

It takes more than lip-service to save the Earth



KATIE TODARO
Mt Spokane

A long-haired hippie stands on a street corner, shouting "Recycle! Recycle my brothers and sisters!" Is he helping make the planet cleaner?

A good-willed girl buys a t-shirt made from organic cotton sporting the words "I Heart Earth."

Is mother nature now smiling upon her?

A magnanimous mother

starts buying only organic produce in an attempt to "go green." Has she done her part?

The answer to all of these questions: NO. While these well-meaning advocates certainly aren't making things worse, their efforts are meek in the face of the monolithic task before us.

Years of careless waste, corporate sludge, neglectful deposits and epic amounts of consumption have finally caught up to us, and people honestly believe that by buying products with "earth friendly" slogans and wearing Birkenstocks they are going to help make it all better.

What is hard for people to wrap their heads around is that unlike all of the other causes paraded in the media, this one can't be solved with posters and lip service.

We are so used to problems that can be easily solved with money. It's easy to drop change in a collection box for breast cancer research or impoverished children relief. You can buy cans of food for

food drives, or Invisible Children t-shirts. Then we get to sit back and watch the money work its magic.

But warehouses of money won't make the rivers cleaner, a bumper sticker which commands you to "HUG TREES!" won't help forests grow back, and a rally

The only way we can start to make an improvement is to dispense with the novelty of "going green" and begin thinking about how we can use less, save more and stop believing that we can continue to have the way we have. The things people can do to help aren't hard, or particularly invasive. They just take a bit of simple effort and genuine concern to make it happen.

It's easy to find alternatives to our earth-harming habits. You've heard most of these suggestions before. Instead of being restricted to the "paper or plastic?" duo, buy some of the reusable shopping bags. They are multipurpose, and multi-use.

Rather than keeping a lawn (which wastes water, the fuel to mow it, and doesn't produce anything useful), convert those resources into a nourishing vegetable/



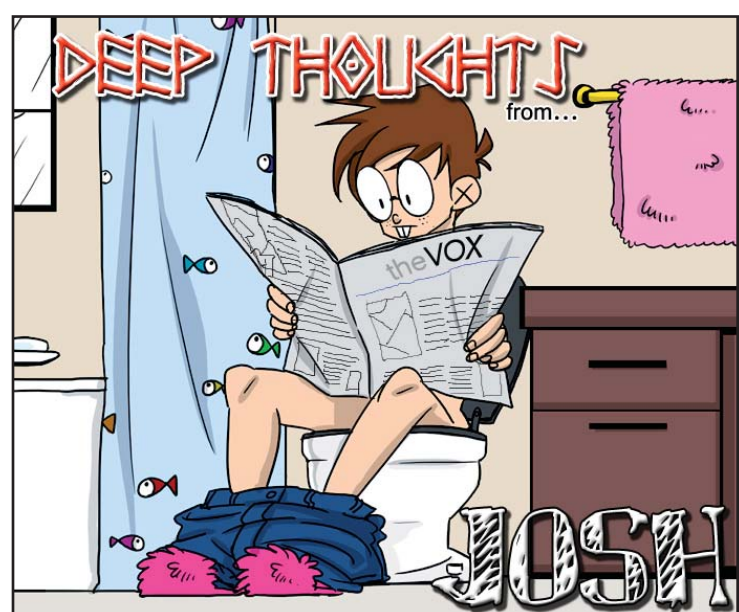
of supporters won't stop the massive amounts of over-consumption occurring in this country.

People are having so much fun wearing corduroy and driving their Priuses that they forget to stop raping the earth. I'm not trying to deny these pseudo-hippies their kicks, I'm just saying they should get over themselves long enough to actually start doing something that will help the environment.

herb garden.

Start turning off lights when you're not using them, bike or walk to places that are within short distance and always remember the hackneyed call of "Recycle!"

Saving the earth is not about what you say, or what you give, or what you buy. It's small, simple actions which happen on a personal level that make the needed changes. You can't count on corporations or rabid activists to do all the work for us.



Longer school year: less laze, more days



JOSH BOSSHARDT
Lewis and Clark

Any lasting society has understood the principle of adapting to shifting economic climates to ensure its own viability in the emerging new order. One hundred and fifty years ago, Horace Mann, a prolific education reformer of the 19th century America, proposed the current school-year calendar that today's society so egregiously reveres. While in the 1840s his plan reasonably balanced supplying more educational time for rural students while allowing them to work on their family farms during a crucial growing season, today, in an economy founded on information and technology, such a device tailored to the needs of an agrarian-based society far from provides this country with the level of

education its youth requires.

