

Forum



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"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution

OUR VIEW

Make the best of it

AT ISSUE: Put the worries aside for a weekend of fun

Two things are constant this time of year: Homecoming and midterms.

It might not be the greatest planning on the university's part, but with a little forethought some of our academic worries can be put to rest. For the next 48 hours or so, all eyes in this area focus on Ball State University's Homecoming.

Sure, the football team may have had a rough start, but they're going into this weekend with as much pride and optimism as possible under the circumstances.

We should be, too.

Homecoming Weekend, let alone the

days leading up to it, is one of the few times of the year when Ball State's campus actually swells with activity. With annual events taking place all over campus and an influx of alumni and parents invading Muncie, it's hard not to get caught up in the rush.

Even the most apathetic of students knows something is going on around here. For most others, there's an odd sense of euphoria floating around campus.

It may not be "Cardinal Pride" in the truest sense of the phrase, but there's some sort of spirit within us all — if

nothing else, the remaining days of our youth screaming and kicking to get out.

There's no reason to hold it in, either.

It's about this time in the semester where life hits the average student the hardest. The heat and excitement of a summer's past are now faded memories that seem so distant. Schedules are crowded, appointments are plentiful and weekends seem to disappear into thin air. All the while, midterms loom over students' heads much in the way ominous October rain clouds hang above Muncie.

For many students, stress is more common than sleep.

Homecoming is the pick-me-up students are looking for, but an empty stadium can't rejuvenate any spirits. If not the game, at least get out and participate in something related to Homecoming. It's not just about cheering on the athletes, but also ourselves.

Forget the team records, forget the controversies, lose track of your academic worries and let loose with your youth. Be responsible, but enjoy yourself.

This weekend, it's about having fun.

Happy Homecoming, Ball State.

David Swindle:
SWIMMING IN BROKEN GLASS

Miers nomination more fun for liberals

This is simply too much fun. This whole Harriet Miers nomination to the Supreme Court? It's just one endless delight. The situation could not be more entertaining if it involved pornography, sexual harassment and an undrinkable can of Coke.

What we're seeing in the Miers nomination is unprecedented for the Bush administration. The president makes an extremely important decision, one of the defining moments of his presidency, and he really blows it. And the result: His devoted army of supporters turn on him, stick to their principles and voice their anger and frustration as loud as they can.

It's wonderful. We — the loyal opposition, the so-called "Bush bashers" — just get to sit on the sidelines, munch our popcorn, take a sip of beer and watch the show.

Many of the real heavy-hitters on the right wing of the punditocracy have come out passionately against Miers, either sadly admitting disappointment or flat-out calling for her to be withdrawn: George Will, Charles Krauthammer, Pat Buchanan, Bill Kristol and The Weekly Standard, Ann Coulter, Robert Bork, Rush Limbaugh, Laura Ingraham, David Frum, Michelle Malkin and Joseph Farah and World Net Daily. According to columnist Robert Novak, at this week's 50th anniversary party for the influential conservative magazine National Review, of the 1,000 conservatives there, he "could find nobody there who was not disappointed by the Miers nomination."

I've never had so much fun reading conservative media.

Others within Bush's base — including most Republican senators — seem to be less than thrilled but a bit more open-minded. The phrase that keeps popping up is "trust, but verify," most likely as a response to Bush's claim that they simply have to trust him on the pick.

What's tough to find anywhere, though, is any kind of genuine excitement or celebration about Miers.

Now, she's probably the kind of judge that Bush promised he'd pick, someone in the mold of justices Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas. She's probably an "originalist" and a reliable vote to overturn Roe v. Wade, the controversial case that legalized abortion. But the right wanted more.

The situation is akin to a child asking for a new video game system for Christmas. He's on Santa's good list, he has waited what seems like forever, and he comes down, opens the big box, and instead of finding a new X-Box 360, there sits a Gameboy.

The president's base wanted a real rightwing street fighter. They wanted an intense, aggressive legal mind, someone capable of shooting blue fireballs and sonic boom dissents. They wanted a Bork or Scalia — not just in ideology, but in spirit, too.

