

Holiday season is a time of joy

Students should take time to examine what joy means to them.

Joy (noun; Latin – gaudia, to rejoice; akin to Greek gethein to rejoice): 1 a: the emotion evoked by well-being, success, or good fortune or by the prospect of possessing what one desires: DELIGHT b: the expression of exhibition of such emotion: GAITY 2: a state of happiness or felicity: BLISS 3: a source or cause of delight.
 – Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary

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Joy. How do we define it? Where do we find it? Can we find it? Joy. Why is it important? How do we know when we find it? And how do we then sustain greater joy into our life, our work, our family and our relationships with significant people in our lives? Joy. What prevents us from experiencing true joy in our life? Do men and women define joy differently? Is there a universal language, philosophy or defining principle that connects us all to living a life of joy? Joy. What does it mean to you?

As we move into the holiday season, it seems that this is a rather timely topic for us to reflect on. In light of the busyness that surrounds our life both inside and outside of the classroom, how often do we allow ourselves a moment to think about the joy that surrounds us or how it is we define it for ourselves?

In reflecting about the different things that define my "joy index," I decided I needed to examine the literal derivation of what "joy"

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means so I went to my trusty Webster's dictionary. The Latin root of the word joy is derived from the term *gaudia* ("to rejoice"). This then prompted me to interview several students and friends of mine at the university on the subject.

In my interviews of both male and female students, I was surprised to find that their takes on what "joy" means to them were very similar. The men said that "joy" to them was a sense of feeling fulfilled or having a general state of satisfaction with most things in their lives (i.e., being happy). The women's comments mirrored the men's. They shared with me that for them, "joy" is a sense of contentment with their lives and relationships with their families and friends. When I asked them what are they joyful about right now, there was a resounding consensus of the most immediate, their looking forward to going home for the holidays.

A few weeks ago, I was comparing notes with a good friend and colleague of mine, Alan Williams, on this subject as well. And as we spoke about how we both defined joy, he pointed out to me the importance of being able to experience the full spectrum of what life presents to us rather than to be joyful all the time. So he gave me some interesting "food for thought" on "joy" and the value it plays within our lives.

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life perhaps this then allows us to be able to cherish how true "joy" operates in our lives when we may need its presence in our lives the most. Thus my series of conversation with Alan and various students on this subject of "joy" took me back to a poignant time earlier this year when I was grieving the loss of the mother of another one of my best friends at the university.

I had met Paul's mother during her decline five years ago thus I shared a unique relationship with her. Now, 10 months after her death, I can reflect back on my memories of Jean and vividly recall what "joy" she created in my life in her own way. These "joyful" moments with Jean were not phenomenal occasions but simple quiet moments with her. Her smiling when we would stroll with her around the care giving facility as we spotted Mr. Woodchuck in the forest, hearing her laugh at Paul's jokes or watching her rest peacefully at night – these memories I have of her were special ones.

In a way, my relationship with Jean has helped me become more in tune with how "joy" now operates in my life. My belief is that "joy" is something that is available to us every moment in our lives. It is both ageless and timeless and transcends our mortality. "Joy" is both a "life-giving" and healing force in our lives and for others. So as we move through this holiday season, I hope that we will all become more aware of how "joy" affects our lives both inside and outside of the university and in the special relationships we share with our friends and our ohana.

With the advent of the new year, may the "spirit of joy" be with you and yours. And let us always be reminded of this Hawaiian saying, "ua oe loke aloha" that "love (and joy) gives life within."

Gore's act wearing thin in Florida

Recent developments push Gov. George W. Bush towards the presidency.

Al Gore knew at the beginning of the battle for a recount that he would probably lose.