As the agricultural economy of the 1800s and the manufacturing-based economy of the early 1900s fade into historical obscurity, this country must open its eyes to perceive a new economic reality in which brain-based industries extending beyond the borders of the U.S. have become the focus of power. The degree to which the increased amalgamation of national economies into a comprehensive global network has progressed now presents developed countries with a formidable level of international competition not only amongst themselves, but also eventually with promising developing countries such as China and India. Unfortunately, international standardized examinations prophesy that the U.S. may encounter a dubious future if several unresolved educational deficiencies continue to plague the nation's workforce. Most notably, in 1999 the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), a renowned and comprehensive evaluation comparing the academic achievement of developed countries in science and mathematics, found that although students from the U.S. compete strongly at lower grade levels, over time their relative aptitude diminishes until they hit nearly rock-bottom at 12th grade, meeting the same par as students from the Czech Republic and Lithuania.

While this debacle undoubtedly originates from a slew of various sources, we can launch reform efforts by revising our anachronistic school-year schedule by implementing year-round schooling and eventually including more school days to the calendar. As for the schedule plan, while several American students enjoy the extensive summer break as time to work summer jobs, travel, attend camps, or simply relax in the doldrums of an environment free from teacher tyranny, studies show that students' minds atrophy during their respite from intellectual engagement. For example, research conducted by Ron Fairchild at John Hopkins University found that on average students lose 2.6 months worth of mathematics skills during the summer, requiring teachers to spend approximately four to six weeks at the beginning of the following school-year to re-teach forgotten material. In terms of time, the TIMSS elucidates that at 180 days of schooling the U.S. falls 13 days behind the international average of 193 and leagues behind the approximate 220 day school-year schedules implemented by countries like South Korea and Japan, both of which scored in the top brackets in the academic comparison. Over the course of 12 years the difference of 13 school-days multiplies to a total of 156 days, almost the length of an entire U.S. school-year; even more alarming is the fact that an average American graduating senior has had less school-days than a finishing sophomore in Japan or South Korea.

We can experience the first inspiration for national policy by looking upon a small handful of progressive schools in the United States that have used year-round schedules. Most U.S. schools that have adopted the year-round framework have implemented the 45-15 Plan in which on average 3 weeks of vacation follow every 9 weeks of instruction. This serves as an acceptable start, but I propose that to compete with the rest of the developed world this country must transition to a 50-10 Plan having on average 2 weeks of vacation follow every 10 weeks of instruction. Experimentation in some United States schools have already shown the boons to be garnered from a year-round schedule. For instance, from 1982 to 1990 San Diego Unified School District compared student performance on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) and California Assessment Program (CAP) to find that students from year-round schools undergo greater improvements in academic proficiency than those from traditional schools, such as how in grade 5 the average percent increase in reading scores on the CTBS was 7.3 for year-round school students but only 1.0 for traditional school students. This trend also manifests itself with other subjects and grade levels, as evidenced by a 5-year study in Chula Vista, California in which 90 percent of eighth graders from year-round schools improved or maintained their CAP mathematics score, as compared to 72 percent of those from traditional schools. With shorter breaks students return to school refreshed without losing intellectual proficiency. Also, during breaks many schools offer "intercessional academies" for students requiring extra help, allowing teachers to ameliorate students' confusions more quickly rather than waiting for remedial summer-school courses.

With the addition of 20 more days to the school-year in the 50-10 Plan, schools can accrue the benefits of both a year-round schedule plan and an increased instructional time that will allow teachers to spend more time on various subjects to ensure the students gain both a level of breadth and depth of academic knowledge. Not only would this plan help students' academic performance, but I believe that most of us would ultimately enjoy it. Think about it: no more spring-time burnout, probably the most-loathed component of the school experience.

This is not a time to wallow in the squalor of our comfort zones dreaming excitedly of summertime adolescent liberty. Instead, this is a time to wake-up from such puerile conceits and adapt to the reality of our world before we are rudely awakened by an unsavory economic stranglegold. Think outside of your own short-sighted desires and lend a hand to the long-term good of this country by supporting an extended year-round school-year.

Apple remote deletion: the core issue



DAVID ROSS
Central Valley

Imagine a world where an automobile manufacturer could remotely control your car. Imagine if Microsoft could shut off your computer with the push of a button at their headquarters, or if a security company was able to remotely deactivate your home security system.

