

## Educationally Speaking

By Justin Harter – College Genius

Greetings! My name is Justin, you may have seen my face in here before writing about various excursions I've taken over the past few years. I recently returned from London, England in June and once I returned I wrote about my experience. It was at church after that column appeared in the Salem Leader that Esther Chastain told me she really enjoyed reading my stories in the paper. A few weeks later at the Washington County Fair, Stephanie Taylor walked by and I said, "Hey! Lemme write for the paper when I run away to college!" She obviously agreed because here I am. I might have said that a bit nicer, and I may have actually asked, but you get the point.

I got the title of my column from a dream I had last Saturday night. It came from two reasons: First, I was afraid of being dubbed as "Guest Column". That makes me cringe, because it's as if I'm not capable of titling my own work. Second, I found employment for two years at the Washington County Historical Society. My (former) boss Willie Harlen writes "Historically Speaking" for the newspaper and it was in my dream I thought of the spoof "Educationally Speaking". This way there is consistency throughout the paper. You can thank me later.

I graduated from Salem High School last May and I'm now attending Indiana University Purdue University of Indianapolis (hereby known as IUPUI because it's the longest name for a university ever) full time and have settled in nicely. I left Salem at 5:30 Sunday morning and headed for Indianapolis with a two carloads of stuff. Thank you Cheryl Lee for helping me move. You never notice how many things you have or use throughout the day or week until you have to pack it all up. Moving in was relatively simple – despite the heat, sweat, crowds, etc.

I'm not rooming with anyone; I'm much too greedy for that. Instead, I opted for the "single deluxe" room months ago. My thought was that the room must have an extra light bulb or something similar to hold the title "deluxe". I wasn't too far off in that judgment. I have a halogen light in the ceiling and *an extra light bulb in the closet that no other room has*. I haven't seen in any other room here with a walk-in closet either. IUPUI also gave me a small couch. No one else has a couch either!

I remember reading Marcia Walker's column a few weeks ago about her being a "modern day pioneer". I laughed when I came in my room because I now have voice mail, cable TV, high speed Internet and a refrigerator all in my room; things I never had back home. (Yes, we had a refrigerator at the house, but not in my room). I don't feel like much of a pioneer. Sorry, Marcia.

Thus far, I have been taking tours, taking part in meetings and half a dozen orientations as part of my "processing" to be a college student. Ball Residence Hall (where I'm living) has a program called "LYFE" which stands for Living Your Freshman Experience". I have a few qualms with that title because living *is* experiencing and visa versa. Otherwise, I think you'd be dead. But death probably isn't something the school wanted

to associate itself with, so LYFE will have to do. Basically, they're making me attend "social gatherings" and events; one being an Ice Cream Social. Everyone was eating ice cream and talking on their cell phones with people they actually knew back home. I haven't been a complete hermit (Mark Carter told me I wasn't allowed to). I introduce myself as Justin and shake hands, etc. We exchange information about what we're majoring in and then it happens. They ask that ominous question: "So where are you from?" I cringe when this happens because I always say, "Salem, it's about 45 minutes north of Louisville, Kentucky." Then, they say almost involuntarily – "OH COOL! That's where they hung all the witches!" I smile and say, "Not quite." Americans have never been known for their geography skills. Indiana is clearly no exception.

At the time of this writing, classes have not yet begun. Evidently, it takes at least six orientations to get you ready for class and I've only had a measly five. I actually have to take a class about how to be good at working in class. I'm majoring in New Media (you can say, "Huh?" now, everyone always does), which is basically web site design. I look forward to writing in the coming weeks and months about my college experience. Please feel free to email me at [justin@justinharter.com](mailto:justin@justinharter.com) or by mail at:

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