

Opinions

Purge your friends and save us all

Facebook encourages lack of depth in real relationships



Rachel Southmayd
Columnist

Five years ago, friends were the people you called when you wanted to go to the movies. They were the ones who would hold your hand in good times and bad, the ones that would pretend to care when you showed them pictures of your latest vacation (in person, mind you, not on a screen). They were the ones who would come to your grandmother's funeral,

get you a great, thoughtful gift for your birthday and actually laugh when you said something funny, not just absently type "LOL."

Enter the beast that has become the social network universe. Enter the world of Facebook, where "friends" can be anyone from the girl you grew up next to, or a distant cousin of a half-brother's ex-wife's manicurist's dog groomer. Enter Jimmy Kimmel, the late-night television personality who has declared Nov. 17 "National UnFriend Day."

According to the show's website, Kimmel believes Facebook is taking the meaning out of

the word "friend" and is encouraging users to cut back on the number of people to whom they bestow that title.

While this move on Kimmel's part may be more of a joke than an actual call to action, I implore Elon University students to take advantage of this day, and cut back on the countless number of people on Facebook who you don't really consider a "friend."

A friend is someone who would drive you to the airport at 5 a.m. When you're moving into a new apartment, a friend comes to help you haul your gigantic couch up five flights of stairs. If your life suddenly sounds like a bad country song, a friend gives you a place to sleep, a fridge to raid and a shoulder to cry on. How many people can say that about the majority of their Facebook friends?

While it may seem fun to rack up hundreds, or even thousands of friends on Facebook, consider how much you reduce the value of each one of those people as you acquire dozens more who mean very little to you on a personal level.

It's good practice not to post anything online that you wouldn't also share in polite company is the real world, so continue that practice with "friends." Don't "friend" people who you wouldn't call up to chat with in real life. Don't value your quantity of friends, both real and online, more than the quality.

We are who we are, or are we?

Fairness in sport is questioned when transsexuals compete



Bristol Whitcher
Columnist

The idea of transsexuality may have been at one time unimaginable to discuss within a society. But times are changing and this is a serious issue, like gay rights and the war on terror, that needs to be in the public's eye.

It is important to understand what exactly defines a transgendered individual. In basic terms, it is a mind that is literally trapped in a body of the opposite sex. These people feel stranded inside a "shell" which doesn't belong to them. One option is to have

gender reassignment surgery, in which the patient's sex is physically changed by surgery, hormones and a complete reversal in lifestyle. Much of the controversy surrounding this issue pertains to transgendered individuals and their competition in athletic contests.

The main question is: "Should these transsexual individuals be allowed to compete in athletic competition, alongside counterparts of their newly reassigned sex?" This brings about another serious question: "Is prohibiting their participation just?" The answer is no, it is not right to forbid these individuals from playing. Though that may be wrong, sometimes a transsexual's advantages in competition aren't completely fair either.

An example presented by CNN brought to attention female golfer Lana Lawless and her participation in events such as the Long Drive Challenge. She won this competition in 2008, driving more than 250 yards. This past year, the Long Drive Association changed the rules prohibiting her and other transsexual individuals from participating. The Ladies Professional Golf Association has a similar standard, enforcing the "women-born-women" rule.

Joyce Davis, chair of the Exercise Science department at Elon University, said that Lawless would have an advantage, but simply because of "biologically longer limbs." She explained that sports such as golf use "kinetic chains," or linked systems of different segments. Because she was born with previous skeletal system of a male, her bones are longer, thus resulting in the ability to make the ball go farther. She also explained that the hormone treatments are going to have a very drastic effect on changing the build and muscle structure of these individuals, greatly weakening them, especially in the case of Lawless. These changes could negatively affect the performance of those individuals.

The LPGA and LDA are two examples of governing bodies that can set the parameters for transsexual individuals and their participation. These two groups allow participation strictly within the gender one is born with. But other institutions such as the International Olympic Committee allow transsexual individuals to participate under the conditions that two years of hormone replacement therapy have been completed, the individual is legally registered under the new sex and the sexual reassignment surgery has been completed.