Steve Jobs, CEO of Apple Inc., recently confirmed in the Wall Street Journal that Apple has the ability to remotely delete applications from users' iPhones. Jobs claims Apple has this capability to be able to remove malicious applications, including viruses or worms, from iPhones. Rumors about this shady capability had previously been floating around on popular tech websites such as Engadget and CNET.

"Hopefully we never have to pull that lever, but we would be irresponsible not to have a lever like that to pull," Jobs said.

Although Apple hasn't flipped the "kill switch" on any applications yet, it is unethical, as well as an invasion of privacy, for Apple to have this kind of control. Say for example, you purchase an aftermarket game for your iPhone. A month later, Apple decides it doesn't want that particular game to be available on iPhones because it competes with one of their own gaming applications. Apple then sends an alert to all iPhones on the grid to delete that competing program. Now, those without iPhones might be thinking, "Who cares?" Everyone needs to be aware of this issue, not just iPhone users.

We cannot allow Apple and other companies to have this kind of control over the contents of our electronic devices. Consider this scenario: You purchase a software application and install it on your Microsoft Windows computer. Microsoft, which sells a competing product, decides that they don't want you running this non-Microsoft program. So, they remotely delete it from your computer, only allowing their product to be installed. The capability of remote deletion or deactivation allows for unethical, illegal and even monopolistic activity. Jon Zdziarski, the one who first found evidence of Apple's "kill switch" capability, wrote another scenario on his personal blog. "How about legislation that requires a mandatory kill switch be integrated into every human being, so that the police can kill an individual without even needing to dispatch an officer to a scene?" Zdziarski said. Although the above situation is quite extreme at this point, it is an applicable comparison to Apple's capability. An even more threatening development would be if companies were to go beyond just deleting content; for example, selling the contents of our cell phones or computers to the highest bidder, or tracking our locations with the GPS technology prevalent in many cell phones.

In a society where personal privacy is becoming increasingly irrelevant, we must notice and defy this kind of dishonorable conduct among large companies before it goes too far.



Thought suicide is the new slackerism



JAMES MCCORD
Homeschooled

In the back-to-school rush, I doubt that any of you are planning to commit suicide this year.

As a matter of fact, you are probably planning on making the most of opportunities, meeting new people, keeping your grades up and having a good time.

But there is more than one way to commit suicide, a lesser known form of the deed. Although it is far more likely to be committed this school year, it is far less likely to be reported.

Thought suicide. Suicide of the mind; a painless, self-inflicted death of intelligence.

Ultimately, suicide terminates what is considered worthless. Motives for discarding life are as varied as the circumstances in which they are set, but if life's circumstances are the waves to be navigated, unanswered questions are the

reefs which bring destruction. A suicide is a smashing to shards on questions. Questions without answers.

Faced by what appears to be a futile battle, suicide gives up, preferring silence to struggle.

Why am I here on earth? If I'm descended from an ape, governed by forces beyond my control, destined only to die and be forgotten, what's the purpose in my existence? Am I really just a machine, a collection of chemicals? Where is the meaning in that? No answer.

Is there hope for a better future? Is there such a thing as right and wrong? How can I be permanently happy? If things and experiences don't bring satisfaction, what will? Why should I keep trying? No answer.

So what do you do when faced by these? There are only three options. Door number one, keep looking till you find answers, regardless of what you have to tear up or leave behind. Door number two, suicide's door: determine that there must be no answers, and consequently become a fatalist and despair. Hmm... Door one is intimidating and uncomfortable. Door two is so painful and drastic. But there is another door, a far easier and less complicated choice. Door number

three. You just...

Drop it. You know, go on with your life, forget the whole thing.

That is thought suicide.

You've just gotta get comfortable with unanswered questions. Who says there's such a thing as truth, anyway? Forget that life makes little sense, just get on with the fun parts! Create your own meaning. Stop worrying about truth and get busy!

If the above describes your approach to life and its most important questions, you are what modern philosophers term the Existential Hero. Instead of dealing with the problem, just pretend it doesn't exist. Solved! Or is it?

An unsuccessful pursuit of fulfillment and authenticity in entertainment or success will eventually only beg the questions more insistently. The Existentialist is left free of questions and free of intelligence.

Door number one only will open on answers. You're looking for significance and happiness? Those who seek find. And only in the discovery of Truth will anyone find happiness. Don't give in to thought suicide! Now is not the time to hit the sleep button, and drift unaware and lifeless. Now is the time to question.