

## Bullying creates controversy at all ages



Alex Boles

Think about it. What kind of example are you setting?

I don't understand humanity's obsession with putting other people down. Recently a 17-year-old Kirksville High School student was incarcerated with a \$1,500 cash-only bond for creating a hate group on Facebook against a 13-year-old girl, according to an article on KTVO's web site. My question is, where does a 17-year-old boy get the idea that it is even remotely OK to bully a girl four years younger than him by allegedly encouraging her to commit suicide and promoting hate talk

about her on a social networking site? It's sickening.

As of Nov. 29, the article had 28 comments. One comment that stuck out asked whether Facebook is the problem. No. I would like someone to attempt the argument that there wasn't bullying before Facebook or other social sites existed. Climb out from under your rock and wake up. The old saying is, "Guns don't kill people, people do," right? Facebook is not the bully, the children sitting in front of their computers with nothing better to do than to find a new person to pick on are the problem.

I was told this hate group was made about this person because she was persistent in finding Facebook friends and was obnoxious. Are you kidding me? Wishing death on a person for wanting to be your friend is all you can think of as a reaction? It's easier and less traumatic to just ignore the friend request. Maybe this 17-year-old wouldn't be facing

charges now if he had just clicked a button instead of taking the unnecessary time to create a ridiculous Facebook group.

Coincidentally, I have every intention of starting up a program to combat bullying in middle schools and high schools in the near future. I am talking to an anti-bullying Web site about a possible partnership and met with two school districts in St. Louis to discuss the possibility of using the districts as pilots for the program. But as much as they are supportive of the program and having people my age get involved with such a prevalent issue, they were almost annoyed with the buzz word "bullying." Bullying has received a lot of attention lately with students calling any sort of negative attention an act of bullying, inundating administration and counseling offices with student complaints. Yes, I can see how that might be stressful, but it's an important issue that needs to be addressed. Buzz words

exist for a reason. Someone didn't pick the word out of a dictionary and decide to start talking about it. Bullying always has been an issue, but when and where have we tried to stop it?

Both school districts agreed that we need to implement a program as early as elementary school that makes students aware of bullying and its consequences. I think we need to at least reach out to them in middle school, as well as high school, to reinforce this information. A major problem is that people who are being bullied are combating the situation with more bullying. It's a vicious cycle that pushes kids into depression and harmful, violent acts. We need to remind our youth's role models that children are impressionable and will mimic the behavior of those in the classes above them.

So, this makes me think: How many children and teenagers have I come into contact with, and have I been setting the right example?

Have you? Creating a Facebook group that spreads nothing but hateful and discriminating words about a little girl is pathetic. Thus far I have left out college-aged people in the bullying discussion, but we aren't setting that great of an example either. Being part of gossip sites, posting negative comments about professors on rating sites and using these social sites to metaphorically pass notes about "that girl" is just as bad.

There is no logical reason, to me, for why people bully others. There is no logical reason to make someone else feel inferior.

I guess what I'm saying is: Figure out what type of example you're setting and see if it's a good one.

Alex Boles is a junior communication major from St. Louis, Mo.

## Generations teach different lessons



Jean Kaul

Gathering around the family dinner table, as many of us did last Thursday, is a prime opportunity to reconnect with family members you haven't seen for months or, in some cases, years. It's the perfect time to give thanks for a supportive family and a rockin' college degree. You get to tell your aunts, uncles and grandparents about your (not) successful job search, and your (maybe) useful degree. No wonder we all look forward to Thanksgiving.

Unfortunately, telling Aunt Gladys about your study abroad trip — leaving out the copious amounts of beer drinking in favor of a description of a cathedral tour — loses its charm, especially once you hear Grandpa Will pull out the old "back when" story. You know the story. In the good old days, the days before iPods and the World Wide Web, Grandpa had to walk five miles uphill (both ways) through the snow every morning to school — surprising, because Grandpa grew up in Florida. According to Grandpa, even today's hygiene is sissier. Instead of those newfangled toothbrushes with bristles all the kids today are using, Grandpa used a twig he scrubbed clean in the creek out back.

