

When Politicians Stop Caring About Health Care

CAROLINE REN
Editor in Chief

With President Barack Obama's State of the Union address and House Representative Cathy McRodgers' response, health insurance plans are once again shoved into the limelight. However, what many fail to address in the squabble over the Affordable Care Act, colloquially known as Obamacare, is that the American health care system is far more deeply flawed than is commonly presented.

Hospital bills charge for tests, dressings, care by length of stay, drugs, therapy and various other services that rack up thousands of dollars in charges that devastate the uninsured and underinsured. There is no set standard for how much a hospital service costs. According to Forbes, the average cost of treatment for a patient at the Lincoln Medical and Mental Health Center in New York is \$7,044, while the average cost at the Bayonne Hospital Center in New Jersey is \$99,690. The two hospitals are less than 20 miles away from each other.

In a society driven by greed, both hospitals and private insur-

ance corporations have disregarded ethical standards. When hospital costs go up, so do insurance premiums, resulting in net gain for both parties. Neither really checks or balances the other as it should, meaning that costs simply keep steadily increasing while patients must either pay hefty sums for their treatments or be denied care because they cannot afford to pay.

Compared to other nations, America charges far more for hospital care, to an extent that has become downright ludicrous. According to the Washington Post, each day a person spends in an American hospital could mean anywhere from another \$1,514 to \$12,537 added onto the bill, while the cost per day in Argentina, Spain, South Africa, the Netherlands, France and Chile is under \$1,000. Despite the enormous disparity between costs

in the U.S. and costs elsewhere, our health care is not significantly better in terms of quality,



and even the same brand-name drugs that are used elsewhere can cost up to five times more here.

Something to keep in mind is that not all countries spend equally, since income disparities do exist, meaning that residents of richer nations will spend more. However, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Americans have around the same income level as people from Switzerland, yet we spend \$3,000 more per person per year on health expenditure than they do. Spend-

ing on hospitals, physicians, dentists, pharmaceuticals and administration in the health care system is higher in the U.S. than in many other OECD nations as well.

What House Republicans need to realize is that instead of fruitlessly attempting to repeal an act that they have failed to remove or defund in over 40 instances, they should be working together to fix a corrupt health care system that takes advantage of the lack of governmental regulations. Making sure that citizens are adequately insured is an important issue, but Congress has become so fixated and single-minded about Obamacare that they repeatedly waste time that could be spent figuring out how to centralize hospital prices the way other countries do so that costs don't fluctuate wildly.

In essence, the root of America's health care problem resides in more than how citizens come about their insurance, and until Congress learns how to do its job, we are left waiting for change, watching as the U.S. continues to fall behind in progress and hoping with our fingers crossed that the hospitals we should be able to trust don't drive us into bankruptcy.

Bribery: Short-term Gain or Long-term Pain?

CINDY LUO
Staff Writer

Who isn't motivated by certain incentives? Some parents promise their kids rewards such as a delectable meal, longer time on the Internet or a new album for the excellent grades they earned or chores completed without nagging or complaints. Following the famous motto "no pain, no gain," this educational mode uses a previously determined gain to encourage children to reach their goals through hard work.

Generations of parents have offered rewards to kids. However, the concept of bribery brings up questions as to what happens when kids solely focus on the incentives,

ignoring the actual learning process. In other words, rewards are causing children to strive for a prize, and not for their futures.

Not all kids are mature enough to grow without wanting or desiring more to stay motivated. Bribery and making deals with kids provide short-term gains but long-term pain. A bribe stops a negative behavior such as procrastination or leaving work half done, but over time kids may start to rely on the prize and forget the value behind hard work. If this attitude is instilled at a young age, it will most likely stay with the kids throughout their lives, as they go through motions for a paycheck at a job, instead of further improving themselves or working toward things they love.

Motivation should come from within and work should be done for its own rewards, such as the satisfaction and pride of accomplishing things, overcoming obstacles and a deeper understanding of responsibility. An innate drive for high achievement and a thirst for knowledge should be the incentive instead of a material object. Well-deserved praise is a better motivator than any material reward that parents can provide kids with. A resultant sense of competence and mastery from completing challenging tasks should be reward in itself, but compliments can also help motivate kids to continue working hard, especially throughout difficult times.



IN THE
RICE BOX

Once Upon a Time

OLIVIA CHEUNG
Editor in Chief

At one point in my life, children's books were all I knew.

