

Lost motives

Pressure to form post graduate plan overwhelms students

“My whole high school experience has been one big rat race, and I reach the end when I leave home for college. Then begins a whole new race, the rite of passage for American teens-turned-adults.”

by **ANNA CANNON**
feature editor



As I walk down the hallway to the office, the plethora of laminated college banners stares back. Names line the walls, emblazoned on the colors of their future alma maters. Anxiety begins to stir in my chest, because my name will one day join that parade.

My whole high school experience has been one big rat race, and I reach

the end when I leave home for college. Then begins a whole new race, the rite of passage for American teens-turned-adults.

There's only one problem: I have two more years until I leave home, and I have no idea where my next rat race will begin.

Because of the emphasis everyone puts on college, I spent my freshman and sophomore years in a state of anxiety. Whenever someone asked what I was going to be when I grew up, I assumed a

deer-in-the-headlights countenance and prayed that the subject would change.

As emails from college started to pour in, I grew afraid to check my inbox. I honestly had no idea what I was going to do, and at the time, that meant I was going to end up living in my mom's basement eating Ramen noodles until I was 30.

Now, I've realized that it's OK. I've come to peace with the fact that I'm not one of those kids with her whole life planned out. I don't know where I'm going to live or what I'm going to major in, and it's not abnormal. My mom doesn't even have a basement.

The entire American education system is focused on what comes next. And more often than not, the byproducts of the American education system (ourselves) have no idea what comes next.

Class choice sheets are terrifying; don't even start on college applications. Deciding on careers, something that we've had to do since the eighth grade, throws us into a state of panic. At least it did for me, anyway.

My reasonings for my newfound

apathetic peace are simple: no one's life plan turns out the way they expect it to. There will always be a fork in the road or a misread sign that throws us a curveball, but that's the reason we're human. We're meant to adapt, and we've been adapting to the curve balls thrown our way since the beginning of time.

So if you struggle with anxiety about your future, remember that you're not alone. Even though the attitude of college recruiters and career advisers will never reveal it, the vast majority of us are clueless.

And even if you know where you're going to go but have no idea what you're going to do, don't worry either. There are opportunities to change majors or transfer schools for a reason.

Whether or not you have a plan, just do the best you can now, and it'll come back to reward you later. Preparing for an uncertain future may seem daunting, but keep in mind that uncertainty is much more prevalent than you think.

And remember: if you don't have a plan, it doesn't mean you're going to end up living in your mom's basement.

THE DIVISION BETWEEN HATE AND HERITAGE

It's time to change pain caused by the past

by **ANNA CANNON**
feature editor

Recent events have sparked a debate over the ethical dilemma of the Confederate Flag. Federal buildings have lowered it from their flagpoles, Dukes of Hazzard was taken off TV Land for its references to the flag and Amazon has stopped selling products that bear its image. Some say it's a symbol of racism, while others vehemently deny it.

For generations, many Southerners have been clinging to the rebel flag. For the especially avid, this includes its prominent display on virtually any surface where it will fit. It flies from truck beds, gets tacked to walls, is sold on T-shirts in gas stations and is

transformed into bumper stickers that will remain until the colors turn pink and baby blue.

The main argument in support of the rebel flag is "heritage, not hate." Yet I fail to see how the flag doesn't represent a time of racial hatred.

Let's look at the facts. According to The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, Africans were kidnapped from their homes, enslaved and transported to America; about 12 percent died in the voyage. Thousands died during the period of adjustment to the unfamiliar American climate. Half of the slave children born in America died during their first year of life. And millions of people from later generations died of disease, malnutrition, exhaustion, injury and any other form of mistreatment. We'll never know how many African Americans actually died while in slavery, because there was no registry for deaths of people considered property.

Slavery is considered an unfortunate blemish in the history of the country because the majority of Americans would never admit to the fact that their country was an active participant in an atrocity of this magnitude. But because of human nature and our inability to take responsibility for wrongdoing, we have decided that even if we uphold the symbol of the people who committed that atrocity, we are in no way connected to them.

