Just how safe are school buses?

The facts may surprise you. Annually, "about 11 children are fatally injured inside school buses and 25 are fatally injured as pedestrians in the loading and unloading zone around school buses," according to School Transportation News. "By contrast, between 1989 and 1996, 9,500 school-age children were killed during school hours while riding in all kinds of motor vehicles."

While the loss of any life is tragic, the simple truth is school buses are still the safest form of ground transportation in this country, as reported by the National Safety Council (NSC). In fact, "yellow school buses are 172 times safer than the family car," said school bus safety advocate Dr. Cal LeMon, who recently released the first ever state-by-state Report Card on School Bus Safety in the U.S.

While there is still much work to be done to make school buses safer, school bus fatalities are down more than 200 percent from 1975. Many of the changes that have made school buses safer have come from the work of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), which has implemented several behavioral and educational programs to address school bus safety. Modifications to school buses have also made school bus transportation safer over the years.

For one, the recommendation that all school buses be painted "school bus yellow" to make them easily recognizable to motorists as having an inherent safety advantage. Also, recent requirements have added retroreflective tape around the emergency exits to make nighttime exists to make nighttime rescues easier.

In addition, "stop arms" were required for all school buses manufactured after September 1992. And standards were modified to allow additional light sources on buses and strobe lights on stop arms to help lessen the problem of illegal passing by motorists.

However, at the heart of the latest debate on school bus safety is the issue of modifying school buses even further with the addition of seat belts.

Serious school bus accidents and reports like the ones featured this year on CNN television programs can bring the debate to a fevered pitch. As with any debate though, there are valid pros and cons to consider when deciding whether or not to support recommendations for school bus seat belts.

The debate is limited to large school buses (over 10,000 lbs. GVWR-gross vehicle weight rating) as small school buses under that figure already require availability of seat belts by federal law. That's because buses of that small size behave more like passenger cars. In large...
Survey continued from page 1

Jennifer Denard, an elementary education graduate student, said her main concerns were in the quality of education.

"My main concern is to protect the integrity of the public school system. I don't feel that the proposed voucher system will do that. I want to know how the candidates plan on raising the bar in public education." Knowing what your concerns are as a voter is important because knowing what you want will help you choose a candidate.

Choosing a candidate isn't an easy task. Candidates may talk about the platform you're concerned about and even give good responses to your concerns, but don't be fooled. There is no written contract stating that what a candidate promises will happen when he or she is in office.

Kerre termination, a graduate student in the journalism program, said, "I think the question is not so much what the platform is or should be, but what's the truth behind the platforms they've presented." Simons gives an example of understanding the truth behind the platforms by explaining Lt. Governor Buddy McKay's stance on wanting to lower the cost of Medicare in Florida.

"Are you (Buddy McKay) saying you want to lower the cost of Medicare just to get elected in a state with so many residents on Medicare or are you really going to put your money where your mouth is? I want to see the history of his actions in this area before I decide whether or not he's truly behind this platform." Knowing a candidate's past history can give a voter a better understanding of what to expect if he or she is elected to office. Another important tactic to better understanding a candidate is to find out where they stand on a number of issues.

"This election, like all gubernatorial elections, is very important. Voters need to take a good hard look at how each candidate stands on a variety of issues, not just the one that's had a lot of air play," said Simons, referring to the voucher proposal.

There are a number of ways to find out a candidate's point of view. A concerned voter can call the candidates' headquarters and ask to speak to the office seeker or someone who knows the stance the candidate will take on issues. Community organizations, like The League of Women Voters, should have up-to-date information on the hot issues candidates are debating. For more information on the LWV, visit their web site at http://www.cs.uwf.edu/~lwvsite/lwv Fleming. These are just a few of the possible sources easily available to a voter.

