

Educationally Speaking
Justin Harter
October 24, 2005

A Journey on Indy's Not-So-Yellow-&-Brick Road

My philosophy professor Louise Morton tends to think of everything as either a metaphor or an analogy. If there were ever an “age-old” adage to something, she knows it and she has no problems with making a reference to one in the middle of class. One of her favorite things to say is “...college, like logic, is a systematic journey that will help take you places not only in this class but your other classes as well.” One student commented as to whether the journey was part of the Yellow Brick Road from the movie *The Wizard of Oz*.

Despite having heard that phrase countless times in the past nine weeks, the word “journey” finally stuck out to me in class last week. I’ve always wondered why people compare life to a journey; as in any other journey, wouldn’t it just be quicker if we hopped on a plane? I figure people who live to the age of 100 probably traveled through “life’s journey” with a horse and carriage. I’m likely traveling on a rocket ship because my mind quickly wandered from “life’s journey” to the journeys I take to class each week.

Yes, I do live in a dorm on campus but the residence hall is about four blocks from the center of campus, and roughly eight blocks from the technology building where most of my classes are. Don’t call me a whiner – I walk often, and typically don’t mind my walks to class. I like every (and I mean *every*) other person on campus, just load up my portable music player with a bunch of songs (all by Aerosmith) and I’m set. But one day I neglected to charge my music player and was forced to walk to class listening to things like “birds” and something called “nature”.

About 15 minutes into my journey, I stopped to tie my shoe and when I got up I realized, “Gee, Indianapolis sure smells funny,” and continued walking past rows of dump trucks in the construction zone and dozens of people walking by yakking on their cell phones. I soon made another realization and I said to myself, “Gee, looking at dirt sure is boring.” I continued on feeling deprived of entertainment and then I walked through the center of campus. Just by walking through the courtyard I made another realization – “Gee, people sure are odd.”

I spotted some of the most interesting sights that day. I saw an elderly lady trying to cross the street with a walker. A couple of other students were asking if she needed help as I walked by. I turned around and notice she had a backpack on – she was a student! I guess one old adage is true, “you’re never too old learn”. After class I was walking back to the residence hall and a student was standing at a shuttle bus stop wearing a bright orange tail. A young lady passed me by and said, “Don’t worry. He wears that thing all the time.” I shrugged it off and went on my way.

I then came to a crosswalk and about fifteen people were waiting for the signal to walk across the intersection when a guy resembling Otis Campbell wearing a large sign came stumbling towards us. Those of us waiting to cross the street casually glanced at each other and stared straight forward. Our hope was that if he we didn't see him he wouldn't see us, but he came up behind us and yelled, "I HAVE BAD NEWS!" Being the smart-aleck I am, I looked back and said to him, "So does every news channel on TV. What's your point?" I heard a few chuckles from those still waiting to cross the street and then I read the sign he was wearing. It read, "Stop the War in Iraq!" He said, "Well, I just heard on the news that the U.S. just bombed a small village in Iraq. Twelve Iraqi children all under the age of eight died." He kept talking, but I was becoming curious as to why the stoplight was taking so long to change. I respected his right to freedom of speech but everyone looked back at me as if I was supposed to say something to shut this guy up. The light finally changed and we started walking away. I glanced at a few people standing around me and said, "You think he even owns a TV?"

Such interesting things can be seen and heard when you're not forcing yourself to view or listen to one particular thing -- all that happened in just on one day's journey. Maybe my logic class will help me argue with protesters on the street someday. Someone call me next time those guys on the square are back and I'll argue with them too.