

The Behrend Beacon

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"Professionalism
with a Personality"

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Internet porn discourages normal sexual development

At a time when young adults are trying to establish a healthy intimate relationship, the media portrays casual sex as the norm via pornography, television, music, and movies. This cannot possibly provide the much needed guidance for singles to form healthy relationships. You would think in today's world of deadly sexual dangers, casual sex would be discouraged, but our culture instead has become sexually obsessed.

People generally accept what they are taught and act accordingly, but I believe that change can occur if awareness of our country's sexual corruption is spread.

Lookism is the evaluation of a

person based solely on his/her appearance. As in the past, today's society continues to define a girl's worth largely by her appearance.

Developing girls feel an incredible pressure to be pretty because of this tangible judgment that they experience daily. To add to the stress, the difference today between the ideal and the real female is larger than it has ever been. "What is culturally accepted as beautiful is achieved only with great artifice - photo croppings, camera angles and composite bodies are necessary to get the pictures we now see of beautiful women" (Pipher 1994, p. 56). Most girls and boys do not know this

though and so they are unaware that the "ideal" standard of beauty is unattainable. Problems start when girls blame themselves for not reaching their impossible goal.

These negative feelings can manifest in the form of eating disorders, depression, or some other emotional pathology. Boys are taught to look for this impossible ideal of beauty which they find idolized in pornography. Their later relationships with women are undoubtedly affected.

I have learned all of this information at college, so I was surprised to see two articles in The Behrend Beacon promoting the use of Internet pornography. I guess

that some males in this school choose to avoid all possible rejection and stick with women who can't talk back. I failed to see the humor in reducing women to body parts.

Deeper though, what is going on in a society that allows this sort of promotion and finds this funny? The fallout of American marriages could be related to the lack of encouragement for young males to look beyond a girl's appearance when evaluating her. It is discouraging to see further evidence of this country's backslide into sleaze at my own college.

-April Hartman

The View From the Lighthouse

Everybody gets a prize

In a move more reminiscent of a kindergarten science fair than an international athletic competition, a co-gold medal was awarded last week to the Canadian pairs figure skaters.

Two weeks ago, in a decision which made professional boxing look clean in comparison, Russian pairs figure skaters Yelena Berezhnaya and Anton Sikharulidze beat out Canadians David Pelletier and Jamie Sale by a narrow 5-4 margin despite the Canadians' near-perfect performance. The Russians had a noticeable mistake in their run but still took home the gold.

After the typical allegations of favoritism, bribery, and vote swapping, a report concerning the admission of vote-swapping by the French judge appeared on CNN. An uproar ensued as the long-standing controversial judging of figure skating was finally proved corrupt.

In order to calm the furor surrounding the decision, the president of the International Skating Union, Ottavio Cincuenta, proposed that the Canadian team be given a co-gold medal. Within a few days the Canadians were awarded the co-gold by the International Olympic Committee to much fanfare. Naturally, the Russians attributed the awarding of the co-gold to the media outcry in America and Canada.

When exactly did we as a people (when I say people, I mean people all around the world) expand the kindergarten notion of "Everybody Gets a Prize" to the most prestigious sporting event in the world? Awarding a second-place team a gold medal in a judged event is merely a tactic by the IOC to avoid confronting the history of corruption in figure skating. Unfortunately, awarding a medal to both pairs is a move more akin to the world of professional wrestling than that of the Olympics.

Had the IOC appointed a panel of unbiased, well-trained judges to review the figure-skating match, then the medal could have been awarded to its righteous winners. Without a true evaluation of the pairs performance, awarding a gold medal to second placed athletes based on accusations of corruption will only further undermine Olympic sports, particularly judged sports such as figure skating.

What is next for the wide world of sports? The tenth place skier in Super G gets a gold because he had as much fun as the first place finisher?

Awarding a co-gold medal only opens up future debate in other sports. What if a penalty is not called in a hockey game, resulting in a game winning goal, and a few witnesses claim to overhear the ref talking about political pressure to throw the game or a bribe? Will we soon have gold medals for the first, second, and third place teams or athletes, silver for fourth through sixth, and bronze for everyone else, so long as they had a good time?

Rampant corruption in many sports has resulted in a loss of interest by the general public. If people wish to see an athletic event where the outcome is decided hours, days or weeks before the event takes place, they will simply turn on Smack Down on Sunday night.

Why we are at war

There is one word that explains why we are at war: globalization. To understand this war we must understand the forces of globalization. But what is it? It is the new international system that replaced the Cold War system. Globalization is the integration of nations, their economies, and the technology which they produce.

