Outlook not so good

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I am approaching my last month in college. Although I find graduation a relief, I feel it couldn't have come at a worse time. The economy is facing a recession, we continue wearing out our welcome in the Middle East and the job market isn't looking very appetizing.

At this rate I'll be working as a valet at Caesar's with a bachelor's degree under my belt and somebody else's Mercedes under my ass. But I suppose it could always be worse.

In any case, our economy is depressed. You can tell by the look on his face; he doesn't even have to say a word. He's angry at the Americans who tried to live above their means. He can't begin to understand the irresponsibility of the banks who loaned these people the money, and he definitely can't believe the government's lack of control.

Home foreclosures are up thanks to the dreamers who thought they could fork out two grand a month in bills while leaving themselves only a couple hundred bucks a month to buy food, gas, toilet paper and beer. That's not going to cut it.

And shame on those banks and their sneaky practices. How dare they raise interest rates and not even alert us of the fact when we sign for a home. Oh, wait. What did it say about the loan's interest in the fine print again?

Then again, what do the banks have to worry about? They have Big Brother to bail them out of any situation that may arise because, believe me, if it has anything to do with money, I can assure you Big Brother will be there with his hand in the pot and a smirk on his face.

To clarify, when I say money, I don't mean that stuff you take with you to the market; I mean the stuff that can finance revolutions, purchase countries and pay off schmuck lobbyists.

I only wonder when it was the leaders decided to discontinue leading the people and instead follow that more important necessity: the all-mighty dollar.

Speaking of having a hand in the pot, does anyone remember that war that's still going on? You know, the one involving America's military backed by billions of dollars fighting against that scary Taliban with RPGs and AK-47s.

If this war continues at this rate it will completely discredit Voltaire when he said God is always on the side of the big battalions.

And who was it we were looking for again? Osama? It's one man. I'm positive he doesn't possess super powers. You mean to tell me after billions of dollars flooding this quagmire in the Middle East we haven't found him? Maybe I'm wrong. Maybe he does have super human powers.

And we are now approaching the presidential election. Although I am not fanatical about any of the candidates, I can understand McCain on his view of… wait. Nevermind.

But I can see where Clinton and Obama are coming from when… uh. Nothing there either.

Perhaps I should change my views to accommodate the majority. Or I could always jump on the bandwagon like some sports fans do. After all, what is a presidential campaign besides trash-talking, egos and power trips?

I think when students finish college they have to make the choice of either changing or conforming.

After seeing a panorama of our present society, it appears too many people have made the wrong decisions in the recent past leaving it up to the rest of us to try and correct the wrong.

So I would like to say thanks to those people. You have now forced upon us a long and hard road to recovery. I hope you achieved your objective or at least made out with a few extra bucks.

So this being my last column I thought I would let you into my head for a bit — like it or hate it.

Although I am a little intimidated by what the future holds for our country, I will do what I've always done and take a deep breath, face my challenges and be on my way.

My favorite things

By **MARY Q. BURTON**
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'I love sugar. Its deliciousness never ceases to amaze me.'

Julie Andrews once sang about what she enjoys most in life. What she described was quite lovely, things like "Raindrops on roses and whiskers on kittens/ Bright copper kettles and warm woolen mittens/ Brown paper packages tied up with strings…" these were a few of her favorite things. Let's reflect. What are a few of our favorite things?

I love the anti-abortion billboards that get plastered across town every few months. Nothing brightens my day more than having some faceless organization's beliefs shoved down my throat as I'm listening to a chipper song like Yes' "Wondrous Stories" or Flight of the Conchords' "Business Time." I'd like to be in the car when a mother with her 8-year-old in the back seat has to explain why Jesus is holding an embryo and how the embryo got there in the first place. It's comforting to have the thoughtful folks behind these billboards making those decisions for us.

I love sugar. Its deliciousness never ceases to amaze me. I generally eat it throughout the day, since it is added to virtually every packaged food on the market. My mouth waters at the mere thought of consuming — in alphabetical order — brown sugar, corn sweetener, corn syrup, dextrose, fructose, fruit juice concentrates, glucose, high-fructose corn syrup, honey, invert sugar, lactose, maltose, malt syrup, molasses, raw sugar and sucrose. Even the loaf of bread I buy has sugar in it. Sugar should be added to fresh vegetables, eggs and strawberry flavored condoms, too. It can only make them more enjoyable than they already are.

I love screamo music. It's fantastic. It brings back happy memories of when my drunken neighbors used to toss their teenager out on his ass for smoking up in the basement. I couldn't understand a word of what they were saying either, but the experience surely would have been enhanced by three distorted, simple guitar chords raging in the background and some girl pants.

As heart-warming as all of these things are, I think I'll reminisce with Ms. Andrews a bit more, and dream of "Cream colored ponies and crisp apple strudels/ Doorbells and sleigh bells and schnitzel with noodles/ Wild geese that fly with the moon on their wings…" these too, are a few of my favorite things. Yeah, cream colored ponies.

'Without education we are in a horrible and deadly danger of taking educated people seriously.'