In the end, it's like Rodriguez said, "When you support candidates, you need to support them on more than one issue. You need to look broadly at how well the candidate would do in office."
Struggling with the woman inside

Tresa Whalen
Next Contributor

Sara lies wide-awake tonight. Her body is tired. All she wants to do is sleep. She huddles down in the covers a little bit further. Acid churns in her belly. The day's events run through her head. A boy at school asked her out for a date and she wanted to go. She told him "no" though because she knew what would happen if she even broached the subject at home. Who would want her anyway? Her mother and father began arguing the minute her father walked in the door from work. It continued until her mother took a sharp slap across the temple. Oh, maybe he won't come tonight. Maybe mom will stop him. Maybe he'll forget... Maybe.

Across the country from Sara, Carla sits at the family table for dinner. She's really not at all that hungry, but she knows her mother will notice if she doesn't eat. Her mother plops mashed potatoes and gravy on her plate, covering the fried chicken. Carla's stomach rolls. They say grace and her parents and siblings fight over pepper, salt and butter. Her older brothers poke at her soft belly and begin with "my momma's so fat..." jokes.

Sara's door creaks open. She squeezes her eyes shut and her body begins the shut-down process. A rage so fierce begins snaking its way into her mind. She hates. Her dinner flies up her throat and maybe she didn't love her three brothers.

"Nearly 80 percent of eating disorders have roots leading to a sexually abusive past," states Alice Gibson, a representative for Remuda Ranch, an eating disorder rehabilitation center based in Arizona. The other twenty percent are mostly rooted in the notion that everyone needs to look like a runway model, a thought girls as young as 11 years old take to heart. "Fear and stress from sexual abuse can make a girl feel as if she is not in control. Understandably, a child will feel as if the abuse will consume them and they can only control their diet, if not any other aspect of their life. As a girl begins to hit puberty, the developmental stage, the less nutrition the body receives, the less development will take place. In a young girl's way of thinking, if the abuser doesn't see a woman body, perhaps she/he will not find the abused desirable any longer," Gibson says. "The child feels ugly and unworthy and begins the downward spiral of anorexia nervosa because of this lack of self-esteem."

Anorexia nervosa is defined as the pathological loss of appetite that occurs chiefly in young women, and is psychological in origin. Anorexia is a disease. Just like an alcoholic, the anorexic will deal with the struggle for the rest of his or her life. Anorexia differs from Bulimia in that, with Bulimia, food is actually eaten; however, before the body digests the food, the individual forces it from his or her body. Typically, vomiting is the method of choice; however, laxatives are also often used. Bingeing and purging are also terms associated with this disorder.

"Chaos and stress from sexual abuse..."

The average woman in America stands at five-foot-four and weighs 140 lbs. Only 10 percent of the world's population looks like the models found in Cosmopolitan, Vogue, etc. When viewing a doctor's chart, models are not healthy individuals. Weighing only 110 lbs., but standing at 5 feet 11 inches is considered unhealthy and underweight. Yet, these women are the women we choose to represent what American women should look like by placing them in our magazine ads and fashion shows. Stick figures inundate our media, sending messages to young women that if they want to be popular and noticed, then they must adhere to the policies of the fashion industry. Interestingly enough, the first emancipated model to begin the look we so admire was an outpatient from a tuberculosis hospital! In the late sixties, just before the ever-popular "Twiggy," came an anorexic patient recovering from a serious disease and we made her America's icon of beauty and proportion.

Signs of anorexia nervosa are: rapid weight loss (20% lower than ideal medical body weight), brittle hair and nails, dry skin, loss of menstrual cycle, memory loss, lack of concentration, and excessive mood swings. Lunago (white dowey fuzzy hair) often appear on the forearms and face of the individual. This is the body's natural defense and reaction to a loss of insulation. Anorexics will restrict themselves from eating and keep up a strict and brutal exercise regimen.

Signs of Bulimia are: bingeing and purging, broken blood vessels in eyes, scars on hands, erratic eating patterns, depression, and mood swings. Bulimics will also restrict themselves from one meal to the next, and begin the downward spiral of anorexia nervosa because of this lack of self-esteem.
school buses, however, "the primary means of occupant protection," says the NHTSA. "It's a concept known as compartmentalization--strong, well padded, well anchored, high backed, evenly spaced seats." LeMon says these "clearly spaced, high back seats are designed to package children like eggs, effectively providing 'automatic' protection in most crashes."

