

Educationally Speaking
April 24, 2006
Justin Harter

Breaking Laws with Pickles on the Side

Two weeks ago, 20,000 Hispanic Americans merged into downtown Indianapolis for a rally protesting legislation that calls for the deportation of nearly 11,000 illegal immigrants. They all got dressed in white shirts and started a rally on the east side of downtown Indianapolis and then marched across the center of Indy and held another rally on the west side of downtown. I'm all for their right to protest and I applaud their effort to raise awareness about their culture and way of life in America. There's just one critical flaw with their process. The whole point of the rally was to raise support for Hispanics living in this country (illegally or legally) and they hoped to catch attention of other races and heritages. Their rally started at 5 PM on a Monday afternoon. If I'm going to attempt to persuade people to like me, I'm not going to do it at the height of the evening rush hour, block off nearly six blocks of downtown Indianapolis and halt traffic all over the city. I was driving home from work right at five, it took me 45 minutes to travel a usually 15 minute drive; and they wonder why the government wants to deport them. Not to mention this is an INS dream – 20,000 Hispanics, many of which are likely here illegally, all crammed into one city block. This evidently is not a very creative or well-thought process by the Hispanics.

The Hispanics should have enlisted the creative processing powers of college students. American college students are some of the most creative people on the planet. I work with many creative people in the New Media program alone, but you'd be amazed at what some of my friends (and myself) do to live frugally. I won't mention her name but Miss Washington County cooks grilled cheese sandwiches in her dorm with only aluminum foil and an iron. Plus, she eats Ramen Noodles and eats pickles out of a jar as a side dish. Mind you, I have friends that use conventional methods of being thrifty – like biking short distances instead of driving. Then there's me – I bring back platefuls of leftover food when I come back from Salem so I don't have to cook or buy things myself. I've been using the same Pizza Hut coupon since February because they never ask to see its expiration date and a large pizza for \$12 gives me three days of food. I also refill bottles of water at water fountains to avoid paying for another new bottle. I also use half the recommended amount of laundry detergent on clothes I don't think are that dirty and I use dryer sheets twice before throwing them in the trash. You also wouldn't believe what kinds of household problems can be fixed using only a screwdriver and how many weeks into winter it takes me to break down and turn on the heat to save gas.

It's for these reasons that shows like Survivor seem like easy money. I'm willing to bet that if you took a bunch of college students and stuck them on Survivor they'd live for years eating coconuts and drinking dew off of leaves; (you may notice I didn't say I would go on Survivor, I'm just saying people other than me would). If I were ever on Survivor, I'd be the guy in the back with a flashlight saying, "It's bedtime" and "When's lunch?" I wouldn't be very successful on such a show. Unless of course they made a

special “Survivor – White Collar Worker Edition” where a bunch of people got stuck in a deserted cubicle and had to devise a plan together to send an email to the help desk for technical support.

Traditionally, college students have this persona of partying, drinking, rocking and disregarding laws. I’d like to know where I was left out of this because that sounds like a good time. Indiana University frowns upon such behavior and during my orientation at IUPUI, we were informed of IU’s policies on such behavior and they continually emphasized the fact that the IUPUI police had jurisdiction in all of Marion County like any other police district. I have to imagine that during this orientation to “college life”, someone was circulating a secret, undercover flyer that told of “real college life” and I just never got one.

Unbelievably, I have participated in some college-esque things, like my recent induction into the Freshman Honor Societies Alpha Lamda Delta and Eta Sigma Phi. It cost me \$75 to join both and I’m told that once you’re in, you’re in for life. I look at this as an opportunity to break traffic laws (and fit that college student persona). If I ever get pulled over by a police officer for speeding I’m going to pull out my membership pins and hope the officer is a member as well and will just let me go. That’s me being thrifty – I paid \$75 with the possibility of saving hundreds on speeding tickets for life.