

## Kids today: Buy, sell or trade?

### Pokemon allows children to mimic a status-obsessed society, parents

A member of the U.S. Congress recently called for an investigation into what he feels is a serious problem facing America's schools. It was not school shootings, drugs or even smoking that concerned him. His worry was about reports of violence stemming from the popular Pokemon trading cards — the pride and joy of countless teens and preteens across the nation.



MARIANO CASTILLO

Parents are up in arms over how seriously their children are taking the trading cards, which feature characters from the popular Nintendo video game and cartoon series. Schoolyard stabbings have been reported in New York and Atlanta, and thefts have occurred in almost every U.S. elementary, middle and high school. But it is ironic that so much fuss is being made over children's obsession with material possessions when they are simply mimicking modern society.

"You have to look at [the Pokemon craze] in the context of our culture," said psychologist Stephanie Pratola of Time magazine. "We are all obsessed with acquiring things, and we don't expect our children to rise above our culture."

The desire to own the most recent products and gadgets seems endemic in our culture.

Whether it is driving an Eddie Bauer station car or organizing oneself with a Palm Pilot, parents show their kids that is a material world — variety magazines glorify new gadgets, television peddles them to the public and people go shopping. In doing so, they breed the "I want it...now!" attitude of many children. Not all kids are brats, but today, no child in his right mind would pass up an opportunity to "catch 'em all."

Parents' inability to say no to their whiny offspring does not help this trend. The more cards a collector has, the more likely he is to show them off at school and consequently get jumped by jealous classmates.

It is a parent's responsibility to let kids know that there are things in life more valuable than Pokemon cards.

The same mentality is found in college students who work extra hours, not to enhance their education, but to afford a new laptop, bike or piece of clothing. There does not seem to be anything wrong with taking pride in ownership in the college and business world, but when it happens as a craze with kids, people go into an uproar.

No more are the good old days when collecting was a hobby rather than a business opportunity. Adults who remember buying stuffed animals to play with should see something wrong with their



RUBEN DELUNA/THE BATTALION

children acquiring beanie animals to peddle off to a higher bidder or to enclose in a case. A childhood today is one where a toy is not necessarily a toy.

The Pokemon collectors are doing just as their role models are doing, but they have no income, so they turn to stealing from each other and violence.

Parents should use the Pokemon craze as a wake-up call to the lessons they are unconsciously teaching their children. The obsession the kids have is a strong comment on American society. Families are not putting sufficient emphasis on hobbies and values that are not material.

The supporters of the probe into "Pokemania" are right that it is pointless for children to get violent over something as insignificant as trading cards, valued by kids or not.

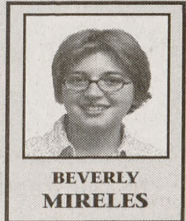
However, the change has to start with parents, older siblings and other role models.

They need to show children that there are other activities that can make one feel good such as sports, music or arts which cost nothing.

Mariano Castillo is a sophomore international studies major.

## Medication can prove harmful when in excess

The overprescription of medicine has been a problem for as long as doctors have been looked upon as lifesavers and medication as a cure-all.



BEVERLY MIRELES

Overprescription has consequences for patients. When a doctor prescribes a medicine too often or too much, the effectiveness of certain medications is impeded.

When one is sick, standard protocol for some doctors is to simply examine the patient and prescribe an overabundance of the antibiotics best known to eradicate or at the very least alleviate the disease's symptoms. However, if patients are routinely exposed to the same antibiotics or sporadically take the prescription, the disease they suffer from may become immune to the antibiotics.

This already has become a problem with diseases antibiotics supposedly had cured, such as tuberculosis (TB). Caused by bacteria, TB was almost completely eliminated (in America) in the early 1900s when people began receiving TB immunizations. However, the disease developed into different, antibiotic-resistant strains TB (a continuing problem overseas) was able to make a comeback in the United States.

It is now apparent that overprescribing specific antibiotics can make medicine useless and yet many doctors stubbornly refuse to change the way they prescribe them.

Penicillin is a perfect example. When first discovered, it was a medical breakthrough. In fact, penicillin initially seemed the perfect panacea — an antibiotic, harvested from a mold, that appeared to kill most pathogenic microbes. Once penicillin proved beneficial, doctors began prescribing it for almost everything, from athlete's foot to the flu. In some cases, doctors would even prescribe penicillin regardless of the symptoms because of a skewed sense of preventive medicine. It worked, and penicillin was hailed as the "wonder drug."

### Overprescription of medicine, if not monitored, could throw a wrench into the treatment of disease.

Unfortunately, diseases mutated and found ways around penicillin's effectiveness. Doctors learned prescribing penicillin no longer worked, and other medicines had to be utilized. But, instead of changing the methods by which they prescribed antibiotics, doctors again overprescribed new "wonder drugs," such as amoxicillin or tetracycline. The possibility that these drugs soon will not work either is realistic. And when overprescription hinders one drug's potency, the need for other antibiotics becomes more pressing.

Medications like antibiotics are much like natural resources — initially everyone benefits, but soon enough, resources, in this case the cures, run out. Therefore, the ramifications of overprescription are ominous because, if continued, medications that once had antibiotic value might be useless against current and future diseases.

Overprescription also is dangerous because medicine, as a recent column in Newsweek said, is not "one size fits all."

Deciding what dosage individuals should be allowed to take can be something of a dilemma for doctors. Because each person is different, the amount of medication one's body can take is different. Doctors routinely use medical guidelines and physical characteristics such as weight and height, but sometimes even the lowest suggested prescription can be too much for a patient to handle.