Although several studies, including those of real-world bus accidents, have shown compartmentalization to be effective protection, proponents of seat belts cite various reasons they should be added. The primary reasons cited include:

- In a crash, seat belts will reduce the probability of death and the severity of injuries sustained by survivors far more than anticipated. Nearly 86 percent of all passengers' seating position being in direct line of crash forces.
- Seat belts offer injury protection in rollover or side impact crashes; and
- The cost to install seat belts in school buses is small.

But there are many industry experts who contend otherwise.

For one, they cite real-world crash examples. In a 1987 safety study by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), 43 serious school bus crashes were investigated to determine the effects of seat belts. The crashes, which included frontal, side and a large number of rollover crashes, were evaluated to see if seat belt use would have made a difference in the injury levels of school bus occupants.

NTSB concluded that:

- "School bus occupant deaths and serious injuries sustained by survivors for the most part were attributable to the occupants' seating position being in direct line with the crash forces."
- "It is unlikely that the availability of any type of restraint would have improved the injury outcome;"
- Rollover incidents in the NTSB study were unaltered with high injury levels of school bus passenger injuries than non-rollovers but to a much smaller degree than anticipated. Nearly 86 percent of all the school bus passengers were either uninjured or received only minor injuries.
- The slight increase in school bus passenger injury severity associated with rollover incidents was due primarily to school bus rollovers preceded by collisions. The initial impact, not the rollover, was responsible for the higher injury levels.
- Lap belt use probably would have made no change in the total number of fatalities to school bus passengers...possibly one more fatality would have resulted.
- At best, lap belt use probably would have reduced somewhat the injuries of eight of the 24 school bus passengers with serious injuries and made no difference to the majority.

At worse, lap belt use would have increased the injuries to almost in many passengers with serious injuries as it improved.

With regard to the idea that seat belts would enhance behavior in students, thereby reducing driver distraction and lessen the number of crashes, the USF Center for Urban Transportation Research Study found otherwise. "Overall, student conduct did not improve while riding in the school buses as a result of the provision of seat belts and, in a few instances, the questionnaire respondents indicated that student conduct actually had become worse," reported the NHTSA on the findings of the study. Additionally, opponents of seat belts worry about the potential use of seat belts as weapons by children against each other inside the school bus, the risks of injury induced by the lap belts themselves in collisions, and the potential risks and limitations of seat belts in overturned buses in lakes and rivers, fire-engulfed buses and other accident scenarios too unpleasant to contemplate, with injured children strapped in, unable to exit the bus," said Paul.

Paul said they also cite "the domino effect" that can occur when some students on board are wearing their seat belts, while others are not. He said, "in the event of a frontal or certain side impact crashes, a child wearing a seat belt would absorb not only his or her own weight, but also the weight of an unbelled child or children in the seat(s) behind, thus doubling the crash force that belted child would have to absorb."

Paul said the bottom line for opponents is no data exists showing the installation of lap belts will solve safety problems on school buses.

So where does that leave us in the great seat belt debate?

Although the benefits of compartmentalization have been proven effective in many tests, no one on either side of the issue is taking the argument for or against seat belts lightly. The main concern of NHTSA and other agencies in studying school bus crashes and the effectiveness of existing safety devices is the protection of the children who travel in those 440 thousand yellow school buses each day.

The research is ongoing and the NHTSA, for one, has initiated a research program to develop what it calls the "next generation of occupant protection for school bus passengers."

In the meantime, LeMon said those who are concerned about congested roads and child safety need to take an objective look at why school bus ridership has declined nationally and that parents should keep a close eye on school board decisions involving student transportation.

If your state is cutting its pupil transportation budget, demand to know why," LeMon said. "If funding costs are delaying the purchase of new buses or making service so inconvenient for working parents that it's easier to drive children to school, demand more buses and more convenient schedules. If your teenagers want to drive to school instead of taking the bus, understand that doing so would greatly increase their risk of injury or death."

