

An Offending Blossom

by Vicki Koon

1. Wonderfully humorous and thought provoking artworks by students in the Humanities are greeted with anger and derision by other students.
2. In answer to the survey question, "Why is there so much apathy on campus?" the majority answered, "I don't care."

"Enthusiasm" is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as possession by a god, supernatural inspiration, or prophetic or poetic frenzy. It is the *joie de vivre* we experience when we do something we specially like to do. "Like learning?" you ask.

Learning is one of the most exciting experiences in life. If you doubt this statement just observe children and how excited they get when they learn something new. They gulp in life, learning as much as they can, as fast as they can, as if there will be no tomorrow. They hate to go to bed at night and are the first ones up in the morning. They anticipate each day because they know that it will be full of new experiences. I once showed my nephew how to make noise with two cupboard doors and for an hour that was the most wonderful experience of his life. Children savor as they learn. They are in a constant state of growth and change which they embrace. They feast on the unpredictable, the unusual, the uncommon. Rather than feeling threatened by a different point of view, they are eager to know it, to assimilate it, and to discard what they don't need. They are fascinated with what is different.

Then the children grow older and for many that enthusiasm for learning is lost. Studies become dreaded tasks, high school - unbearable. Some students drop out physically, countless others drop out mentally. Of the ones that stay in the system, many go on to college. These students aren't anxious to embrace a new idea or confront a different opinion for they have become afraid of growth and change. They cling to the status quo. Rather than anticipating a day because of its surprises, they anticipate a day for its familiarity. Their enthusiasm for growth is replaced with an enthusiasm for maintaining their knowledge and beliefs. Rigidity, that opponent of life, has begun its course.

3. A college environment could be one of the most exciting places on earth.
4. For some, it already is.



Quarters, Parties and Feeling a Little Older

I don't do it very often, but a couple of weeks ago I went to a college party. It was a good time to go because I have been feeling old lately.

My doctor said to watch the high calorie foods that I like. I've been told that I'm not bad looking, for an older man. Another student told me she wanted to go for a beer after a tennis game instead of a coke. How was I to know, they all look 19 to me. Stuff like that. How old am I? You have to read the whole thing.

Alan
Foster



This party was on a Friday in Shippensburg. But before we get to that party I stopped by a friend's house who is a third year resident at Polyclinic. This was a drug party, but not the kind that is getting all of the bad press. The food and sodas were free, provided by a drug company representative, but you had to watch this movie on OC (that's doctor talk for oral contraception). I tried, but Scotty wouldn't beam me out of there, so I went out the back. When somebody invites you to a drug party, Just Say No.

Okay, okay, the college party. It was on the top of this building in Shippensburg. The person who invited me is my age and a graduate student in counseling. We'll call her Susan, since that is her name. She was already there and introduced me to the, we'll call them partygoers. I knew several people already so it was no big deal, being the old guy and everything.

I also knew the music. Meatloaf, that one song, "now I'm waitin' for the end of time, so I can end my time with you." They played that a couple of times, I think because it is a great lipsync number. And there were some Stones, a few Beatles, Led Zepplin. I mean nothing that you hear on Wink, with that crashing urban beat. These songs had lyrics. "I can't get no Sat-tis-fac-shion." Artistry in its purist form.

There was a keg of beer. I swear it was the same keg they used when I was in college. And it didn't get cold until it was time to go.

Something new was hacky sac. I'm not very good at hacky sac and I always say I'm sorry when I don't hit it with my knee or foot far enough for the next person to hit it back. One of the rules is never say you are sorry (just like Love Story). When you do they wail the bag at you. After a while I just kept quiet. So six of us played on the roof until Shannon (it was his girlfriend whose apartment we were in) kicked the hacky sac into the alley.

After hacky sac it was time for Quarters.

Quarters is a drinking game and all you need is a quarter and a low glass. The object is to bounce the quarter off the table into the glass. Then you can tell someone else to take a drink. If you do it five times in a row, you can make a rule. After a rule is made, and you break it you have to take a drink. You have to comply with all the rules before each drink or you have to take another drink. I've been to events at the Governor's Mansion and the Hershey Convention Center and we didn't do any of this. But I think there were people there who wanted to. Shannon was the first with five and his rule was no pointing, then there was a saying that you had to say, something about getting sick, and then another saying. Most of these were Shannon's rules. I think he had been playing this game since elementary school. I finally got the knack and my rule was that you wink before you drink. Hey, it's not that hard to learn, even at my age. Keep reading.

You can't play this game for a really long time or you have to stay in Shippensburg and I had a lot to do the next day. But there were a few who made this an interesting game. All those rules.

Susan and I visited another party for a few minutes, but they were waiting for the police to stop by. Again. So we felt being arrested would not be a good career move and went back to the quarters party.

A lot more of the old songs and a couple of guys stopped by who had been to a drug party. The kind that does get the bad press. They were in the shape that when you tell a series of knock-knock jokes, they laugh at them all. As though it was humor on another plane. We were all invited to their party, but this really would not have been a good career move. Talk about nasty small town headlines.

This party broke up and we all said our good-byes. Usually at this time I get retrospective and start to question everything I did or should have done. I wonder why, at my age, I was on the roof playing hacky sac, bouncing quarters into a glass and having a good time. The answer is not to worry about it. And my age, in the cosmic scheme of things, does it really matter?

(Alan Foster is a communications instructor who frequently contributes to this newspaper.)