only are we supposed to be reflecting, but also we're supposed to be interacting. Because of this, for a brief period of time, all college students become the person their parents warned them about.

We are hormonal. We are naive. We are young. We have energy. We are still optimistic. We are, in a blink of an eye, given a doorway to freedom.

We have one pathway paved in front of us leading the way to where we are expected to go.

But it's a pathway with no fences, and members of society on each side are saying, "Come over here. Come over here."

None of us know what's on the other side. Hopefully, it's a degree.

I guess the day we graduate

— if we do — we'll find out. That's the day we can say we're leaving the forest.

Then we go back to where we started — the real world.

We go back there as entirely different people.

So, maybe what I'm trying to say to everyone is congratulations.

To those of you who are surviving and even thriving in the collegiate academic environment, good for you because what we are doing is not easy.

It's miraculous that we function here. That feat shouldn't go unnoticed.

We didn't just go camping in the dark forest that was before us when our parents first dropped us off at college.

We are living in it every single day.

We are doing it despite all odds and pressures against us.

That's a triumph in itself.

And it's something that cannot be learned in a textbook or even in a sociology class.



SARAH HILL

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nals

A different kind of compensation



SARAH HILL

Love or money?

I know the answer should always, be love.

But lately I'm kind of worried about that answer.

Sometimes you can't choose love over money.

I'm not talking about having to choose between some poor farm boy who happens to be the love of your life or Danny the no-personality-Ivy-League-graduate-soon-to-be-big-time-lawyer.

I'm talking about choosing between love and money when it comes to deciding on a career.

If everyone decided to choose money, then we'd have a real problem.

We wouldn't have teachers, social workers, journalists or non-profit workers.

We wouldn't have writers, musicians or artists.

You could argue that people become singers because they dream of the big bucks.

But I don't think anyone in the arts field could be successful with that mode of thinking.

A person can't just sing, "I want you to like this. Give me money. I want to be rich." (Unless, of course, that person were a rapper.) They have to have something to say.

It's unfortunate that people have to choose between love or money.

They should be able to do what they love and get paid for it.

If people did what they loved, they would be much happier, and I'm pretty sure Americans could use some cheering up.

If they were happier, maybe they could stimu-

Here's a proposal for President-elect Barack Obama: Pay people for doing what they love.

This plan is genius.

Obama should probably appoint me to his cabinet.

I have yet to see Hillary Rodham Clinton come up with such a good plan.

In a perfect world, this plan could solve a lot of problems.

But, sadly, this world is not perfect, and my plan isn't feasible.

It's nice to dream about, though.

It's sad that it can't ever work out.

I know a man who loves to write and wants to write novels for a living, but he's studying petroleum engineering so he doesn't end up under a bridge some day.

I love writing poetry, but I know it will never pay my bills.

My poetry is just going to wilt away in my diary until my funeral, when somebody will find it and read it aloud. I'll probably be blushing in my grave.

I wish I loved to do something that could make me money.

How lucky are those doctors who truly love helping people? You can definitely tell the difference between them and the ones who are just in it for the money.

My advice is to pursue what you love, regardless of what it pays.

Even if you can't get paid enough money for doing it, someday your passion will pay off.

The best artists in the world wouldn't have contributed so much to our culture if they had given up and chosen money.

Leonardo Da Vinci could have been a doctor, but where would that have left Mona Lisa?

Sarah Hill is a professional writing junior. Her col-

Photo provided

ending balance with the university. this could lead to an investigation e that money actually went. coal in your stocking at this point.

ow or attend a tacky Christmas

he does this every year. And they hese are the most fun fiestas of ter. Hunt down a Frosty sweater w on a Santa Hat. Wrap yourself in lights. However you prepare, just you are there.

d the University of Texas a con- gift.

ould be a real gift from depths crimson heart. I recommend hir- ner plane to circle Texas' bowl h- the following inscription: "2.

Ichabod McCain

STAFF COLUMN

Gossip the language of hate, untruthfulness

Gossip is the modern day form of public execution.

As a culture, we are fascinated with gossip. We just can't get enough.

And when Hollywood can't fill in the gossip hole in our hearts, we resort to each other to talk about.

I think for students, gossip starts when we learn the telephone game in pre-school, where we whispered in each other's ears and passed it around the circle to laugh at misinterpretations of what we said.

It was amusing that a person at the beginning of the game could start by saying, "My father is the strongest man in the world," and by the time it weaved its way in and out of others ears, it became, "Sally's father likes to eat poop for breakfast."

My twin sister was the butt of many rumors all through elementary and middle school. The rumor queens would come ask me for validation.

