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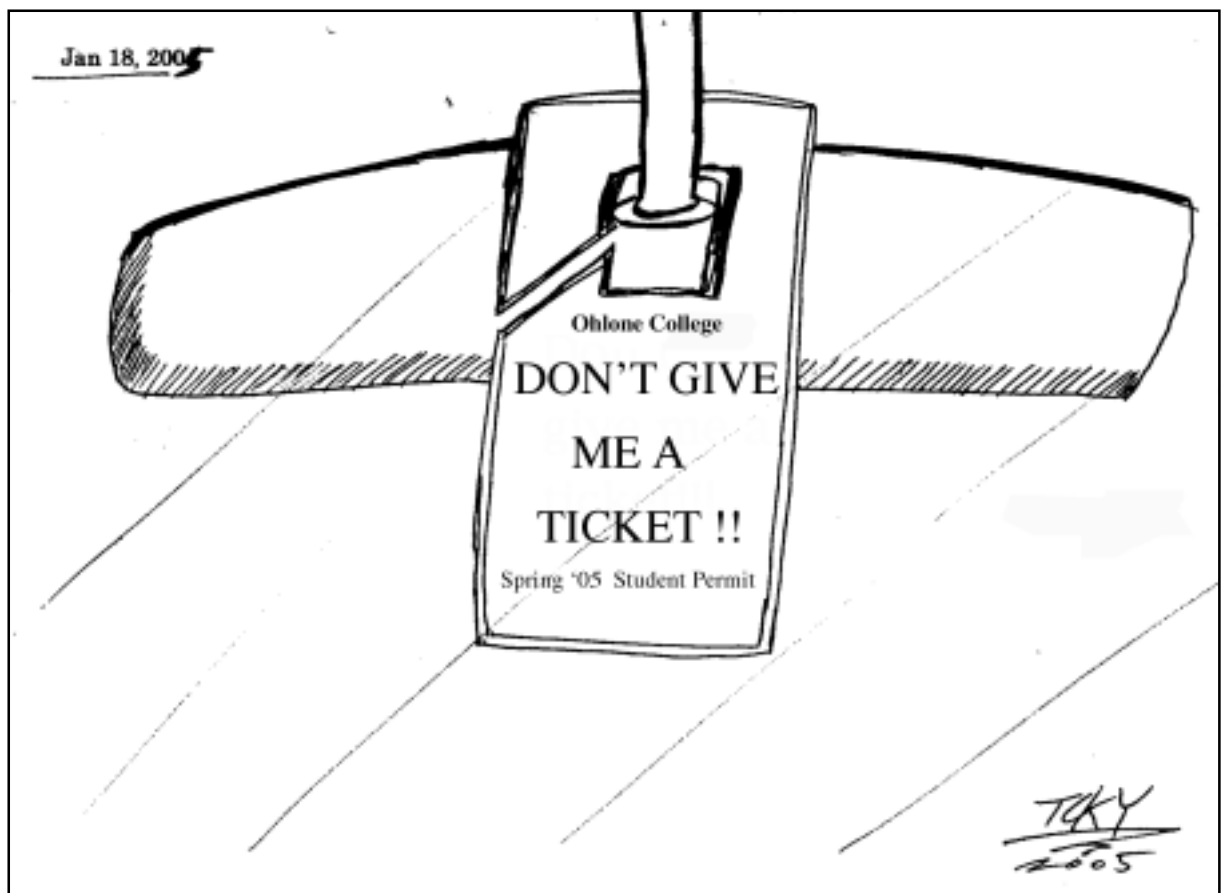


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OPINION

The not-so-amazing race for material possessions

By OLIVIA SPERANZA
Opinion editor

Celebrity idolizing is making our society want the unattainable and diverting attention away from the bigger picture. Buddhists believe that the path to enlightenment is to cease from wanting. They say that surrendering to all desires will bring you closer to happiness. I see so many people wanting so much and most of it is beyond reality. With so much energy being used to focus on the surface, what about what's

outside of that box?

Let's take, for example, the show *The OC*. Who that you know actually lives like any of these characters? Have you looked around at the average American lately? If I'm not mistaken, most of us don't drive \$80,000 cars, have immaculate bodies, or are fortunate enough to have a mini Neiman's in our closet.

Also, let's not forget about any music video on MTV. I mean, come on, this entire network is my definition of narcissism. People in love with themselves and the way they

look. I can hardly bare to sit through an entire video of Lindsay Lohan posing and performing horrific dance numbers. Yet nevertheless, Lindsay is pretty hot and she usually looks cute no matter what she's up to, therefore giving grounds for so many girls to look up to her and somehow enjoy her music.