The Web offers the best and clearest example of globalization. The world after the three double u phenomena is connected like never before. Individuals can trade stocks online, shop online, chat online and so on all over the whole world. We are all connected to one and other like never before. You can get on a Reed computer and play chess with someone from Bangkok. You can get on IM and chat with one of your friends who is spending a semester over-seas. Distance, simply put, has been conquered by technology.

No more do national lines and borders matter. Governments matter less as well because with new technology and communication capabilities individuals are empowered. We are fighting such empowered people today. We are not fighting a nation but a ring of multi-national, highly connected terrorists, all of whose leaders have been super empowered by the new international system.

bin Ladin kept tabs with his terrorist associates with Jihad Online or the acronym JOL if one prefers. He would often use his computer to monitor world events on CNN. Even if in a cave, the terrorists leader was always up to date and always in communication with his followers. He was (and maybe still is) an angry man, super empowered by globalization and technology.

But so what? What does that matter? How did globalization cause the war? The first answer is that with globalization terrorists were able to

wreak unprecedented havoc and organize in a manner never before capable. But with globalization comes another attribute that has inflamed Fundamentalists in the Middle East. That attribute is Americanization.

As countries enter the global mar-

Look, here's how it is
Guy Reschenthaler
Newswire editor



ket, they are Americanized. To compete economically they have to Westernize/Americanize their economies by making their markets free. With this freeing of the market, a middle class soon flourishes. And the middle class demands representative government. So economically and politically nations Americanize.

But they also Americanize their culture, as well. They soon get a television. They turn on MTV and see such things as half-naked American college students dancing around in Cancun Mexico over Spring Break. Perhaps a McDonalds pops up in their neighborhood and they can savor the All-American Big Mac.

And before anyone knows it, the youth of a nation are watching American TV shows, dressing and acting like Americans, and eating like Americans. This may seem exaggerated but it is happening as we speak. Globalization is synonymous with Americanization.

So a Fundamentalist sees this going on. He/she thinks that America is trying to dominate the world. He/she just does not realize that as the world globalizes, Americanism is going to be seen by more and more people.

And most people who see MTV want to be Americans (I do venture to say that we Americans have the most fun of anyone, so keep on partying to do you part in globalization).

So this fundamentalist denounces America as evil. Maybe they throw up a banner reading, "America is very nohty," burn effigies of our beloved Bush and Uncle Sam, and burn our stars and stripes.

Perhaps the fundamentalists get scared and worry about women having rights. Maybe they get nervous because their followers start to question their way of life after seeing how the democratic half lives.

And leaders of these nations also worry. How can they hold onto their tyrannical rule if the people have more knowledge about the world around them? They cannot control the Internet like they can with the TV (in example Iraq).

So to hold onto power and fight progress they denounce the red white and blue as imperialistic, as "the evil snake," and other such foolish rhetoric. Often on TV you can see these protest and the protester will be wearing blue jeans. Now how can one protest against America while wearing blue jeans? It is ridiculous, like their cause. They are just trying to hold onto to history and to power as progress rips them from their arms.

The Middle East is the hotbed of these anti-American protests. This is because they are at odds with globalization and can afford to ignore the American cultural influence more than other areas. With their oil wealth they can just say to the wind with globalization. They, or at least their top

elite, can sit back and sell their oil for abundant wealth.

They feel that they can use some of this wealth to fund some anti-American, anti-Western terrorists rings.

So a bunch of them get together and blow up some of our buildings and kill our innocents. It is a pathetic, barbaric, moronic attempt to stop us. But when all is said and all is done they will realize they are fighting on the wrong side. They are fighting the most powerful nation in the world who can crush them. They are fighting globalization (free markets, democratic regimes, and technology) and will lose against this social force as well.

Oppressive dictatorships and theocracies can never make their regimes more appealing than a democratic republic and they can never offer them anything better than what a democracy delivers to an individual.

The Middle East sooner or later will learn this and hitch its train to Globalization. They are not the land time left behind; they are the people who left time go by. But they can and will have to remedy this problem. They can't stay in the Stone Age forever.

No matter how you look at it, they are going to be defeated; no one can stop a historical trend. No body ever stopped the Industrial Revolution.

Look, here's how it is: As our nation wages war, and rightfully so, we must understand that globalization was the root cause of this war, or more precisely, backlash to globalization was the root cause of this war. To stop the terrorists we must reform the governments in the nations in which they are based. We need to set up democratic regimes, show them the wonders of capitalism, and give them all a TV and set the channel to MTV.

Reschenthaler's column appears every three week.

