

School is cool?

Poverty, core classes make college less than enjoyable



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I've always heard good things about the college experience. The humorous anecdotes I've been told about classes, professors, dorm life and annoying roommates are plentiful. Many college-educated people I have known (teachers, military officers and friends) describe college as being one of the greatest experiences of their lives. Why, then, do I dislike college so much? First of all, I don't really enjoy studying. When I like a particular class, I'll admit that the work involved for that class is more tolerable than in a class I despise. However, the actual act of sitting

down to memorize information so I can regurgitate it on a test is always unpleasant. This method of instruction sometimes seems so pointless to me. Learning to adjust to a studious lifestyle is, however, only one of many reasons I'm unimpressed with my college experience thus far. Being broke all the time doesn't add to my enjoyment of college either. I can barely afford to pay for my basic expenses (rent, food, utilities, etc.), let alone actually buy much of anything. For example, I'd like to buy a new pair of running shoes because my current pair are near death. However, my financial situation is so bleak that I can't even afford a new pair of shoes. By the time I'm finished with my four years at Nebraska, I'll probably be at least \$10,000 in debt. True, that's not all that much compared to others' debts, but I still don't like the idea of starting my life out in the hole. My first post-collegiate job will probably not pay much, and the last thing I'll want to deal with then will be school debt. My financial situation will be bad enough as it is. If I were interested in something, college might be somewhat more diverting, but I've come to a pathetic

conclusion. I possess no professional interests whatsoever. I don't really have a burning desire to "be" anything. I admit this is probably my fault, but what am I supposed to do? I can't force myself to like something. I don't mind menial labor, but people look down upon those who perform these jobs, and, more importantly, these jobs don't pay all that well. I think I could deal with being scorned by others if I were receiving a decent salary. Heck, if McDonald's paid its employees \$40,000 or \$50,000 a year, I'd quit college right now to gladly say the words, "May I take your order?" Something else that annoys me about my experience with higher education is those fetid pieces of dung known as core requirements. What's the point? Why should the first 1½ years of the college experience be a repeat of high school? Who determines what a "well-rounded" education is, and by whose authority do they do it? I'm not saying that every core requirement is a waste of time, but for the most part I'm of the opinion that they are. Quite often, I wonder why our soci-

ety thinks a college degree is so important. Certain professions, obviously, require specialized training, but why does virtually every company in this fine country require this piece of paper? If the job I obtain after college has nothing to do with the degree I've earned (a scenario that's quite likely), then why do I even need a degree in the first place? When I enter the working world, my level of intelligence, my willingness to work with other people as a team, my willingness to labor diligently and my good fortune (or lack thereof) will determine whether I'll be successful or not. My bachelor's degree will have little to do with my success in life. Why, then, does our society require me to obtain a degree? I struggle to understand why people find their college years to be so much fun, but I think it might boil down to this: A good number of students start college shortly after high school. College is the first time many people experience some degree of independence. Since college is the first time that many experience this newfound freedom, they associate the elation that

this freedom gives with college itself. I'm not saying that I haven't had good, memorable times since I've started college, but I don't associate these pleasurable experiences with college itself. Good times are a part of the workforce experience just as much as they're a part of the collegiate one. Maybe I'm alone in thinking that the working world is enjoyable, but I doubt it. When I was in the Navy, I had many good times, both on and off duty. Granted, life in the Navy wasn't some sort of utopian experience (quite the contrary), but it had the potential to be quite enjoyable, and it paid better than college does. Most important, the Navy (or almost any job I've ever held) provided me with a sense of accomplishment that college never will. Perhaps when I've received my degree, I'll look back on this time with fond memories, but for now I'll simply have to make the best of my time here and attempt to learn something. I'm very happy for anyone who finds college to be a rewarding experience. I really wish that I could feel the same way.

TV wasteland

Morally bankrupt programming leads to corruption of youth



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When I started out to write this column, my goal for was to compare the quality of television programming years ago with the quality of it today. I wanted to make the point that the average sitcom then was a heck of a lot better than it is now. But as I pondered on the television I have experienced in my brief life, I noticed more and more that not only was television 15 years ago superior in quality, it was a lot better for you. The four of you who are reading this may now be asking yourselves, "Just what in the Sam Hill is that conservative bastard talking about?" Well, let me explain. It's not too difficult to see that this country is in a period of serious moral decline. We've got kids shooting each other at school, kids giving birth to babies and killing them and doctors legally killing kids in the womb. The total number of sexually transmitted diseases is the highest it's ever been. The leader of our nation has more "alleged" affairs than 311's got crappy songs. The economy may be alive and well, but our nation's moral pulse is barely detectable. Now what does this have to do with today's television and entertainment industry? It's a good question. Are television, music and movies a reflection of our steadily deteriorating moral fiber, or is our downward spiraling culture a product of the loose and irresponsible actions of producers and "artists"? I'm not really sure. All I know is that whenever I turn on the TV, I can be sure to find a wealth of poorly written, morally irresponsible garbage. That's not how it used to be. I can

remember quite vividly the shows that I grew up with: "The Cosby Show," "The Wonder Years," reruns of "Welcome Back, Kotter," "Taxi" and "Happy Days." These shows existed in a time when television still had its innocence. A time when Theo Huxtable, Kevin Arnold, Juan Epstein, Latka Gravitz and Arthur Fonzearelli all lived in good, clean TV Land harmony. Now think about the shows that television offers us and America's youth today. Let's face it; Springer, although peculiarly entertaining, is not something you would want your kids to watch. That can also be said about almost all the pitifully written shows that spew forth from America's TV sets daily. We have Ellen, mouthpiece for gay propagandists everywhere, right there on prime time. There's also new fads "Dawson's Creek" and "South Park," which can be applauded for their bouts of political incorrectness; but both shows are still mindless fodder that have spread like wildfire among junior high students across the country. And MTV, producer of the embarrassingly shameless and moronic "Loveline," is 99.5 percent drivel, both intellectually and morally. It's not just television; music and movies are equally bad and sometimes worse. From Snoop Doggy Dogg to Marilyn Manson, the moral and intellectual level of today's popular culture lies at the direct bottom of the proverbial barrel. You can call me old-fashioned. You can call me a prudish, out-of-touch conservative ideologue. I don't care. I can handle it. But I can't help but believe that the anything-goes, no-holds-barred style of today's entertainment industry has contributed to the steady deterioration of this nation's moral fiber. Do you think the 13- and 11-year-old boys in Arkansas who killed their fellow classmates were influenced by popular culture? You can bet they were. The abundance of violence and overall disrespect for human life that has pervaded our culture surely affected these kids. But some bleeding hearts will insist that it's the guns that were used that are the source of all

evil, and not our "open" and "progressive" culture. Sorry, it's not guns that are infesting and rotting the minds of youth, it's the deadly and immoral culture we have produced. I went to hear Tom Osborne speak at a Fellowship of Christian Athletes function Sunday. He eloquently and prudently mentioned this very issue. He referred to Biblical Scripture and noted that what we fill our minds and souls with will eventually come out of us. We are beginning to see this in the disrespectful and violent attitudes that have arisen in some of today's youth. When we feed the minds of our youth with despicable filth, that's what we can expect from them. Yet there are those who would say that the entertainment industry's recent shift toward "looser and less-confining" moral guidelines is an indication of a nation moving closer to a more open and progressive society. If increased violence, sexual immorality and general depreciation of the value of human life are the end products of this "progressive" society, I don't want it. And no other civilized person in this country should either.

