

*This weekly column will feature confessions of a Southern, religious studies major. Each week, Jonathan will offer a light-hearted look at the little things in life that can make a big difference.*

## IT'S THE *Little* THINGS...

### End of the World Part IV

*"It's the end of the world as we know it and I feel fine." -R.E.M.*

**Jonathan Chapman**  
Columnist

In the past century we have survived six major wars, numerous conflicts, hundreds of scandals and international tension that has spanned the better part of 50 years. But a new war has begun, one that breaks all previous boundaries and finds its way into our own personal homes. Every day, I arm myself with my right index finger. It carries the arrow on my computer over the red 'x' at the top of the window. I click. One pop-up ad down, 9,999,999 to go.

Every day, Internet users fight through hundreds of pop-ups, shooting them down almost as soon as they appear. Double clicking on the Internet icon on my desktop, I begin to brace myself for the impending bombardment [pop] of these horrible windows of annoyance. At first,

I navigate in peace, checking my e-mail. Then, I make the move they were waiting for — I check my Hotmail account.

Suddenly, I am in the midst of a war zone. One comes in on the right. There's another on the left. Then from the bottom. Then they drop the big one — an ad pops up and shakes at me! I can handle an advertisement or two, but when one shows up and starts shaking at me, my patience drops to zero. I click in rage. First here, then there. My anger builds until I finally succumb to the ads and close my browser with complete and total abandon. The companies won that battle.



**Jonathan Chapman**

And the thing is, the companies win all the battles.

Maybe I'm totally off target, but these companies that sponsor such advertisements must realize the war zone they have created by bringing these pop-ups into our homes. So my question is, why are these companies purposely making my (and the rest of the world's) Internet experience miserable? Do they have it out for anyone who connects to the World Wide Web?

Perhaps I am over analyzing. Lets look at this logically.

Companies make money by selling products or services. They are able to sell such products and services by advertising. I learned that in eighth-grade economics.

What they didn't teach me in eighth-grade economics is that the most effective way of advertising is to annoy the [pop] out of

Internet users.

Let's face it, the last time I wanted to get someone's attention, the first thing I thought to do was to take out massive amounts of pop-up windows to grab my target's precious [pop] time. Obviously, this irritating scheme of complete pop-up immersion is working because every time I log onto the Web, more and more ads appear.

This revelation leads me to my next [pop] question: Who are the Einsteins who keep clicking on these maddening windows? I don't know any, at least I hope I don't, because I might just be forced to sever all ties with them. Maybe complete alienation is too harsh, [pop] but I will most definitely be forced to rethink our relationship.

Perhaps the [pop] problem doesn't lie in those who continuously click these exasperating pop-ups. Why should we punish the people who [pop] have fallen prey to the evils of diabolical ads? Instead, we should create a blacklist of companies that use pop-ups.

First appearance on the list, they are considered a low threat — a [pop] warning is sent to the company [pop] encouraging them to stop using pop-up ads as a means of advertising.

If a day passes and [pop] it has

yet to react to the initial warning, it will be subject to a slightly less tolerable response. The companies [pop] behind the annoying advertisements [pop] will be placed on the "second strike list."

This list leads to restriction of Web site size and accessibility for a specific amount of time. The extent of this punishment will be determined by a specially created tribunal that would handle all inadequacies concerning Internet advertising.

The third strike [pop] warrants more aggressive action.

Webmasters [pop], publicists and, depending on the severity of the offense, CEOs, will be arrested and submitted [pop] for research helping to analyze the [pop] effects of the excessive [pop] viewing of pop-up ads.

Perhaps this [pop] scheme is a [pop] little unrealistic. Maybe the [pop] advertisers don't realize the hateful emotions some Internet users [pop] are beginning to harbor for their companies. Whatever the case, the pop-ups are going [pop] to have to stop before [pop] we [pop] all [pop] go [pop] insane. [pop]

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## College students should plan their futures, not just plan to graduate

**Bonnie Fitzpatrick**  
Columnist

Last week, my mom told me, "When people ask me what you're majoring in, Bonnie, I tell them snowboarding, ice hockey and horseback riding." Sadly, this is more than accurate. Going into the last semester of college, the most tangible examples of my "education" are ice hockey medals from the state games, some old plane tickets to Colorado for a snowboarding trip and some blue ribbons hanging in my tack room, at my horse stable. One semester I studied tanning and working out while I worked and lived on the Florida coast.

While in college, I can't say that I took too many classes. One semester I took eight hours, the next semesters I took 12. I took some interesting classes, too: Dance in Worship, Canoeing and Literature, Creative Writing and Mediation. I even took a semester off.

When I returned to college the summer



**Bonnie Fitzpatrick**

after my semester off, my only concern was to graduate on time, regardless of how many more hours than usual I would have to take or how many interesting classes I would miss. I didn't care if I received a degree in creative writing or in general studies; I was just going to graduate in four years, period. It turns out it can be done, but it is a big joke.

If your only goal in college is to graduate in a certain period of time after not taking nearly enough "real" classes, you are most definitely not going to graduate with enough "real" knowledge in one given area to feel marketable in a struggling job economy.

I want to know if my whole education is only about getting me in the door after graduation. Do we all have to have a low-paying, boring and dispensable job for a year or two after college to learn what we should have learned in college, or have the professors and academic advisers lost touch with the world outside of the academic college bubble?

In order to set my goal in the right direction, I gave all my educational aspirations to an adviser. This adviser is someone who is supposed to help you obtain your dreams by directing your education in the best way possi-

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ble. It seems reasonable to ask that you have views similar to your adviser's so they understand your intended career path. I had big plans that I was going to do everything differently than the typical college graduate. My father never went to college, yet has earned a living that put him into a higher than average class.

From an early age, I decided I would get a college education, but it would only be for security. My \$80,000 piece of paper would show potential employers I was just as intelligent as the next Joe Schmo. With all my activities and hobbies, there was no way I would graduate college and get a 9-to-5 job in a cubicle when my horse is waiting and there is fresh powder on the slopes. But how do you tell your college adviser that all this preparation is really never going to be of interest to you personally, but thanks for all the help and

encouragement?

I think it is time we take our lives and our future job desires into our own hands. Why don't we learn what we like to do and create jobs around things we want to do, instead of getting herded into the typical market the professors know? Instead of sitting around hoping to make the necessary contacts to develop a life we want to live, we should go out and get internships outside of our majors and not listen wholeheartedly to advisers who don't know what we are truly capable of beyond the classroom walls. There is no reason to believe any one of us could not find or create a job we will be happy with after college, because after graduation a degree is really nothing more than an expensive piece of paper.

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