Concerned parents and citizens can also take a look at the arguments both for and against seat belts presented on the School Transportation News website at www.stonline.com. There are several links listed for more information, especially specific information from government sources.

We can also advocate alternative safety programs, such as directing funds towards research on making the 'danger zone' safer for children.

In the end, your best bet is to be informed so you know which side of the argument you're on and then work with your school and congressional leaders to propose any changes you would like to see made.

"We give lip service to how 'our children are our future,'" said LeMon, "but all of that is so much dopey sentimentality unless we ensure their physical safety. The big yellow school bus is the safest and smartest form of transportation for our children."

We can all work together to make it even safer.

Exploring lost civilizations

New exhibit explores the mystical and magical ancient Peru.

Kaeris Sims
Next Editor

The next exhibit at the Florida International Museum will be "Empires of Mystery: The Incas, the Andes and Lost Civilizations.

Opening Oct. 23, it will be the fifth blockbuster exhibition the museum has hosted since it opened in January 1995.

Visitors of the last exhibit, "Titanic," know the museum goes all out in preparing for an exhibition of this magnitude, often transforming rooms of the exhibit hall in an effort to make visitors feel transported back in time. This exhibit is said to be no exception.

"Empires of Mystery" will feature the largest exhibition of Peruvian artifacts ever to travel to the United States and will span several thousand years of history, including rituals, artistry, warfare and the daily lifestyle of some of the most complex and sophisticated civilizations the Western Hemisphere has ever known.

Of the 300 artifacts to be displayed, some of the more significant are three 5,500-year-old mummies, one of which is a 1,500-year-old mummy of a sorceress who is wrapped in her hair, which is over eight feet long. Also included in the exhibit are gold ceremonial objects, ornate nose rings, and 1,500-year-old human skulls with evidence of successful brain surgery...begging the question: How could a civilization have performed ancient brain surgery over two thousand years ago and have patients survive?

The mystery continues around every corner of the exhibit.

The Inca, a nation of only 40 thousand, managed to conquer 10 million subjects to form an empire larger than the Ottoman at its peak. How did they do it? And how were the Spanish able to conquer such warriors?

In Peru, mummification was practiced one thousand years before the Egyptians, and yet these mummies are perfectly preserved. What were the methods that made this possible?

Chan Chan, the world's largest adobe city, has survived numerous earthquakes over the centuries and is re-created in the exhibit corridors for visitors. Is it true the mysterious whistling pots found in this city make a sound audible only to the person blowing them?

Also re-created are the enormous and intricate designs that were carved into the desert sands at Nazca...designs which have survived for 2,000 years but were only discovered in the 1940s when passengers from a plane saw them. The Nazca lines are so vast, they can only be understood by viewing them from thousands of feet in the air. So why were these carvings made and who would have been able to see them from such a height?

But perhaps the biggest mystery of all: Will the exhibition have the answers?

Or will visitors leave with more questions than ever before...Who were these people? Where did they come from? Where did they go?
Hypnosis: Can it make your life better?

Alvin Bartz, Ph.D.

This article seeks to help the reader better understand what hypnosis is and what it is not. It will show that our ability to be hypnotized is a natural psychological trait that was an important factor in man’s survival and evolution. It will discuss some of the marvelous ways in which hypnosis is currently being used to help make people’s lives better. And it will conclude by attempting to dispel some of the misconceptions that have impeded the potential benefits hypnosis has to offer.

Hypnosis is an altered state of consciousness, more akin to daydreaming than to sleep. It is a state of heightened awareness and focus in a realm of deep peace, calm and relaxation. In the hands of a competent therapist, it is a means for helping people take personal responsibility for achieving their individual goals of living a fulfilling and meaningful life.

Hypnosis is not magic or some supernatural power. It is a natural human ability which, in many ways, has immeasurably contributed to the very survival of mankind.

