

Informed Voting: The Great American Responsibility

By Caitlin Haney

The excuses are endless.

It is too much work. My vote won't matter anyway. I do not like either of the people running. All politicians are liars. They will not follow through with their promises so there is no way to know who to vote for. Both people will just mess up the country. It does not matter what party they represent, Presidents will lie. Money controls the country, not politics. My family tells me which party to vote for. The issues will not affect my daily life.

There are countless reasons why people refuse to learn the issues of elections. In a time of extreme economic crises, multiple international military conflicts, and changing social relationships it is mortifying to hear so many of my peers express these sentiments. Most people are comfortable admitting that voting is important, but strangely enough people are less likely to admit that learning about the candidates and their issues is even more important. Voting is great and an important American right, but it corresponds to an even more important American responsibility.

As Americans with tremendous

capabilities for obtaining information there is no reason why an individual cannot easily, and almost effortlessly, become at least minimally informed about the main issues in politics today. Freedom of press is a privilege belonging to only a miniscule percentage of world citizens, yet Americans refuse to take advantage of the broad scope of opinions available.

Some students suffer from a diverse range of unawareness. The worst kind involves complete lack of exploration. These individuals are often completely ignorant of things going around them, even lacking recognition of the problems. Then there are those who at least aware of the problems yet lack intelligent opinions or insight. Some people have a general idea as to how they feel about issues, but fail to do any research into the different aspects of the issue at hand. These individuals may only listen to new programs that express the same opinions they hold, or they fail to question bias sources found on the internet. Most do not even know from where the information originates. With so many sources from which politicians derive information it

is easy to avoid ideas that conflict with one's own. But many do not realize that confrontation with a conflicting idea can actually reaffirm one's own stance on an issue. Such confrontations force the individual to take a second look at what may have originally been taken for granted, forcing a conscious choice as to whether or not you will accept a doctrine in its entirety. It is also possible that under closer scrutiny one may discover faults within an idea after all.

Only by taking at least a minimal look at multiple opinions about a problem can someone really consider being informed about an issue. Then, and only then, are people really exercising their right to vote as American citizens. For many students at St. Andrews the 2008 election is the first time they will be allowed to vote in a national election. It is crucial not to take this opportunity lightly; everyone should live up to the American responsibility of becoming an informed voter.

Fall Fashion Trends

By Kelsey Moody

The leaves are turning and its getting cold, which can only mean one thing—fall is here! This brings up the dreaded decision of what to wear. This fall its all about bold statement jewelry, a little bit of 80s, some feathers and fur, extremely high heels, and anything purple. The key to owning these fall trends is not to be afraid. When you look through

magazines and you see a trend that sparks your eye, go for it! If people look at your in a weird way, let them stare! Maybe they will get the hint and realize they need to get aboard the fashion train. Always remember that everyday is like a fashion show; the world is your very own runway.

Get Hip:
A few of
fall's latest
must-
haves.
*Picture
courtesy of
Kelsey
Moody.*



Education: Making it Worth Your While

By Lisa Garber

"I can't stand silence." Seated at my kitchen counter, Laura Long shakes her head while anticipating the roll of sushi I promised her for taking part in my interview.

"I'd rather listen to an opinionated person yap all period than struggle to make people talk all the time." As I slice the homemade Philly roll (salmon, cream cheese, and onion) into bite-size, fellow Senior Caitlin Haney adds, "It's like a vacuum. You can put all the ideas you want out there, but if they don't bounce back, you've got nothing."

Can you imagine a lawyer—someone defending someone's life—being too lazy to read a book? Does it make you cringe when you think of an athlete who plays into the stereotype by riddling his or her written assignments (the few he or she turns in) with spelling, grammatical,

and factual errors? How about a general education major—who will one day teach our own children—who doesn't care to show up to class on time, never mind stay awake for its duration? Quest I Teaching Assistants like Long and Haney, and Resident Assistants like Caitlyn Johnson wrestle with these fears daily, and, frankly, they're a little worried.

"One of the things that bothers me the most," Johnson laments in an online interview, "is the way students seem to be able to justify the way they waste their college careers by not attending class meetings, writing mediocre papers, spending many a night intoxicated without also taking the time to execute the various responsibilities which come with being a student."

Long considers the possibility that many students, especially but not limited to

underclassmen, have yet to switch from methodical high school to the explorative and more mature experience of college. She is incredulous, however, that some St. Andrews students have made it this far. Frankly, so am I.

"Kids use 'U' for 'you,' or the number two (2) for 'too,'" a self-described 'flabbergasted' Long says. "They don't capitalize letters at the beginning of a sentence. They write papers and e-mails to their professors like they're still on IM (Instant Messaging)."

In other words, many students have failed to recognize St. Andrews as college instead of a blog, and have not processed the explicit rule of written submissions: they must be professional and well-researched. This is not Wikipedia. And in case you think Wikipedia is a scholarly source, here's *(Continued on page 7)*