The NCAA, for example, does not have any specific requirements for transsexual individuals. They have "recommendations," but currently no specific standards. As Gary Brown reported for the NCAA news, the aims of the organization are to "maintain the integrity of women's sports but also provide an equitable opportunity for transgender student-athletes to participate."

This brings us back to the question, "is it fair?" Personally, no, I do not think it is fair. But again, the question of "is it right?" gets brought up. Personally, yes, I think it is right for these individuals to play. These topics bring about a constant battle between what is right and fair, and in this case, justice is far more important. Davis also said that being transsexual is "not just biological and anatomical. It's cultural, ethical, societal and built on life experiences which surgeries and hormones cannot take away." Because of these things that can physically not be changed, it would not be right to forbid these individuals from playing as who they truly believe they are meant to be.

Ban alcohol at sporting events

No upside to public intoxication in athletic venues



Steve Roth
Guest Columnist

Throwing up on other people, using public spaces as bathrooms, physically assaulting random strangers and using extremely profane language around small children are all specific ways of ruining sporting events for nearly everyone. Yet, we see countless examples of this when we go to events, and occasionally see these behaviors on national television.

Although some people may blame this problem on the bad attitudes of a select few, the real truth is that almost all of this occurs because of the presence of alcohol at sports games. Many fans like to think beer and sports go together like peanut butter and jelly. If this is the case, I'm switching over to tuna sandwiches. Although perhaps a bit extreme, sports stadiums should ban alcohol for good.

I can hear the booing and outrage, but hear me out. First of all, let's take into consideration that no matter how many people can control their alcohol consumption, there are many who can't. Put all of those people together in one giant stadium and it's a recipe for disaster. These "fans" seemingly attend these sporting events not to socialize or to root for their favorite team, but to trash their bodies and make fools of themselves.

We've seen this chaos inside stadiums and we've seen this chaos in the parking lots prior to games. Some tailgaters, who have been drinking since 7 a.m., have no problem filing into the stadiums after consuming alcohol. Since we cannot stop these drunks from bringing alcohol into parking lots without doing detailed checks on every vehicle that enters, there must be rules instituted to prevent them from purchasing more alcohol in the stadium.

So if stadiums can't sell beer, how are they going to make their money? This seems to be a key argument in a situation like this. Once

alcohol is banned and people know that they can no longer get beer, they are more likely to buy sodas, lemonade, water, etc. from the many concessions and vendors available. Even though soft drinks are considerably cheaper than alcohol, stadiums and teams can still make a profit. For example, according to Team Marketing Report's 2009 data of NFL merchandise and food prices, the average 17-ounce beer costs \$6.80 while the average 21-ounce soft drink costs only \$4.09. So instead of someone buying two 17-ounce beers, that individual could now use the money to purchase three 21-ounce soft drinks and still have some money left over for a snack.

Examples of banning and reducing the amount of alcohol sold have been popping up all over sports in recent years. In 2008, when the Philadelphia Phillies won the World Series, they paraded through the city and the celebration culminated in their home stadium. Only on this historic day in the city's history was alcohol banned in the entire stadium. Because of this, not a single negative incident was reported.

The NBA began reducing alcohol consumption a few years ago by cutting off sales at the start of the fourth quarter of all games. They also placed a limit on the size of each drink to 24 ounces, and limited each customer to two drinks per purchase. But this does nothing when that customer comes back several times to buy more alcohol and is so inebriated by the fourth quarter that there is no "wear-off" effect. The drunken fan then endangers lives on the drive home.

Even the grand Yankee Stadium began to change longstanding rules in the early 2000s by banning alcohol in the bleacher seating section of "the House that Ruth built." Lonnie Trost, the team's chief operating officer stated then, "It is the Yankees' responsibility to take every reasonable step to maintain a fan-friendly environment throughout the stadium, and we feel this is a positive and proactive decision."

For those of us who prefer getting our money's worth at a sporting event by being able to truly enjoy rooting for the home team with our friends and family with a hotdog in one hand and a foam finger on the other, this change would mean the world.

I'm sorry Ms. Jackson, my blog's for real!

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