

Coal miners need more protection, safer mines

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The history of coal mining has a very dangerous past. There have been unnecessary deaths and injuries because of a lack of safety. There has been progress made, but more precautions should be taken to save more lives. Illinois is trying to pass a new bill for safety that will require lifelines in mines in Alton, Decatur, West Frankfort and more. These safety precautions will make it possible for miners to find a way out, even if they cannot see. Also, the state is going to update mine rescue stations which will ensure that there is an extra supply of oxygen available in case of an emergency. If the new bill is passed, coal mining will be safer.

The new law will include Self Contained Self Rescuers. These are used by miners in case of emergency because they give the miners one hour of oxygen. Since it takes some miners more than one hour to reach the surface, the state lawmakers are considering installing oxygen throughout mines. The lawmakers are also considering placing Communication and Tracking Systems, which are wireless communication devices capable of receiving emergency calls. Lifelines and taglines that help miners exit the mine safely will be used, as well as transportation of workers to help move the miners. If this law is passed, many more lives will be saved and coal mining will be safer.

To help prevent more accidents in coal mines, states need to take immediate action. State governments and the federal governments need to pass laws to help

provide more safety for coal miners. If the government does not help the coal miners, coal companies should provide assistance. The companies that employ the miners need to help them by not slacking on safety procedures.

For years, the coal companies have gotten away with not paying fines for penalties. To help improve miners' working conditions, companies need to be on top of every portion of their company. To do this, the companies need to provide their mines with all the technology available. "Coal miners need to be specifically trained on what to do in an emergency," said H-F Astronomy and Geology teacher, Gary Haut. They can train their workers to protect themselves in case of an emergency. If more people are aware of how to save themselves, there will be less fatalities.

In addition, if there were other energy sources then less coal mines would have to be used. If the research and resources are available, then these sources of energy should be used instead of coal. "Using more renewable energy sources such as solar power, wind power, hydroelectric dams or even biological sources of energy such as ethanol from corn will be costly to get going, but once solar collectors or wind machines are up they will produce energy without any fuel costs," said Haut.

To prevent future deaths from coal mining there are steps that need to be taken to insure the safety of the workers. If new laws are passed, or other energy sources are used, more lives can be saved. To protect the miners, the government and the coal companies need to take action now. To do this there needs to be new laws, on the state and federal level, that enforces and protects the safety of the miners.

Year	Number of deaths
2000	38
2001	42
2002	27
2003	30
2004	28

Author Frey deceived millions of readers, wrong to change events

LAUREN WEBER
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In October 2005, Oprah Winfrey chose James Frey's memoir, *A Million Little Pieces*, as one of her book club selections. The harrowing tale of drug addiction and recovery shot to the top of nearly every bestseller list in the country and made Frey an instant celebrity. However, Frey was recently shot down from his pedestal as his *thesmokinggun.com*, an investigative website, revealed that he had falsified numerous details from his memoir, such as jail time in Ohio. After vehemently denying those claims for several weeks, Frey finally admitted that he had lied about many aspects of his life in the memoir. Frey's decision to alter events in his memoir was wrong because he misled his readers and

knowingly published his book as non-fiction after embellishing details.

First and foremost, Frey's actions were morally wrong. Students are taught from a very young age that lying is wrong, and he apparently forgot this lesson. Millions of readers were blown away by the horrors and struggles in the memoir, such as Frey undergoing a root canal without Novocain. They never dreamed that *A Million Little Pieces* was not entirely true. "When I teach students how to use the internet, I tell them to be careful because you cannot trust everything you find. When you read a book you automatically assume that you can trust the information because the publishers have editors who carefully check facts," said H-F Library Media Specialist Kathleen Tisoncik. *A Million Little Pieces* would still have been a powerful and moving book without the false events, and there was simply no need for Frey to fake important occurrences. "I feel that you betrayed millions of readers... It's such a great gift to have millions of people read your work and that bothers me greatly," said Winfrey to Frey on the January 26 episode of her show. Frey also knowingly blurred the thin line