Now, keeping an open mind regarding Miers is perhaps the most responsible, respectful position for both conservatives and liberals. When it comes down to it, we just do not know that much about her yet.

She might be much more qualified than the pundits think. It might not be the "disaster on every level" that Bork claims it is.

But one thing has to be admitted.

On October 4, according to MSNBC, Bush said, "I picked the best person I could find."

There have been numerous objections raised about Miers' nomination. Adopting the "trust, but verify" position, some have provided rational answers, but this is one that's tough to defend: Is Miers really the best person Bush could find?

An open mind is one thing. An empty mind is another.

Still, there's hope: The Senate hearings should be even more fun than the pre-game. But that's just a guess.

Write to David at
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Patrick Hogan is a Ball State student. His views do not necessarily agree with those of the Daily News.

Michelle Long: **POSTCARDS FROM MORELIA**

Cooking, eating healthier in Mexico

A challenge: Take a walk down the aisles of your local grocery store or supermarket. What do you see?

Chances are you see heaping stacks of Hamburger Helper, mounds of macaroni and cheese and a frightening variety of 15-minute all-inclusive "meals" in a box.

As well, you will find cans of sodium-soaked vegetables, nutrition labels covered in chemical names and microwaveable munchies questionable as to their real "food" content.

In more than a month of living in Mexico, I have eaten far fewer chemically composed products than I did in a typical month of eating in the United States. In a sense, I am spoiled.

The true difference in the food is the natural ingredients used in their cooking — whereas in the United States, the can opener has seemingly become a staple in our lives.

The head of the kitchen in Mexico is the Señora, or the mother of the household. She buys the ingredients ahead of time and begins preparing the main meal early in the afternoon. Rarely does a man participate in any of the cooking.

Most of the ingredients are fruits, vegetables, meats and baked goods bought from a market, not at a grocery store

— the products at these "mercados" are cheaper, and shopping at them is a cultural norm.

My host mother cooks soups, salsas and other dishes using ingredients such as natural whole red tomatoes, fresh carrots, zucchini, potatoes, chiles, beans and rice. She has only opened a can twice in the time I have been here, and the only chemically assisted ingredients she uses frequently are ketchup and small amounts of olive oil.

Even our juices are fresh-squeezed on a daily basis — mango, lemon, strawberry, orange, Jamaica (a flower) and tamarind, to name a few.

Some people also purchase their meat fresh from the fields. A friend of mine from the University of Michoacán says her mom buys the chicken whole, kills it, cleans it and cooks it.

In the United States, if your meat doesn't come with saran wrap and a black Styrofoam tray, you're probably a farmer or game hunter.

In Mexico, it is also common for a family to prepare everything by hand, especially the indigenous population that lives in the smaller pueblos (villages).

Sitting around the table one afternoon for "la comida" — the main and biggest meal of the day, around 2 p.m. or 3 p.m. — I commented on my appreciation for the natural food I've been eating here.

That's when I learned our house cleaner, Ginita, actually lives in Oaxaca, Mexico, where her family owns cows, pigs, chickens and other animals. The cheese they eat is handmade from their cow's fresh milk; the tortillas are made by hand; and the beans are grown in a field by her father.

There are also far fewer fast food restaurants. I have seen one McDonald's, a Burger King, a Subway and a KFC.

The rest of her pueblo lives the same lifestyle, too.

There are also far fewer fast food restaurants. I have seen one McDonald's, a Burger King, a Subway and a KFC. But there are far more food vendors on the streets. Instead of selling cotton candy, corn dogs and nachos as you would typically think of street vendors selling at fairs, these vendors sell fresh-cut fruit or vegetables, tacos and handmade tortillas on a daily basis.

But as the saying goes, there are exceptions to every rule. Stacked high on the shelves of the Bodega Aurrera — which is owned by (who else) Wal-Mart — Mexicans also have their choice of wonder products.