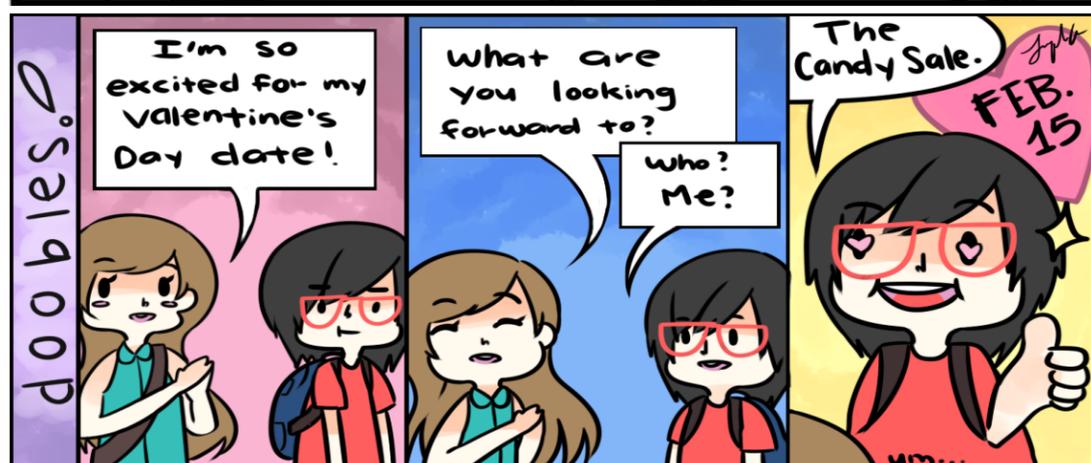
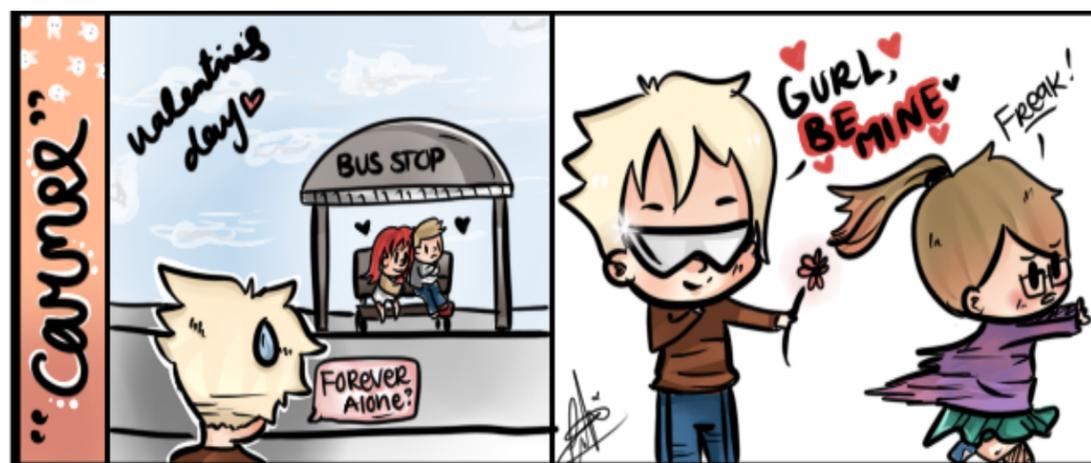
I spent my summer days scouring the library, collecting books to read in my favorite corner in the children's section. I remember singing the rhymes and laughing at the characters' obliviousness. Eventually, though, I grew up and was told that the books I once loved were "too young" for me; I was taught to dissect Dickens and Faulkner instead, focusing on how character development reinforced themes.

Analyzing complex literature is an astounding feat, but one shouldn't dismiss the importance of children's books. While the former may utilize motifs and SAT vocabulary and the latter prefer colored pictures and size 24 text, they both communicate critical messages to their audiences.

A prime example would be Dr. Seuss' *Oh! The Places You'll Go!* Though I admit the rhymes are what kept my seven-year-old attention, its message is what reassured my clueless 17-year-old self. As a college-bound senior, I'm asked every moment, by friends and family alike, what college I want to attend or which career I want to invest in—questions that I have no answers for. *Oh! The Places You'll Go!* was a much-needed reminder about the direction my life is gearing toward. A direction. As long as I remain in motion, there's no real loss.

So, the next time you're at the library, visit the children's area. Shamelessly browse until you find a favorite and proudly check it out. There's no age restriction to learning life lessons.

MOOR graphics by
SIMON ZHAO



The Abuse and Misuse of Freedom

JOSEPH NEY-JUN
Staff Writer

The First Amendment of the Bill of Rights grants freedom of speech, but nowhere does it include freedom of harassment. Over the past few years, an animal rights activist group named "Progress for Science" has done more than harass the UCLA science department.

The group's name is actually quite deceiving, as they are actually out to hinder scientific progress, experimentation on primates being the primary focus of their protests. The group has employed violent protests in the past, such as firebombing the houses of professors, according to Speaking of Research.

Recently, 45 members of the UCLA community rose up and protested the protesters. In 2008, UCLA dealt with groups similar to Progress for

Science like the UCLA Primate Freedom Project, and the Animal Liberation Front. The UCLA Newsroom reported that the Liberation Front publicly advocated violence to stop the animal experimentation.

The Newsroom also reports that the Los Angeles Superior Court ordered them to stop. While they were forced to halt their activities, this one court order did not stop groups like Progress for Science from continuing the same tactics.

Constitutional or not, it is not right to violently harass or show total disrespect to anyone. Freedom of speech is a license to speak freely about one's own ideas intelligently, not to verbally abuse individuals as a means of protest. Many more of these types of groups are squandering their First Amendment rights by targeting individuals rather than intelligently challenging them.