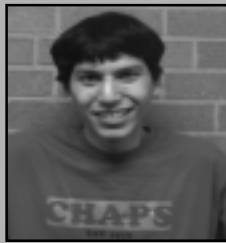
between memoir and fiction. Admittedly, as a memoir is an author's remembrance of a certain period in his or her life, not everything will be written exactly as it happened because it is impossible to remember every detail. However, memoirs remain non-fiction because they are factual in nature and authors do not invent new chapters in their memoirs for dramatic effect. Frey went beyond filling in minor details to inventing important events central to the reader's perception of his character. "In order to get through the experience of

the addiction, I thought of myself as being tougher than I was and badder than I was... When I was writing the book... I clung to that image," said Frey to Winfrey. Frey knew that the book became a work of fiction when he did this, yet *A Million Little Pieces* was published and marketed as a true story of drug abuse.

Frey should have admitted from the start that parts of *A Million Little Pieces* were fabricated, and the book should have been published with a disclaimer stating that it was "based on a true story." *A Million Little Pieces* is an extraordinarily powerful book. The memoir should not have been tainted by the fact that certain portions of the story are not true. Future readers of Frey's work will not be able to fully absorb his writing, as they will constantly focus on the false events. "He made the wrong choice, and the book should have been marketed as fiction," said Tisoncik. Nobody is denying that Frey was a drug addict, and had the book been published as "based on a true story," rather than non-fiction, Frey would have earned equal praise and the essential meaning of *A Million Little Pieces* would have remained the same.

The revelation that *A Million Little Pieces* contained falsified events shocked the country, and caused people to question the authenticity of the memoir genre. Frey showed terrible judgment in publishing his memoir as a non-fiction work and was wrong to lie about certain parts of his book because this action is immoral.

Guess Who? GUEST COLUMNIST



Get to Know the Columnist: Hari is the sports editor for the Voyager, participates in Mathletes, and is a play by play announcer for WHFH.

By Hari Tyagi

Throughout my two and a half years of high school, I have always been busy inside H-F. I never quite had a typical 8:30 am to 3:00 pm "work shift." Many days of the week, I stay after school for a couple hours or so because of journalism or other activities.

Regardless, whenever I leave this building, I can almost guarantee there will be zero students in the hallways. But I can always guarantee that a few security guards or maintenance workers will be lurking in the halls. After months of passing by them, I realized how much credit they do not receive for keeping H-F clean and relatively peaceful.

When most outsiders see our three-time winning Blue Ribbon school, they think of the excellent teachers and administrators who make it possible for students to get an education. But underneath all that are the unsung heroes of the school—custodians, security guards, technicians, etc. No, they may not teach classes or help me with my math homework, but they do the "little things" around the school that almost all students take for granted. Just last Tuesday at 7 pm, I was walking by the cafeteria and saw a custodian cleaning the trophy cases. I was puzzled. How many students even touch the trophy cases?

What makes them even more unbelievable on top of their hard work is that they never really complain about "reckless students." I have been here after school so many times, and I have yet to see one custodian criticize or tell a student why he or she should not have thrown that wrapper on the ground right in front of them, or a security guard say "jeez, kids, can we follow the rules for a change?" I know I would lose my mind putting up with what they deal with on a daily basis.

The maintenance staff is not just custodians or security guards that I have chosen to magnify but all parts of the staff that are doing noble work. I for one think it is amazing that they clean literally every square foot of this building; regardless of whether it is their duty or not, they do a good job. It would be nice if more students, faculty, and administrators recognized them for their efforts; they work just as hard as anyone at this school. One way we can show our gratitude for them is by picking up a crumpled ball of paper or two off the ground and putting them in the garbage can where they belong. That may seem hard to comprehend for many students, but what these hardworking people do is baffling. If you think I am bluffing, see for yourself.

GRAPHIC BY CAITLIN HAMILTON AND JANE GARDNER