There are people who do choose to use tomato sauce from a can or pre-packaged, chemically processed cheese, but only on rare occasions do such products come across my plate.

Which leads me to wonder: Is this kind of natural cuisine even possible to find among the fine delicacies of Ball State's ample dining halls? I don't think so.

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FORUM POLICY

The Daily News opinion page aims to stimulate discussion in the Ball State community. The Daily News welcomes reader viewpoints and offers four vehicles of expression for reader opinions: letters to the editor, guest columns, feedback on our Web site and phone responses. Letters must be signed and

appear as space permits each day. The limit for letter length is approximately 350 words. All letters must be typed. The editor reserves the right to edit and condense submissions for length as well as clarity.

The name of the author is usually published but may be withheld for compelling reasons, such as physical harm to the author. The editor

decides this on an individual basis and must consult the writer before withholding the name.

Lengthy letters that focus on an issue affecting students might be considered for "Your Turn" columns at the editor's discretion. Those interested in submitting responses can submit a typed copy to the Daily News office, located in AJ 278.

Tim Sukits:
OH, AND BY THE WAY ...

Wal-Mart's famous convenience, prices come at a cost to all

It almost seems like an essential part of every Ball State University student's life — you have to buy books at C.B.X., show up to class and make a "Wal-Mart run" for everything else you need. I recently noticed that my food supply was at the "half-box of Ramen noodles and Gatorade bottles filled with water" stage, so I decided it was time to make a "Wal-Mart run" myself.

I was greeted by a friendly gray-haired man as I entered the massive 209,000-square-foot Wal-Mart Supercenter. I pushed my cart across the front of the store, admiring the cute winking smiley

faces at the end of every aisle. I entered the grocery section and instantly had everything I was going to need for winter hibernation, and it was all in plain sight.

I thanked the gods of convenience for the temple of "Always Low Prices" that lay before me, and I went to work filling my cart with life's necessities.

Somewhere between the Gillette Mach 7 razor and the TAG Body Spray, I started thinking about my study abroad experience in Australia last semester. Those poor Aussies have to go to a different store for everything they need. They have to buy their meat from the deli, their bread from the bakery and their vegetables from the market. They even have to go to a special stand to buy fruit — I think they call it a "fruit stand."

Men's and women's clothes are often sold in completely different stores — even hardware has its own store. If you want to buy beer, you have to go to a liquor store, and if you want to buy a gun, you practically have to go to America!

Needless to say, I'm happy to be back in the good old United States, where I can get my food, clothes, tools, alcohol and firearms all under one roof.

Australians are pretty good at supporting small businesses and reinvesting profits locally, but they don't know a thing about convenience.

Wal-Mart, on the other hand, knows exactly what it's doing.

New supercenters are popping up in every little Podunkville town in the country. It's like the convenience fairy sprinkling her magic dust all over rural America.

Wal-Mart currently has more than 1,700 stores and is projected to have 3,131 supercenters in operation within five years.

So how is Wal-Mart able to provide everything we need at "Always Low Prices?" Well that's easy: It just pays its 1.6 million associates an average of less than \$20,000 a year for full-time work, force local businesses to close by cutting retail prices way below cost when you enter new communities and buy \$10 billion worth of merchandise each year from Chinese sweatshops that pay their workers 13 cents an hour.

Wal-Mart's got it all figured out. Once it devours the local grocery, hardware and clothing stores, it jacks the prices back up to bring home those consistent record profits that only a true monopoly can get you.

The superstores don't even have to create new jobs; in fact, for every two Wal-Mart jobs created, three local business jobs are lost.

All those small local Aussie businesses should take a step back and watch how the pros do it. Buy cheap goods from poor people, sell them at low prices to poor people and keep opening new stores where poor people live. That's the way the real money-makers do it; it also happens to be the most convenient way, for everyone.

Oh, and by the way ... This might have been my last "Wal-Mart run," unless I'm in a town where it's the only store.

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The Daily News encourages its readers to voice their views on legislative issues. The following legislators represent the Ball State community:

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