Well, it appears that the election is about over. After much delay and many recounts, court challenges of recounts, and posturing on both sides, it appears that Florida's electoral votes will go to Gov. George W. Bush after all. All I have to say is, it's about time! On election night,

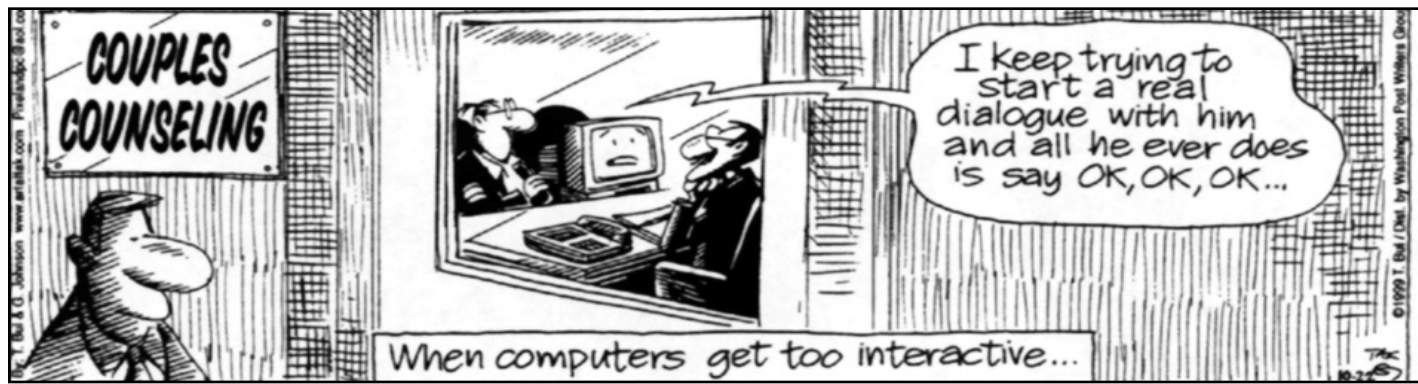
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when the polls closed, some of you may remember that George W. Bush had a lead of some 1700 votes, far too narrow a margin for the election to be called with any certainty. Following the required recount, George W. Bush was still up by some 400 votes. Continued maneuvering was conducted in the courtroom, as Florida Secretary of State Katherine Harris entered and left the spotlight, the Florida Supreme Court jumped on the bandwagon; Circuit Court Judge N. Sanders Sauls ruled that several thousand ballots should not be recounted; and the United States Supreme Court gave the Florida Supreme Court a slap on the wrist for not justifying their opinion on continuing the recounts. After all this delay, George W. Bush holds on to his slim lead in Florida, and unless the Florida Supreme Court reinterprets a law that none of the law professors I saw on CNN and the Fox News Channel knew about, then that lead is enough to catapult him into the White House. Once again, I say, it's about time.

Vice President Al Gore knew at the beginning of the battle for a recount that he would probably lose. Unless he could get permission for his canvassing boards to reinterpret ballots that were thrown out by machine, he stood little chance of picking up the requisite number of votes to change the outcome. The fact that recounts, when conducted fairly, rarely change the outcome of elections was shown perfectly in Florida. True, Al Gore won the popular vote. True, Pat Buchanan received quite a few votes in Palm Beach County, which was not expected to be a stronghold for

him, but it is also true that George W. Bush won when the votes were counted. Throughout all this mess, Al Gore's refrain has been to "count every vote", but what he really meant was, "count every ballot." Count every ballot that has no vote for president as a vote for Al Gore, count every ballot that has an incomplete marking as a vote for Al Gore and count every ballot that was cast for Pat Buchanan as a vote for Al Gore. This has not been the public refrain of the Gore campaign, but it has been the main thrust of Gore's hopes to occupy the White House. All his hopes were concentrated in overcoming the rule of law that was on George W. Bush's side by changing the rules of the contest. He sought to change the definition of a valid ballot, and succeeded in one county. He sought to change the deadlines that were imposed by a court predisposed to favor him, and he nearly succeeded in that as well. Fortunately for the election rules in the rest of the country, his journey has ended now. George W. Bush has been certified the winner of Florida's electoral votes, and unless the Florida Supreme Court can manage something magical for him now, and satisfy the requirements of the U.S. Supreme Court as well, his residence in Washington has ended and it is time to go back to the private sector.

