

Educationally Speaking
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“I’m King of the World!” (Assuming Salem is the World)

I like to make fun of people. I do it all the time, and most of the time I say things as if it were a reflex. Some people are just asking to be made fun of – like Dick Cheney when he shoots people. Some people require me to quickly think of a witty remark about something they said, but I usually can and don’t disappoint. I’m told that the sense of wit and irony indicates I have good problem-solving skills. I’ve never had a problem before so I have no measurable way to test that theory – until now.

As a college student, I know lots of things, (I get double points for being a college student at IUPUI). As a teenager, I know everything. It’s a fantastic combination and I’m lucky that way. It makes me smarter-er. So, as a teenager and a college student, I will use my super-duper-problem-solving powers to fix Salem.

You might say Salem isn’t broken. But I read the newspaper I write for (so I can make sure my name stays credible) and I’ve noticed that Salem is broken. Here is my solution for the problems Salem currently has.

Problem: Parking on the city square is too limited and courthouse employees don’t like walking.

Solution: Parking meters.

Problem: The County is in need of a new hospital facility, but many claim the funds are unavailable.

Solution: Use newly discovered funds from parking meters to fund a new hospital.

It’s interesting how these problems all work together for the best. That was easy, too. But if the city doesn’t like the idea of parking meters, I suggest removing all the parking spots on the square except for one. That way everyone will be fighting and slugging punches at each other for that one spot. Then the hospital will get lots of business from patients with bloody noses and thus raise the necessary funds for the new facility.

If there’s one thing I’ve learned about college students, it’s that we don’t care about anything except flirting, beer and loud music. So consider yourself lucky that I spent my time working out a solution to your problems. I can do that because I don’t partake in the beer or loud music portion of college life. That leaves a lot of time for flirting and solving people’s problems. You’re also very lucky that college students are generally proud people. We don’t soon forget the people back home (even after we get rich and famous with all of our fancy degrees).

That leads me to my final point – disappearing. With all the seemingly big problems Salem has, I’m worried about its future. Coupled with the proposed extension of Interstate 69 through Evansville and Interstate 65 running in Scottsburg, I’m afraid that Salem will get left behind in this economically stressful era as Interstates just go around the county. My thinking is that everyplace around Salem will explode with life and vitality, and Salem will become useless and vanish. I have this vision of Rand McNally (the map maker) taking an eraser and erasing “Salem” off the map. I envision the Highway Department putting up a sign on all entrances to the city that say, “Salem’s Closed” and then re-routing all the highways to go someplace else. Then *I’ll* have a *really* big problem with conversations that go like this:

Other Person: “So, Justin, where are you from?”

Me: “Oh. Nowhere.”

That’s a big problem and I’m too proud to let it happen. That’s why I am willing to continue solving all of Salem’s problems for free. I know the Mayor and council members are reasonable people and are elated to have me on board as their new King. Simply call in your problems to the Town Crier and I’ll be happy to fix them.