So maybe I'm exaggerating a tad about the severity of the "back when" stories, but I'm sure I'm not the only 20-something tired of hearing about how ignorant young people are about the technology and culture of yesteryear. In the past few months, I've been asked if I know what "Star Wars" is, if I've ever seen a VHS tape or if I remember what it was like before everyone had cell phones. I've bitten my tongue, not wanting to offend old fogeys who don't understand that the word youth isn't necessarily code for cluelessness.

Yes, I remember what it was like before I had a cell phone — after all I didn't get one until I was a senior in high school — and yes, I know what a VHS tape looks like and yes, I know who Luke's real father is.

Surprisingly enough, we pampered technological youth are living through the "Information Age," so it makes sense that we might have gleaned a few tidbits of knowledge from our constant Googling. And before Grandpa Will asks, I still do know how to look up a word in the dictionary — although the phone book does sometimes prove to be a problem. In defense of youth, I offer this: Maybe we don't have a working knowledge of typewriters, but we do know how to design Web sites really well, and maybe we don't

know how to read the Rand McNally like Dad does, but we are wicked talented when it comes to mapping routes on Google Maps. But I can't be too hard on the older generation. After all, we probably should know how to use maps,

and a working knowledge of the phone book doesn't hurt.

The understanding that younger and older generations can give one another should be valued. Instead of treating one another like enemies, crossing the generation gap can result in some really wonderful collaborations. Expertise and experience can be exchanged, as well as advice and insight. The corporate world is taking advantage of this by offering reverse mentoring. In addition to the usual corporate Obi-Wan Kenobi offering advice to the young, newly hired Luke Skywalker of the world, Luke offers Obi some much needed guidance on HTML. Companies also are investing a great deal in diversity generational training after seeing just how important it is for generations to connect.

So next time Grandpa offers you a "back when" story, offer to set up his e-mail account. You'll both win.

Jean Kaul is a senior English major from Marengo, Ill.

**"The understanding that younger and older generations can give one another should be valued."**

## AROUND THE QUAD

Do you have a special study technique you will use to get through finals?



**"I'll be planning like crazy."**

Frankie Bruning junior



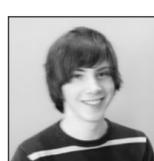
**"I just sit in a quiet room and read my notes over and over."**

Jacob Funke senior



**"I use a lot of flash cards."**

Courtney King junior



**"I'm a freelance studier. I hope for the best."**

Joshua Wangler freshman

## Cannabis education abuses medical marijuana rights



Molly Skyles

Marijuana. Weed. Cannabis. Pot. Most know this illegal substance as a purely extracurricular activity. That isn't entirely the case anymore, so stoners, listen up. Here is a college whose curriculum is purely rooted in marijuana.

Med Grow Cannabis College recently opened in Michigan, offering classes that teach students how to grow and use medical marijuana. At first this seems like a good concept: a school that is teaching the known, but sometimes ignored, advantages of medical marijuana. However, this college is nothing like any school I'm used to. With its pot leaf logo and its barely out of college, 24-year-old founder, Nick Tennant, who seems more a frat boy than a business entrepreneur, Med Grow just seems a bit too sketchy and lacking in any type of regulation to be a legitimate learning establishment.

What first tipped me off that Med Grow was a joke of a college was its curriculum. It offers classes on horticulture and legal matters, which are legitimate classes in this field, but it also offers a class on cooking

with marijuana. Cooking with marijuana, come on. The Med Grow Web site's course summary describes the class as a hands-on way to "eat your work." In other words, let's come to class and get high on pot brownies.

Students at the college say that the school is a business investment, according to an article in the Nov. 28 issue of the New York Times. With the uncertain economy, getting into a new field where there are many interested patients seems like a no-brainer way to make money. However, many people interviewed in this article would not disclose their names, or they said they hadn't told their families about the college. This just further emphasizes my point of Med Grow's illegitimacy. Even the students are afraid to talk about it. When starting a new business or delving into a new field, most people are proud and want to make their name public. Not at Med Grow. Med Grow makes you ashamed of yourself.