While I have no doubt that the Presidency of George W. Bush will be one of bipartisan cooperation and an era of hope for our country before all is said and done, I have no illusions about Al Gore remaining out of the public eye. He will probably call press conferences from Carthage, Tenn., criticizing the stance of the Bush Administration on issues, and he will probably run again for the Democratic nomination and the presidency in 2004. His support from prominent Democrats like Jesse Jackson, Dick Gephardt and Dan Rostenkowski will not dissolve, even with his embarrassing loss when he as much as promised victory. He may in fact run for Congress again, and challenge Hillary for the Democratic nomination in 2004. As the election in 2000 has proven beyond any doubt, Al Gore can never be counted out of anything as long as there is a narrow legal road on which to travel.



Flying the friendly skies over Thanksgiving break

Nothing is more painful than flying on the year's busiest travel day.

Ah, Thanksgiving. The time of year when we all skip out on classes early, eat pounds and pounds of food that will stay in our bodies for roughly 18 minutes, and give thanks for all the wonderful blessings we have had in our lives.

This past Thanksgiving, I was

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thankful for air travel. Yes, you heard me right, I was thankful for air travel. Why is that, you might ask? Well, it all started harmlessly enough two weeks ago when I bailed on classes and drove to the Greensboro airport on Friday.

I was surprised to find a relatively short line in front of the US Airways desk, and I proceeded to the first friendly and helpful associate. As I checked my bag, she informed me that my flight into LaGuardia was delayed several hours due to heavy air traffic.

Now, I know the first thing you are wondering is why on earth anyone would ever fly into LaGuardia. I don't know.

I really don't, so you'll have to cut me some slack on this one. LaGuardia International Airport is about as nice as a Vietnamese POW. camp (and the people are just as friendly!), but my mom made the flight reservations and paid for my ticket, so I just showed up on time and kept my mouth shut. But that's beside the point.

So the warm, cooperative woman at US Air offered to reroute me through Philadelphia. I would still get home late, she informed me, but at least I

wouldn't have to deal with flight delays and missed connections. I thanked her profusely and went on my way.

The trip home was about as much fun as playing Trivial Pursuit with Brendan Haywood and Corky from "Life Goes On" (I know you watched that show, and I know you made fun of him, too, you heartless bastard), but I arrived in Syracuse on a plane that still had both wings, so I was pleased nonetheless.

My extended vacation was uneventful, but it was more fun than being tied in a burlap bag with a rabid weasel, so I had no grounds for complaint. The real fun, however, started when I drove into Syracuse on Sunday night to catch my flight out of the frigid, desolate tundra that is upstate New York.

I arrived to find a rather lengthy line, but since I was checking a bag I had to tough it out and wait for the first available US Air representative, who turned out to be roughly as intelligent as the bag I was checking.

After minutes of staring blankly at a computer screen, I finally reached over the counter and poked him in the eye with a pencil to see if I could reanimate him, and luckily he blinked twice and began breathing again. He asked me if I had problems with my flight into Syracuse and I explained the LaGuardia-Vietnamese P.O.W. camp thing to him. He nodded dumbly at me and waved for his supervisor.

The supervisor put the now drooling US Air representative back in his kennel and tried to explain the situation to me. Somehow, the friendly and helpful associate that had conveniently rerouted my original flight had managed to erase my return trip reservations. Yes, that's right, she had erased my reservations, leaving me stranded in the airport with two very heavy bags, no car (I had returned the rental car about 15 minutes prior), and no flight reservations on the busiest travel day of the year. Hooray!

I tried to remain as calm as possible, and I miraculously fought off the urge

There were three separate lines in front of the US Air desk, each stretching for hundreds of feet in every direction. The sheer mass of this crowd dwarfed the one outside the terminal, and I wept like a three-year old girl with a skinned knee at the thought of missing my flight because of this.

to kick someone in the groin. I stood at the counter with a hollow smile on my face while this woman attempted to reroute my flight through every airport in America. At one point she had me on a flight into Greensboro that went through Chicago, San Francisco, Panama City, Buenos Aires, Madrid, Belarus, Sarajevo and Moscow. That one would have gotten me back just in time for finals.

