We all have our little fears that present themselves once and a while. Unfortunately, we can't argue with our emotions, even if they are illogical and fear might be the most influential emotion we have. The real issue, though, is whether we will be controlled by those fears.

Is there something that you've always wanted to do if it wouldn't be for the danger factor? Now, fast forward 60 years. We'll be around 80, looking back on our younger years and wishing we had an interesting story or two to tell our grandchildren. We'd probably give an obscene amount of money to go back and relive that time without all the "what if" questions stifling our curiosity.

Our lives tend to follow a fairly predictable pattern, even in the college setting, where we are supposed to be free and on our own. These patterns kill our sense of creativity and adventure. Some of the things we are taught to be afraid of aren't even as dangerous as driving a car.

Get together with a couple of friends and hop a train to nowhere in particular or hitch a ride to Staunton for supper. Maybe you don't do anything like that, but I do. I've done something that has at least two, and preferably all three, of the following aspects: interest, unpredictability, and excitement.

No matter what you are planning, it should be something that you're interested in. Maybe it's something that you've always secretly wanted to do but didn't think you'd ever get a chance to do. Maybe it's something that you've always wanted to know about but didn't think you'd ever have access to.

One thing that makes our lives monotonous is the predictability of everything. We plan far too much. In fact, there's an old saying, "fear of the unknown is greater than fear of the known." Our lives tend to follow a fairly predictable pattern, even in the college setting, where we are supposed to be free and on our own. These patterns kill our sense of creativity and adventure. Some of the things we are taught to be afraid of aren't even as dangerous as driving a car.

Excitement may come out of unpredictability or interest, but it might also be something that very few people you know have done or something you saw someone do on the Discovery Channel when you were four.

Put these three together, do something new, and have a story to tell your grandchildren while you're looking back on your younger years and wishing you had an interesting story or two to tell your grandchildren. We'd probably give an obscene amount of money to go back and relive that time without all the "what if" questions stifling our curiosity.

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By Andrea Kniss
Contributing Writer

Several Weather Vanes ago, I defended my fairly non-controversial, mid-dle-of-the-road position. Today I write this: "Please read the following anything else I have to say." Good question. But please read on: that's precisely the issue I'm addressing.

I think it's safe to assert that two of the most common commands given (in various forms) to the average North American are: One: "Make up your mind!" and Two: "Be open-minded!" Many college students, for instance, are prodded on a regular basis about the focus of their studies and their post-graduate goals. "Come on, Jim-Dan, it's about time you found some direction in your life. Make up your mind." If there's one thing our culture glorifies—power and wealth—aside from thinking a little—"It's one's con- sequences. Making plans, charting a course, and sticking with it. Our decisions, convictions, and accomplishments determine our worth as contributing members of society, which is why we're here. I applaud those who choose to go back and relive that time without all the "what if" questions stifling their curiosity.

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By Rodney Umble
Contributing Writer

Last week, as I talked about the possibility of war with my parents, Mum said, "How can George Bush say we need to go to war because one man in Saddam Hussein is evil?" Doesn't he know that we are so often our own enemy? I agree. Because President Bush speaks so frequently about Saddam, much of the US's energy is focused on the possibility of war with Saddam rather than on the many problems we have internally. I want George Bush to say, "We have to get rid of this evil presence threatening our country. He is armed with weapons of mass destruction and is destroy- ing people's morale and bodies every day. His name is poverty and injustice." Paul Klemperer

If we went to war with Saddam, many people could not even afford a newspaper to know anything about it. Is it possible that Saddam more important than people having enough money to buy supper? Can you imagine what social change might take place if we actually addressed a problem with our own society, such as poverty, rather than all the "problems" overseas? In a speech to military troops at Fort Hood in Killearn, Texas, President Bush said, "And in times of calm, we'll be focused and patient and relentless in our pursuit of the enemy. That's what we owe the American people." Or maybe the enemy is within the US. What President Bush and 50 percent of our national broadcaster, the American people, are resources used to address real problems within our own bor- ders, not "problems" with over- seas dictators. What if instead of the Department of Homeland Security, we had the Department of Poverty/Injustice-land Security, whose job was to pro- tect the poor and oppressed of our country. Would they strive to bring about self-sustainability for the poor and oppressed and protect them from terrorists such as economic oppression and lack of opportunities? "Code Red: Severe!" could mean that kids were abandoned in the streets and had nothing to eat instead of its current meaning: "Terrorist activity on a specific target may be imminent." (As if anyone understands what the terror color-code system means anyway.) I doubt we'd ever reach the low-danger "Code: Green," but at least the elimination of poverty would be a more beneficial and widespread goal than ensuring "a low risk of ter- rorist attack." I've heard several people justify war with Saddam by claiming that Saddam Hussein is crazy, and maybe he is, but many people in the US are going crazy, literally, because they could lose their health care; maybe they had a brain tumor or an aneurysm and could not have surgery; they might be denied organ trans- plantation. A terrorist attack, it's only because they are not in a position of power that their crazy-ness receives no attention. I look forward to the day when powers that be in the US turn our attention to our own problems and not the problems of "crazy Saddam." I look for- ward to picking up a newspaper and seeing an article about poverty within the US. On the front page. Otherwise, I too will go crazy. Rodney Umble can be reached at rodney.umble@emu.edu

By Conrad Erb
Contributing Writer

Fear & Boredom: Worth the Risk

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Code Red: Problems with "Go Eagles!"