Sure, we're all guilty of opening up an issue of *Vogue* or *Entertainment Weekly* and seeing a celebrity with a lifestyle that we all wish we could have. I'm not saying it's wrong, I'm just saying that I don't

understand why so many shows are focused on how much money stars are making or what they're spending it on when there is so much more to life. Who knows where the catch phrases, "You're fired" and "That's hot" came from? Now who knows who Speaker of the House is, or what his position is?

Yes, it's nice to be motivated by something or someone, but I can't express how tired I am of hearing about Brad and Jennifer's break-up. It seems like more of us know about the details of their relationship than

about why our country is at war. So many of us look up to these beautiful people with tons of money, when there is so much more in this world.

Being consumed with how other people spend their money isn't going to make us more educated, nor will it make us more content with ourselves. Knowing every aspect of pop culture won't make us better people. I think our society needs to focus on what really matters: what we can do for each other -and that's nothing we're going to get from watching *The Fabulous Life Of...*

A store that cares about more than the bottom line

By TONY C. YANG
Staff writer

Chances are, you've never heard of Ingvar Kamprad. Kamprad is the founder of the successful furniture chain IKEA and possibly the richest person on earth.

I find it quite surprising that while most people have heard of Bill Gates, who has a personal fortune of \$47 billion (give or take a couple million, according to *Forbes* magazine), few have heard of Kamprad who has a net worth of approximately \$53 billion.

I am struck by how early Kamprad's entrepreneurial drive began. When he was only 5 years old, little Ingvar sold matches to pals

and by age 17 he was manufacturing pencils. Ultimately he took a simple idea- foldable furniture, ostensibly the holy grail of IKEA's success, and turned the stodgy retail furniture industry into a mass-market phenomenon.

Although those Horatio Alger-type stories may be commonplace (Edison, Ford, Gates), Kamprad stands out because despite his riches, he maintains a very simple approach to life. For starters, he drives an old Volvo.

Kamprad lives frugally in Switzerland, where the altitude is high but the taxes are low.

He routinely travels on public transportation. When he must fly, he buys economy tickets. He hates wear-

ing suits and thinks the environment is something to protect, not plunder. It is this philosophy that influences his corporate conscience and makes him a seemingly atypical leader (Warren Buffet notwithstanding).

Let's look at how he operates his company: Kamprad shakes hands and meets with every IKEA employee who attends his annual meeting in Sweden, he insists on eco-friendly production plants and has no child or sweatshop labor. Virtually all IKEA products are flat and easy to ship (unassembled), saving on costs and lowering pollution.

Also, three of the leading managers at IKEA are his sons (nepotism: a good thing?), who will presumably continue his high-minded business

practices after he is gone.

Or maybe it's because the company is Kamprad himself. After all, it's named after him. IKEA is a highly personal acronym: Starting with I and K, Kamprad's initials; the E stands for Elmtaryd, where he was born; and the A is for Agunnaryd, where he was raised.

From a modest Swedish neighborhood, Kamprad has expanded IKEA from a small Swedish farming village in 1943 to a global retail giant with more than 185 outlets in over 44 countries.

Its annual income is around \$20 billion and it was even named one of the "100 Best Companies for Working Mothers" by *Working Mother* maga-

zine. The point is; IKEA is a "good" company, not one of the rule-bending, greedy, heartless companies we have read about so much recently.

But why is it so wildly successful and profitable?

I have no clue-but when I went there for the first time a few weeks, I left the store with more than I intended to buy.

At the very least, you now know about the richest person in the world and why he is a particularly unique tycoon.

IKEA's website states; "IKEA has always tried to do more with less." It is an apt philosophy, one we should all consider, even if we aren't a Swedish billionaire.

CAMPUS COMMENT >>>

What resolution have you made for the new year of 2005?



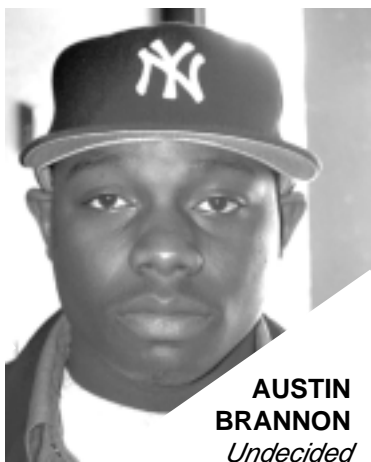
GREG BELL
Undecided

"To drink more water."



GINA MELLO
Undecided

"I haven't made any."



AUSTIN BRANNON
Undecided

"To become a go-getter."



ROUN TAMAKI
Respiratory therapy

"To make '05 a blast again."



LAKESHA HOKE
Undecided

"To not worry as much about things I can't do anything about."