Finally we settled on the following contingency plan: I would fly to Buffalo on a flight that was scheduled to leave in 10 minutes, then I would catch a flight to Charlotte, whereupon this woman gave me a voucher to take a cab to the Greensboro airport to get my car. Now that's a winner.

However, with no other way to get back to North Carolina before the Red Sox win a World Series, I sucked it up and signed on for this woman's ridiculous roller coaster ride of a return trip.

I checked my bag and sprinted to the gate, only to find that the flight to Buffalo had been delayed. I sat down and waited. And waited. And waited. And waited. After four more delays, a woman's voice finally came over the loudspeaker and announced that the flight to Buffalo had been cancelled. In the same breath she also announced that a much larger flight to Boston had been cancelled.

This sparked a mad rush of angry travelers to the desk, desperate to get rerouted through anywhere so they

could get home on time. Luckily, I knocked over an elderly, crippled woman, whose corpse tripped up a handful of other passengers, and I was one of the first people to the desk. Unluckily, however, the five people ahead of me were also trying to make the connection to Charlotte, and they swiped the last five seats available that night to any airports that had connections to Charlotte. I was angry.

After playing with the computer for nearly 10 minutes, the woman at the desk informed me that there was no way to get me back to Greensboro in time for my class on Monday. After informing her that I had already missed my class three consecutive times due to my unusual Thanksgiving travel plans, she worked out the next best scenario, which was to fly me into Charlotte at around 10 a.m. and give me another voucher for cab fare.

By this point I was irate. I demanded a free hotel room in addition to the free cab ride and the woman reluctantly agreed. She also gave me \$8.50 to spend on dinner at the hotel, which I promptly wasted on beer. So I spent the night getting sauced at the hotel bar, and I had my tab added onto the bill for my room.

Naturally, I spent a solid 15 minutes the next morning arguing with the woman in the hotel lobby over who should pay for my binge from the night before. I finally triumphed when I told her that "(expletive) US Air jerked me around all (expletive) night and I spent my entire (expletive) evening in an airport with smelly little kids and a (expletive) load of old people, so the airline could most certainly pay for me to get (expletive) drunk after they sent my (expletive) blood pressure through the (expletive) roof."

What can I say? I have a way with women.

However, the debate with the hotel manager put me way behind schedule. I quickly caught a shuttle over to the airport only to discover a throng of people waiting outside the US

Air baggage check area. I estimated the crowd to be no less than 100 people, which I barged through to get inside the airport. Once inside I was dumbfounded.

There were three separate lines in front of the US Air desk, each stretching for hundreds of feet in every direction. The sheer mass of this crowd dwarfed the one outside the terminal, and I wept like a three-year old girl with a skinned knee at the thought of missing my flight because of this.

However, in a brief moment of clarity, I realized that both my bags were small enough to fit into an overhead compartment, so I rushed to the gate in the hopes that I could get checked in and still make my flight. Drenched in sweat and smelling like a yak in heat, I rushed to my gate only to find ... you guessed it: a line of about 50 people waiting to check in for their flights.

Thinking quickly, I rushed back down the terminal to another gate that was empty due to flight delays and cancellations. I found a woman who worked for US Air and I frantically begged her to check me in so I wouldn't miss my flight. She obliged, happy to help me in my plight. With my boarding pass and ticket in hand, I rumbled back down the terminal, knocking over strollers and wheelchairs, making it to my gate just in time.

And as I boarded, I also noticed that my seat had somehow been booked in first class. Apparently, the only seat left on the plane had been in first class, and the woman at US Air had no choice but to book me in the section with the big leather chairs and the flight attendants who treat you like the Sultan of Brunei. So I kicked back and flew to Charlotte in style, reading my complimentary paper, devouring my complimentary breakfast and relaxing with my complimentary hot towel.

And that, my friends, is why I'm thankful for air travel.