Another argument cites our First Amendment rights, saying that we have freedom of speech that allows us to display any flag we want. Yes, you're right—we're allowed to say whatever we want as long as we don't threaten someone's life. And I'm not saying that the Confederate flag should be illegal, I'm just saying that the First Amendment shouldn't be cited as a reason for you to be mean. Because, after all, racism and its symbols are pretty mean concepts.

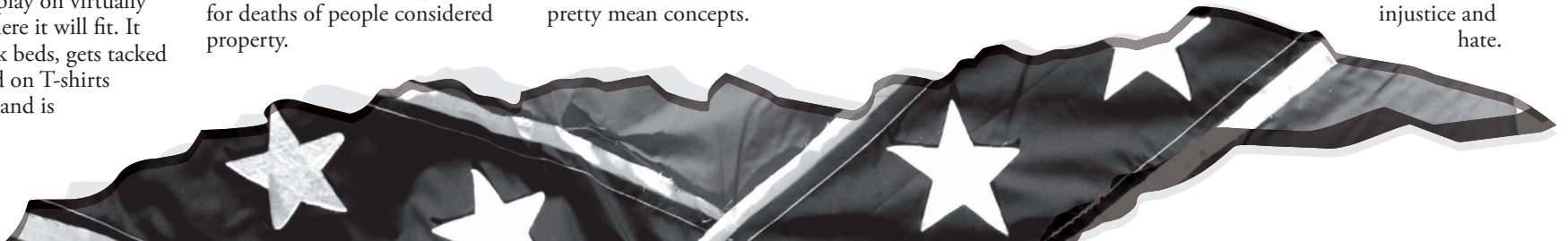
Other arguments go back to the origin of the war itself: supporters say that the Civil War was a battle over states rights, not slavery. While some deep, philosophical reasoning can shape this argument into something that makes a little sense, it entirely disregards everything that we are taught in history class. The Missouri Compromise, the Fugitive Slave Act, the Abolitionist Movement and any other cause of the war revolved around one thing: slavery.

And the controversy over states rights was created by the issue of slavery—the Southern states were terrified of prospect of losing their slaves to a government order, so they campaigned for their right to property and for their states' rights to nullify federal laws.

You can talk about tariffs and states rights all you want, but those issues would never have

erupted into full scale war: the South Carolina Nullification Crisis was resolved amicably enough, and we didn't worry about nullification again until it had to do with slavery. The "states rights" philosophy may hold some truth, but it would never have been an issue if slavery didn't exist.

The remaining argument: "stop being so offended, it's not a big deal." But for some, it's definitely a big deal; while you display your heritage and belief in states rights, you display a symbol of one of the greatest transgressions in American history. Our generation is the one with the ability to change things, and nothing will ever be changed if we stay silent about injustice. It's our job to create a world that doesn't determine worth on the basis of skin color; one that decides to own up to its mistakes and develop a zero-tolerance policy toward injustice and hate.



Bounce in Excitement

Teenagers have a new place to find their inner child

by **ANNA CANNON**
staff writer

There's a new hangout in town. Zoohaa Adventure Zone opened Feb. 7 and caters to teens and toddlers alike. The business is located at 1801 N Robinson Road, Suite 1, and has attractions such as mini golf, bouncy houses, and even a gigantic hamster ball.

"We have our fun zone, which is our bounce houses," owner Phyllis Harless said. "We have Hooplaa basketball, putt putt golf, and our 9-foot ozone ball, which is a gigantic ball with another ball suspended in the center of it. You get inside of it and you run in it. It runs a course in the regular light and the blacklight as well."

Zoohaa continues to expand, and has several new attractions opening soon.

"We have some things that are going to be opening up in the next three to four weeks," Harless said. "We will have our

galactic laser tag arena opening up, as well as our laser fire zone."