"Did your sister really say the F word in front of Mrs. Connor?" they asked me once.

I had to explain that I was not in Mrs. Connor's class. I asked

my sister what she said, and she said she was reading the words inscribed on the desk. She asked Mrs. Connor what the word meant, and people took the incident and misconstrued it.

As that case showed, gossip is mean and often is not the truth. It is only people's perception of events.

Many times, it is third- or fourth-hand information that started out as one thing and ended up as something else. It is people trying to validate what they want to believe.

To my knowledge, I had never been a victim of gossip until recently. I wasn't a gossip queen before my incident. However, I would hear things, and if they sparked my interest, I sometimes would repeat them.

I never wondered what it felt like to be gossiped about, and I figured it wouldn't ever happen to me.

This summer, that changed.

It all started when my phone was stolen in London. I was gone for almost two months, and no one but my close family and friends knew where I was.

When I came back, I was very sick and spent almost two weeks in the hospital.

I had no phone or phone numbers and was so sick I almost couldn't come back to school.

When school started, the rumor-mills were going. There



Photos.com

was a myriad of explanations for my absence. People were saying I took drugs. People were saying I lost my mind.

A lot of close friends even hopped on the band wagon. I didn't have a phone to address the problem, but that didn't matter. I didn't receive many phone calls once I got one.

The way people handled the situation was disappointing.

Instead of friends asking if I was OK or asking what actually happened, they chose to believe what they had heard.

Rumors are powerful, and many mistake them for truth.

It's easy to judge and say, "Wow, she must have bad friends." But that's not necessarily true.

My friends were and are great

friends. They're probably just as good to me as your close friends are to you. The only problem is that they fell victim to gossip.

Unknowingly and unintentionally, they just reacted the way everyone reacts to gossip. They believed it, repeated it and moved on.

No one knew how upset I was about things being said about me. Not many people cared.

I say this on behalf of anyone who has been gossiped about: It feels awful, and it's degrading.

Gossip is very mean spirited, and people need to mind their business.

SARAH HILL IS A JOURNALISM JUNIOR. HER COLUMN APPEARS EVERY OTHER MONDAY.



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AFF COLUMN

What you wear representative of who you are

you have walked across the beautiful, boomer-
g North Oval or the seductive, soonering South
val you may have noticed something, and I'm
talking about the flowers.

I probably have noticed the
people next to you. If you
then you probably noticed
they were wearing.

According to *The Little Black
of Style* by Nina Garcia,
say you dress yourself in the
ing is the way you want to
sent yourself to the world.
at scares me.

One other day, I started paying
attention to what people might
of me as I walked across campus. What was
ing to the world?



**SARAH
HILL**

I walked to school in a brightly colored T-shirt
paired with some dirty, white shorts. I wore
over-sized sunglasses and had my coffee and cell
phone in my hands.

I looked like a snob. Like Eve must have felt the
first time she looked down, I was embarrassed.
Someone easily could have taken one look at me
and passed me off as "one of those girls."

But the real story was, I had been up all night
writing a paper, I hit the snooze button on my
alarm too many times, and I was calling my mom
to check on my grandmother. Relatable?

No? Well, maybe you should call your grand-
mother.

Anyway, I imagined for a second a world in
which people didn't judge outward appearances.

In that world, I had to look at the guy with the
cowboy boots and the belt buckle and not imme-

diately think he listens to country music.

I had to look at the preppy guy in the polo shirt
talking on his cell phone and think maybe he was
on the phone with his grandmother, too.

I had to look at the girl with the dreadlocks and
wonder if she maybe liked John McCain.

Anything should be possible, no matter what
outside appearances suggest. People are compli-
cated, which I often forget.

But, my first guesses about those people prob-
ably were correct. I am indeed dressing myself for
the world in the mornings, and you are too.

My mom, a speech teacher, once told me it
takes a person 30 seconds to develop a first opin-
ion of me.

I would respond with, "Great, I'm screwed
either way. I'll cut my losses."

She then would add that it takes three hours of

conversation for me to change that first opinion.

That is obnoxious, but she is right.

So is Nina Garcia, I have a feeling, though I did
not want to believe it at first. Whether we like it or
not, we are dressing ourselves for the world each
and every morning.

To be politically correct, it really shouldn't mat-
ter. We are who we are, and stereotypes based on
clothing should have no merit.

But the sad truth is, we are what we wear.

Knowing this, I am still going to wear my cut-
off jeans. But at least now I know what I will be
saying.

I'll be saying, "Howdy ya'll!" or better yet, "I just
transferred from OSU."

**SARAH HILL IS A PROFESSIONAL WRITING JUNIOR.
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