After completing a six-week course at Med Grow, students become caregivers. With a care-giving card, in Michigan, one can have up to five patients to whom they legally distribute and for whom they legally grow marijuana. The law regarding the legalization of medical marijuana in Michigan regulates how much can be grown. However, this marijuana is being grown for supposedly medical purposes. Thus, two months of learning how to grow and bake with marijuana certifies you to give

prescriptions for dosages of an illegal drug to sick or even terminally ill patients. Two months is just not enough preparation. If I'm ever terminally ill, I will most definitely not be taking my medical advice from anyone other than a trained professional doctor.

I'm by no means saying that marijuana does not work to help ailments. Joycelyn Elders, MD (note the MD) said on the Web site medicalmarijuana.procon.org, medical marijuana can alleviate all types of pain including nausea, vomiting and other symptoms of diseases, including AIDS and Multiple Sclerosis. Also, it is less toxic than many other prescription drugs. However, Elders is a doctor who has gone through numerous years of schooling to learn these facts. She is not some 24-year-old looking to make a quick buck.

Medical marijuana is a potential asset in the field of medicine. Once the legal issues are resolved and more research is conducted to learn all the pros and cons, the use of medical marijuana needs to be taught in medical schools and practiced among doctors. However, with schools such as Med Grow that give people a reason to think medical marijuana is a shady practice, the true advantages may just get lost in smoke.

Molly Skyles is a sophomore communication major from St. Louis, Mo.

## Government shouldn't control assisted suicide choice



Toby Hausner

Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness: From Rousseau to Locke, the foundational thinkers of our society have had their disagreements concerning our inalienable rights, but one has remained a centerpiece in the modern era — life. We enjoy the freedom to live and to exist, and this right is protected both by our government and from our government. The articulation of this idea has led to many societal debates, which continue today. When life actually begins is a crucial issue

of the ongoing debate on abortion. Questions as to what qualifies as truly "living" have been brought into welfare policy disputes. Does the government have an obligation to provide a better life for its citizens? But the question that never seems to be asked is, does the right to have a life include the right to choose to end it?

In America, we often fail to understand the complexity of this question. It's not as simple as life vs. suicide. The issue of euthanasia is an important one for a society to hash out. Certainly we can see how supporting involuntary euthanasia, like the Germans utilized in World War II, would stand fundamentally at odds with our right to life. But voluntary euthanasia is another matter altogether.

There are two forms of voluntary euthanasia — active and passive. Passive currently is accepted

widely throughout America and is not criminalized by the government. Passive euthanasia is a death when medicinal treatments are purposefully withheld, like cancer treatment or life support. The active form of euthanasia encompasses suicide and assisted suicide. A person is actively choosing to force their death.

We have sent doctors to jail and stripped them of their medical licenses for their participation in assisted suicides. We also have seen the practice legalized in Oregon. Some would call this a socially degenerate move to begin the practice of allowing people, in any condition, to actively end their life. I see it quite differently. After seeing my loved ones die slow, painful, expensive and exhausting deaths, I have seen the light. Stripped of their health and ability, some people simply need to

hold on to the one thing they have left — control of their inevitable, impending death.

How far should this freedom extend? Who has the right to choose when they can end their life? Should it be restricted to only terminal patients? Should there be an age restriction? Regardless of what parameters we attach to who gets the "right to end their life," we give the government the power to define and control our lives.

Perhaps it is my libertarian bias speaking, but I feel the less control the government has in our life, the better off we all are. As stated earlier, the right to life is one protected by the government and from the government. This is where I stand at odds with the current policy. While I would never encourage outright suicide, the policy of criminalizing it seems like utter idiocy. If someone is good at it, you can't

prosecute them. It is essentially a policy that prosecutes people who fail at committing suicide.

If we want to have programs in place encouraging a choice for life, perhaps allowing people a legal outlet through which to approach suicide is the answer. Maybe there should be a program that allows people who are considering committing suicide to work through and decide for themselves at the end. But, when the rubber meets the road, the government should never define life, it should never dictate what you do with it and it cannot infringe on your inalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Toby Hausner is a junior political science major from Kansas City, Mo.