The trait of hypnotizability was an important survival mechanism that was passed down to succeeding generations. The hypnotic ability of some Cro-Magnon men to dissociate themselves from severe physical pain, for example, would greatly enhance their ability to survive severe injury and otherwise disabling wounds.

This ability hypnotically to separate one’s consciousness from physical pain was utilized in amazing ways by ancient Viking warriors as well. In preparation for battle, Vikings would put themselves into a hypnotic trance by repeatedly shouting, “Odin, Odin, Odin!” Even though these fierce warriors didn’t wear protective armor, they appeared oblivious to even serious wounds. Here, too, the capacity for dissociation from pain during battle helped lead the Vikings to victory and thus to the preservation of only the fittest fighters.

Throughout man’s ancient past, the intentional and accidental use of hypnosis can be found in abundance. Shamen and medicine men apparently made the most of this natural ability in their healing rituals. The ancient Egyptians developed “Sleep Temples” where a truly formalized hypnotic trance induction and guided imagery were used in the relief of illness, suffering and pain.

The underlying principles which explain the foundation of human hypnotizability are being utilized by professional clinicians today.

Let us now explore some of the myriad ways in which modern hypnotherapy is being used to make people’s lives better.

Through hypnosis, individuals can be taught to channel the miraculous power of their subconscious mind to make important life changes. Self-hypnosis can help people control chronic pain, reduce stress and anxiety, and continue to pursue meaningful and fulfilling life activities. Hypnosis is widely used to help people give up unwanted habits and phobic reactions. Hypnosis often helps people gain greater self-confidence and the determination to achieve difficult personal goals and objectives.

Hypnosis is also being used by many women as the only means of anesthesia for the delivery of their children and it is gaining wider and wider acceptance as an adjunct to conventional medical treatment both in surgery and the general field of health and healing.

In the realm of psychiatry, hypnosis is gaining greater acceptance than ever before as a quick means for uncovering deeply hidden traumatic experiences which are often responsible for the onset of chronic depression, stress and anxiety. As a therapeutic tool, hypnosis can help individuals tap into a core of strength, confidence and self-mastery which greatly enhances any psychiatric technique that is being used.

While it is unlikely that this article will dispel all of the misconceptions about hypnosis, I would like to conclude by addressing some of the most common misconceptions and encourage the reader to seek a greater awareness of a natural phenomenon that might serve to enhance his or her enjoyment of life.

Is hypnosis dangerous?

No. Hypnosis is never dangerous in the hands of a trained professional and it can never be used against you. You cannot be manipulated by hypnosis and made to do anything that is not in keeping with your morals or your purpose for seeking hypnosis. However, you are indeed open to the idea that positive change can easily take place which will make your life happier and more fulfilling.

Can I be hypnotized?

Yes. The vast majority of people can easily be hypnotized; yet, no one can be hypnotized against his or her will. Individuals who possess relatively normal intelligence and who do not suffer from acute paranoia or schizophrenia can easily learn self-hypnosis and deepen their hypnotic state with practice.

Are there any negative side effects to hypnosis?

No. There are absolutely no negative side effects from hypnosis. Hypnosis is not addictive. One awakens from the hypnotic state feeling well rested, clear-headed, relaxed and refreshed. Hypnosis invariably leads to deeper and more restful sleep, and a more positive feeling of self-control and self-mastery.

From its ancient evolutionary origins to its modern uses, hypnosis is a natural phenomenon which, when directed by a skilled professional, can offer amazing benefits to all who have the courage to expand their comfort zone and try something different that will surely make their lives better.

Alvin Bartz, Ph.D., is a clinical hypnotherapist and certified behavior analyst. He is a member of the National Society of Hypnotherapists, the American Association of Professional Hypnotherapists, and the American Association of Behavior Therapists.
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Attention Crafters
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Crow’s Nest Writers
If you have talent, we have an outlet. Write features, news pieces or commentary for the student newspaper. Work on assignment or on your own. Call Kaerie at 553-3113.

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November 14 will be our annual Fall Fest. Join us for food, fun, and family entertainment! This event is sponsored by Harborside Productions and will be held from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. Harborside.

