

Major in Mixology no minor feat



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“How many people do you know who’ve had run-ins with the law, lost hours of their life to hangovers, had unprotected sex or gotten injured by unexplained circumstances? This isn’t normal weekend behaviour in the real world. Lucky for us, that elusive reality usually doesn’t hit until a few years after graduation.”

For the past five years, I have drank excessively at least once a week. Before reaching the legal drinking age, I had systematically worked my way through Mike’s Hard Lemonade, Southern Comfort and anything involving orange juice. After a love affair with tequila, I lost my ability to swallow a shot. I’ve been hospitalized once, taken home by the police and made plenty of bad life choices. But among university students, I’m not exceptional, or even noteworthy. In fact, I’m relatively well-behaved.

My undergraduate career was spent at a university where you could get \$2 beer or highballs every day of the week. Monday was the only off-night—unless there was something to celebrate. I drank out of Tupperware tubs, scooped Jello shooters from the bowl and produced empty two-sixers on a regular basis. I could funnel like a pro and kept ibuprofen in my purse. Luckily, I had a strong stomach and was able to balance my lifestyle with a high GPA. I had the time of my life. Instead of being questioned for going out at least twice a week, I was commended for being able to do it all.

Passing out, blacking out and waking up with someone unexpected are considered rites of passage in the life of an undergrad. Not every student goes through their

degree mixing schoolwork with keg stands and shotgunning, but plenty do. According to a 2004 Canadian Campus Survey funded by the Canadian Institute of Health Research, 85.7 per cent of students polled had consumed alcohol in the past year; 77.1 per cent had drank in the past month; 16.1 per cent of participants (representing 46 different universities from across Canada) reported frequent heavy drinking.

On average, students who had consumed alcohol within the past month drank on average 1.3 times a week for a total of 6.4 drinks. Think a six-pack during the hockey game, four times a month. In my warped frame of reference, I would say that involves an incredible amount of self-restraint and an active sober social life. Binge drinking—five drinks in one sitting for a man and four for a woman—simply isn’t something to raise an eyebrow at when you’re in university. Just call it the usual Thursday night at Garneau Pub.

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an environment where it’s commonplace to find at least one friend drunk on any given night, we’re conditioned to think that what everyone else would consider unhealthy is just a part of life. Addiction seems completely detached from our party-oriented lifestyles. But the reality is that while most students may remain unaffected, the beer-guzzling student lifestyle stumbles a risky line between youthful indiscretion and adult addiction.

One doctor at the U of A Health Centre explained to me recently that the line between frequent drinking and alcoholism is difficult to gauge, and noted that many students may have a problem that isn’t acknowledged. She suggested that students can drink excessive amounts of alcohol without it ever interfering with their lifestyles, as alcoholism often isn’t identified until it affects one’s day-to-day life. After all, a greasy breakfast can sustain just about anyone long enough to make it through a couple hour-long lectures before heading back to bed. We don’t live a nine-to-five existence, and we don’t apply the same standards of behaviour.

But what happens after the party ends? Do we all sober up and start acting like responsible citizens? Develop a taste for classy dinner parties and red wine? I hope so—cheap draught leaves a killer headache.

Truth more retarded than fiction

These recent news gems have got me pulling out whoever’s hair I can find



CONAL
PIERSE

In the past couple of weeks there’s been a large amount of what I could call “stupid shit” cropping up in the news. I’m not sure if it’s just a slow news month or a result of fluoridation of our water supplies, but the following news stories have dumbfounded me with their sheer stupidity.

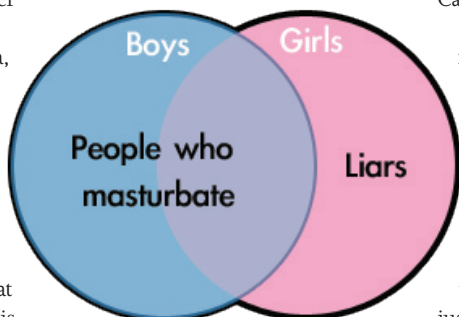
Recently, the President of Gambia, Yahya Jammeh, announced to foreign diplomats that he has discovered a cure for AIDS. Initially, this sounded like wonderful news, because really, who doesn’t want to cure AIDS? But it’s when you get to the part about how his special concoction of seven herbs and spices is a miracle cure that was revealed to him in a dream by his ancestors that you start to realize that maybe he just got stoned and fell asleep during a KFC commercial. This sounds about as effective a treatment as sharing a water bottle with Magic Johnson.

Now, this wouldn’t be a problem if he were just some crazy, toothless hermit trying to sell you anti-cancer pills that look suspiciously like chicklets. However, the fact is that he’s the fucking President, and as such, he should have more sense than to encourage his people to stop taking their proper medications in favour of Uncle Jammeh’s AIDS-fighting syrup

served over pancakes.

In British news, a recent study has shown that the rising rates of childhood obesity are, in part, due to a failure of parents to recognize when their children are obese. You might attribute this to the fact that parents may not feel comfortable judging their children, but in reality, this is a direct result of how overprotective parents have become. Children no longer walk to school out of fear of kidnappers and pedophiles, but I say that running from a child molester burns calories, so why not give it a shot?

Instead, by meddling in playground



affairs, these well-intentioned parents are effectively removing the fat child’s only natural predator: the bully. The role of the playground bully is to tell your child the things that you love them too much to say—things like, “nice haircut jackass” or “you get picked last because you don’t fit in socially.”

This whole idea that children need to be bubble-wrapped and labelled fragile is complete and utter bullshit. Just because another child thought it was funny to play keep away with your kid’s glasses doesn’t mean they’re

eventually going to crush him with a giant rock if left unchecked.

Finally, not to be outdone, our very own University of Alberta has decided to jump on the stupid train. Let me first say that I’m a fan of research performed solely for the sake of knowledge—if you want to study the colour preferences of turtles, by all means, go right ahead. However, this next study crosses the line into true absurdity. According to the research of one Sonya Thompson, more than one-third of 13-year-old boys in Alberta have viewed Internet pornography. This is about as shocking as being tricked into eating I Can’t Believe It’s Not Butter.

The worst part about this debacle is how offended and frightened parents are pretending to be, calling schools and wondering what they should do. The truth is there’s nothing that can be done aside from disabling your Internet connection, and that just means your son will have to resort to paying a hobo to buy him porn just like his father before him.

Any father who’s going along with this needs to stop lying to his wife, and the mothers out there who think that their little Jimmy couldn’t possibly be one of those dirty perverts needs to realize that the reason tissue paper is so scarce around the house isn’t due to it being allergy season.

Personally, I’m really looking forward to the results of a follow up study on the masturbatory habits of teenage boys. They can be conveniently presented as a Venn diagram that consists of a solid circle labelled “boys who masturbate.”

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