

Unawareness

Technology



In the last few days, I've noticed that the majority of students I cross on my way to class show absolutely no attention to the beautiful environment we have present on campus. Unfortunately, many of us only see the flaws in our campus such as missing chunks of gravel, spray painted dumpsters, overflowing trashcans, and cigarette butts variously spread about. While these things do cause an eye sore as students head to class, we must realize that we're overlooking many aspects of our surroundings.

On the short walk from Morrill Hall to the Humanities and Social Sciences Building, there are dozens of birds, squirrels, towering trees, and latching vines that truly show the complexity of nature. Without paying attention to our surroundings, we will never truly appreciate all of the individual living things that are right in front of us on a daily basis. Without stopping to observe nature, we will fail to understand how these natural living things not only provide beauty but also play a vital role in our ecosystem.

By observation and study, we will begin to realize how all of nature works together and gain a new appreciation for our wonderful surroundings. Gilbert White said, " The most insignificant insects and reptiles are of much more consequence, and have much more influence in the economy of nature, than the incurious are aware of; and are mighty in their effect, from their minuteness, which renders them less an object of attention; and from their numbers and fecundity. " Some of the unawareness can be blamed on modern technology such as cell phones, laptops, and mp3 players.

There is a saying regarding the issue of technology, " The more you have, the more you'll want. " People are constantly shortening their attention

spans by expecting a text to come every minute or waiting to sing along to the next song on their playlist. Sadly, people drive themselves crazy when they are presented with more than five minutes of silence. Mother Teresa said, " We need to find God, and he cannot be found in noise and restlessness. God is the friend of silence.

See how nature - trees, flowers, grass - grows in silence; see the stars, the moon and the sun, how they move in silence...We need silence to be able to touch souls. " Even the nonreligious can agree that silence presents a somewhat religious, calming presence. Annie Dillard warns people to live less like weasels and more like humans. Weasels sleep in their underground dens and sometimes live underground for two days without leaving. Outside, they stalk rabbits, mice, muskrats, and birds, killing more bodies than they can eat warm, and often dragging the carcasses home so they can remain underground for another few days.

Many people spend days without leaving their homes and, consequently, don't experience the beauty of God's creation and, ultimately, live like weasels. Some people do not appreciate the beauty of nature and are unaware of their magnificent surroundings throughout life. In my opinion, nature is perfect itself. We have simply allowed technological advances and everyday noise to divert our attention from our natural environment and the peace and tranquility that it can bring.

I'm not asking people to eliminate technology; I'm just encouraging my fellow students not to take our beautiful campus for granted. I am suggesting that we take time each day to turn off electronics, spend a few minutes

outside, and be silent long enough to see and appreciate the beauty throughout our campus. I believe that taking the time to be alone and observe nature can be the most beneficial, meditating way to begin or end a student's long, hectic day of classes.