Students Needed
Interested in event planning or would you like to learn about student activities? Join us for a Harborside Productions meeting! Mondays at 4 p.m. in CAC 133.

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Attention *
It has come to our attention that in the last issue of The Crow’s Nest, an ad for writers that appeared on this page offended some people on campus. It was not our intent to offend anyone. The picture was from an event on campus here in the past; it was not a "real" photo. We sincerely apologize to anyone who felt the ad was in poor taste.—Kaerie Simons, Editor
Campus and Community Events

October 20
Break the Silence! The Clothesline Project of Tampa Bay will have shirts on display to bear witness to violence against women. Each shirt is a woman’s story of her experience with violence. This event is sponsored by Harborside Productions and the shirts will be displayed Harborside from 11:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

October 20
On Oct. 20 and 27 and Nov. 10 and 17 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m., the USF Police Department is offering free Rape Aggression Defense (RAD) classes in the CAC. For more information, please contact the USF Police Department at 553-1140.

October 21 - 22
A book and bake sale will be held in Davis Lobby from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. to benefit The Michael House. This is a home for babies who are abandoned at birth or born addicted to drugs. The money raised will keep their babies. Want to make a donation? Please contact Lisa Gilbreath at 426-0417 by October 20.

October 21
Point-counterpoint discussion on “Christian Science, Children and Medicine.” Speakers are Janna C. Merrick, a professor of government and international affairs at USF whose research focuses on healthcare policy for pregnant women and young children, and Peggy DesAutels, director of the medical ethics program at USF’s Ethics Center. Noon in Davis Hall Hall 130. Free, but reservations are required. Call 553-3172 to RSVP.

October 23
“Agging and Community,” presented by speakers Dorothy and David Counts, anthropologists and authors of Over the Next Hill: An Ethnography of Aging Seniors in North America. The Counts will discuss how senior citizens organize their lives in different types of communities. Free and open to the public, 1:30 p.m. in Davis Hall 130.

October 25
The second annual 25th Hour Bayboro Brunch takes place on campus. Noon that day will be the reception and alumni silent auction. At 1 p.m., the brunch and program begin. Call 553-1561 for more information.

October 27
The League of Women Voters of the St. Petersburg Area is hosting a program on the proposed constitutional amendments. Jon Mills, a law professor at UF, and Barbara Ford-Coates of Sarasota, two members of the Constitutional Revision Commission will be discussing and taking questions on the proposed amendments. The program will be held at the St. Petersburg Main Library, 3745 Ninth Ave. N., St. Petersburg on Tuesday, Oct. 27, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

October 30
Harborside Productions will be sponsoring a Halloween Masquerade in the CAC CORE, 8 p.m. - 12 a.m. Be sure to get your ticket in advance. At last year’s party, The Crow’s Nest caught many students in the act of being way too connected to the characters they were dressed as...but that just makes the party so much better. This year, the big question is: Who will win the costume contest? A few people have told us what they’re coming as and we’re ready with our camera. So join us for music, dancing and refreshments; be crazy; get scared. I.D. is required. The party is free for students and just $2 for faculty, staff, and guests. Tickets can be purchased at the front desk in the CAC.

Great Explorations
Haunted Halloween
Great Explorations, The Children’s Hands-on Museum, has Halloween treats for the whole family. On Oct. 24 - 25, design your own “Trick-Or-Treat” bag or scary mask. Also on Oct. 24, the museum will present “Special - Effects Spooky Story Telling Among the Stars.” Join master story teller, Larry Venson, in the Star Tracker planetarium for pre-Halloween story telling under the stars. Running until the end of the month is the Haunted House Spooktacular. Call 821-8992.

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8 p.m. - 12 a.m.
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Free for students; $2 for faculty, staff, and guests

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C A C Front Desk Oct.
19 - 29 and in Davis
Lobby 12 - 1 p.m. & 5 - 6
p.m. Oct. 19 - 22 & 26 - 28. (Tickets will be available at the door.)

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