– G. K. Chesterton

Traveling abroad an eye-opening experience

By **GREG DASSELL**
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Those of us from Kentucky and southern Indiana are not thought of as sophisticated world travelers. That perception is often proven true by our actions when we do travel abroad.

I was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to travel to Monaco and France recently for eight days.

As someone that was born and raised in Kentucky and was visiting Europe for the first time, it was an eye-opening experience. You have a tendency to forget how young our country is until you have a chance to see a place that has been around for centuries longer than the U.S. has been a country.

My wife and I first went to Monte Carlo, Monaco, for a company-sponsored event.

The first thing you need to do before planning a trip to Europe is to figure out where the dollar stands next to the Euro and plan your budget accordingly.

At the time of our trip the exchange rate was approximately 1.6 dollars to one Euro. For you non-math majors, that is no good. Now, unless you figure out a way to control both the U.S. and European economic markets, it is impossible to plan when the exchange rate will be in your favor. But it is something you need to be aware of before you leave.

Monte Carlo is a playground for the rich and everything is priced accordingly. For example, the first night in Monte Carlo we went to the Blue Gin bar and ordered two mixed drinks and it cost 28 Euros, approximately $45. My best advice is to keep drinking heavily and the pain of realizing how much you are paying to get drunk goes away.

Monte Carlo was as beautiful as a post card. In the middle of winter there are still sunny days with 60-65 degree weather and a gorgeous view of the Mediterranean Sea from just about any point in the city.

The Grand Casino of Monte Carlo, probably the most well-known casino outside of Las Vegas, is indeed grand. The whole city gives you an old-world feel with all the luxuries of the modern world.

Without our knowledge, the highlight of our stay in Monaco was seeing Prince Albert walk down the street next to us while we were out sight-seeing. The Principality of Monaco is its own country run by Prince Albert, with the protection of France's armed forces. Insert your favorite French joke here. I sure did when I found that out. The locals love and admire him in a way that political divisions in our country wouldn't allow.

Paris was our last stop. It has the urban buzz of New York City or Washington, D.C. People tend to have the perception that in France and Paris in particular everyone is rude, especially to Americans.

I honestly did not find this to be the case. Almost every single person we came across was extremely nice and went out of their way to make sure we had a good time or help us find what we were looking for.

Paris is actually two cities in one. It has a modern city with skyscrapers and business offices that you can see from the Eiffel Tower, but we did not visit.

It also has another city within the framework of these incredibly old buildings and monuments, which is where we spent our time. Of course we saw the Arc, the Louvre, Notre Dame and all the other major hot spots the books say you should see.

Americans, especially in the South and Midwest, are generally not too open-minded when "foreigners" come to America to visit and the language barrier prevents any real communication from going on. I hear people say all the time, "They need to learn English if they are going to come into this country." We generally don't take that same attitude to the language barrier when we go to another country.

10 Ways to...

Make new IUS traditions stick around

1. Make replacing the carpet in buildings with leaking problems every year or so a new tradition. Hope everyone forgets about the leaking problems. Initially, the only thought anyone will have is, "Hey! New carpet!" That is, of course, until the rain soaking through every part of the building begins to give the carpet that moldy smell again. Incorporate that odor into your milquetoast explanation of the delay on repairs and call it "that fresh, spring mildew scent."

2. Have a "Count the Red Brick Chips Outside the Crestview, Room 209, Window" contest as a new tradition kick off event. They're sure to change at least weekly thanks to the seemingly water-soluble bricks used on the facade. Keep a count, then hold a raffle [illegal, ilschmegal] to guess when the whole damn thing just falls down. While you're at it, explain how that broken CD got up there.

3. Give new traditions names containing words only used by old people or very young children. College students flock to events with words like "haberdashery" or "shindig." There's nothing better than going to the Big People School Wiggle.

4. Lie to students to get them to attend these new traditions. Tell them there's free booze involved. You'll at least get the gullible ones.

5. Scale up the dining. Pizza's OK and everything, but give us a free steak every now and then, and we'll attend just about anything if we're promised cow meat. Events like "The Eccentricities of Eukaryotic Organisms" would suddenly be more interesting if there's a free rib eye involved.

6. Bring professional wrestlers — WWE, not NCAA — to talk to students about making responsible decisions, or something else positive, as a new tradition. We don't care about some schmo who wrote a best-selling book, but we'll listen to Mankind and Mr. Socko about the dangers of binge drinking.

7. What the heck is a "*new* tradition" anyway? A tradition needs to be established before it's called a "tradition." Let's call them what they are: More money-wasting events only five people will attend, but we will continue holding, come heck or high water.

8. We need to spend more money on events that have no educational value, like puppet shows and magic. Nothing says "higher education" like marionettes. Oh, we need more inflatables — and Velcro walls.

9. Let the students have the freedom to create their own traditions rather than concocting them and forcing them into being by using the word "tradition." How about "quality education" as a tradition? "More money for students and faculty"?

10. Incorporate some sports traditions into the academic world. Fire a cannon every time someone successfully explains the General Education requirements. Have cheerleaders do push-ups the number of times a student successfully navigates OneStart. Have our mascot fake fight administrators once a week in The Commons.