The owners have taken measures to open their business to children of all ages, including family and school groups.

"We have what we call our Zoohaa toddler world, which is for children 3 and under," Harless said. "We also do a family event on the weekend. If there are four or more people who are going to do all the events, it would be \$12 per person, which is the weekday price."

The Harless's are finding more ways to advertise and hope to expand their business once the advertisements take off.

"We are in the process of having a commercial done," Harless said. "We've had some ads placed in Texarkana Parenting, and TXK Today is supposed to do a story on us. We sent flyers home to 8,000 students in the Texarkana ISD and we're working on reaching out to Arkansas schools as well."

Prices vary depending on the events.



photo by m. morris

"During our weekday, a single event is \$5," Harless said. "For example, our bounce houses. Right now, a single event comes with the Hooplaa basketball, so you get two events for the price of one. To add another event, it would be \$4, so \$9 total. Monday through Thursday, you can do all four events for \$12. Friday through Sunday, the single event would be \$6, and it also comes with the Hooplaa basketball. To add one more event would be \$10 total,

and to do everything would be \$15."

For those who have been, Zoohaa has provided a fun and rewarding experience.

"It's a really cool place," sophomore Olivia Johnson said. "It's reasonably priced, and I think it'll be a great hangout. I think having a place like Zoohaa in Texarkana is great because it broadens what teenagers can do in their free time. It allows us to have fun with all of our friends and add variety to our Friday night antics."

Cutting wires for clean water

Putting down cell phone can help provide water to impoverished areas

by **ANNA CANNON**
staff writer

On television screens across the nation, a little African boy holds a gas can of dirty pond water for his baby brother to drink from. The camera pans to a shot of a scrawny woman and her equally scrawny children walking to a stagnant water hole, buckets in hand. Then the UNICEF logo flashes across the screen, followed by an excruciating 30 seconds of a UNICEF representative begging you to help for, “a quarter a day.” For most of us, the option is to change the channel and not worry about it. After all, we can’t help, can we?

Enter the UNICEF Tap Project, a nifty little innovation that allows the average American to provide clean water for impoverished children without providing credit card information. All you need is your smartphone, the Internet, and 15 minutes or more to go without your phone.

Here’s how it works; go to Safari,

Google, or another Internet browser. Search ‘Unicef Tap Project,’ and click the first thing that comes up (it should be a white screen with some nice little blue bubbles). Enter your name and email, and begin. For every 15 minutes, one of UNICEF’s many sponsors will donate enough money to buy purification tablets for a full day of clean water. You don’t have to pay anything. Easy, right?

But there’s a catch. If you pick up or move your phone, the timer stops, and if you don’t steady your phone in the next 10 seconds, you have to stop and finish. So that means no texting, no calling, no Instagram, Twitter, tumblr, Facebook, or any of the other wonderful things that the American populace has become creepily dependent on in the past decade.

“No phone?” you may gasp. “Why must I endure the torture of time spent away from my lifeline of communication, interaction, and entertainment for the sake of a faceless African child?” Well, that’s

the point— if us Americans are so opposed to losing the luxury of cell phones for 15 minutes, think about all the people who don’t even have the necessity of clean drinking water.

It’s not as difficult as it sounds. Put your phone on the charger, turn down the brightness and leave it on while you sleep. For those (few) of us who get a full eight hours, that’s 32 days of water. Leave it on while you’re doing homework. It’ll keep you from checking Instagram or Snapchat while you’re supposed to be studying, and since it keeps track of time, you’ll know how long you’ve been working. Leave it on the bathroom counter while you’re in the shower— it makes you feel a little better about taking a few extra minutes.

In the way of easy and rewarding ways to help others, the UNICEF Tap Project takes the cake. It’s quick and it’s free, and it tests your self control in our technologically dependent world. Give it a try. Millions of people go without

water every day. How long can you stand to go without something less crucial?



photo by Brianna O'Shaughnessy