If so, patient health is at risk. The human body can only handle so much chemical meddling. By challenging the limits of chemical allowances, doctors can put their patients' lives in danger. Some medical researchers even believe chemical overexposure can lead to a non-HIV related form of autoimmune deficiency syndrome, better known as AIDS.

The helplessness doctors already must feel because of AIDS currently is a huge issue in the medical community. If overprescription is thought to be another way a person can suffer from AIDS, one would think doctors would make overprescription a bigger medical anathema than not washing hands between patients.

Overprescription of medicine, if not monitored, could throw a wrench, so to speak, into the treatment of diseases. There are too many dangers that come with too much medicine to ignore the problem.

As long as doctors continue to overprescribe and patients to not follow doctors' orders, the effectiveness of certain medications will continue to decrease and while new and mutated diseases will increase. People must be aware of overprescription of medication and try to avoid it whenever possible. Doctors are professionals, highly skilled in their trade, but they can make faulty decisions. That is understandable. But they are aware overprescription is hazardous and take every precaution against it. Otherwise, they might as well be amateurs, treating people by trial and error, instead of experience gained.

Beverly Mireles is a junior sociology major.

## Lawyers, legal system sometimes misunderstood

If the glove does not fit, you must acquit."

These wannabe Dr. Quess words have echoed in the emp-vaults of American minds ever since the infamous Simpson trial.

It is a sad, but true, fact: Americans simply do not trust lawyers. They are seen as bloodsucking bottom-feeders who are more concerned with getting their clients off the hook than with being justice. And they are, in some respects, right.

Modern law has shifted from a search for the absolute truth to verbal combat where relative truths are as important as how well the lawyer likes a tie.

Law proceedings are supposed to be simple trials of fact. The prosecution argues that a charge (the indictment in criminal law) is legitimate based on the facts. The defense argues the prosecution's charge is not valid based on the facts. The jury decides truth or falsehood while the judge referees. It is a very simple system.

Unfortunately, the advent of constitutional protections has provided many lawyers an opportunity to abuse the system. These protections, like free speech, habeas corpus and presumptions of innocence, are designed to keep the government from oppressing people. However, these protections, taken to extremes, can turn the search for the truth into a wild-goose chase. For example, search warrants are a

common technicality. The procedure to obtain a warrant is a bit complex, and an error as simple as a typo can invalidate a warrant, all the evidence gleaned from it and, in many instances, the case. Throwing a case out because the desk sergeant switched

finding judiciary stems from the use of a jury of peers. Without going into the discriminatory specifics of past years, it can be stated reasonably that the definition of "peer" is important to the concept. Some definitions would mandate

the defendant. Furthermore, any jury of such "equality" would itself breed inequality.

Sentiments such as "Oh, she got off because they were all lesbians," or "He was found guilty for not acting [Insert ethnic group here] enough," coming from the mouths of the ignorant and bigoted, would take root in the cracks in the national consciousness.

The other extreme — the local, citizen's jury — breeds its own injustices. For starters, the preferred IQ of might be considered low, or at least somewhat lower than one might expect. Except in contract cases, which are very complex, most lawyers prefer a dumb, easily-swayed jury.

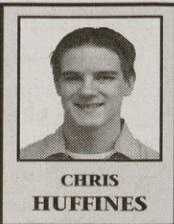
By allowing anyone in the county to serve on a jury, lawyers are getting just that. Many of the intelligent potential jurors are struck for various reasons, including the three peremptory strikes each side has. Also, can a middle-aged farmer understand an inner-city youth well enough to be deemed a peer?

Sure, the farmer was young once, but he, like many adults, might not credit the youth with the intelligence or responsibility the defendant actually possesses. Either approach easily can lead to injustice.

But, both types of injustice stem from abuse of the legal system as an absolute truth-finding body, not from any problems inherent in the basic system.

Like so many other things, American law needs to get back to its roots, so that justice will be done.

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CHRIS HUFFINES



RUBEN DELUNA/THE BATTALION

two numbers in the address seems fairly silly. But it must be remembered that the founding fathers preferred a hundred criminals go free before one innocent man was put behind bars because of government excess, hence the protection.

Another breakdown of the fact-

that a African-American woman's jury be composed exclusively of African-American women. The current legal system allows anyone who stands as a citizen of the state or country to sit on a jury. Either approach breeds problems.

Juries which match the defendant in every respect may sympathize with

### ROOMMATES

needed ASAP own bed/bath...

needed for spring, 2brdm/1bth...

for spring or longer 3brdm...

for spring/summer/00 3brdm...

for spring, Own 1brdm/1bth...

for Spring '00, own bedroom...

needed ASAP for spring...

needed ASAP own bed/bath...

needed for spring, 4brdm/2bth...

needed Spring '00, Own...

large bedroom in 3brdm...

needed for spring, 3brdm/1bth...

needed for spring, 2brdm/1bth...

needed for spring semester...

needed for spring semester...

needed ASAP, Jan-May, 2brdm...

needed for Jan-May, 3brdm/2bth...

needed for spring, House in...

needed: 1700sqft, house, 3brdm...

needed: 3brdm/1bth, \$300/mo...

needed for spring, W/D, 3brdm...

needed for spring, W/D, 3brdm...

needed for spring and...

needed 2brdm/1bth, Own...

needed for spring, Parkway...

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