

Pedestrian crossing needed

By **Liliana Torreblanca**
Layout & Design Editor

When I was younger, my parents told me stories about the long and excruciating journey they had to make to get to school. My father told me he had to cross rivers, mountains and busy highways.

In one of his stories, he shared the heartbreaking memory of losing a classmate to a fast-moving vehicle. This happened when he was young and living in Mexico of course.

While these may seem like exaggerations, this is a sad truth that many Mexican people faced not too long ago. In some cases not much has changed to this day. It's true that Mexico doesn't have the best walking areas for their pedestrians, and some places in America might not be so different.

Despite the two countries' vast differences, when traveling on foot, the obstacles and dangers don't differ that much. In America our rivers and mountains are sometimes just busy roads.

On the Northeast Texas Community College grounds, the agriculture department sits right across from the main campus. The road that separates the two sites is a 50 mph farm to market road, with no crosswalk for students who walk to class. Though the weather here is mostly fair and sunny, on rainy days there is an extra challenge for drivers and students crossing the road.

Adding a crosswalk, safety signage or flashing lights between the two locations would increase the safety and visibility of pedestrian students. A working crosswalk system can alert drivers of pedestrians and give students more confidence when crossing the road.

NTCC Agriculture Director Rene McCracken, said that she constantly has trouble directing students to her side of the campus. She said this is partly due to the fact that the Ag complex is not shown on the main campus map that is provided to students.

McCracken also said that adding the Ag complex to the campus map would not only help students realize there is a road to cross, but also make them aware of how much time they need getting from one building to the next. This might also encourage them to build a schedule to get to class on time.

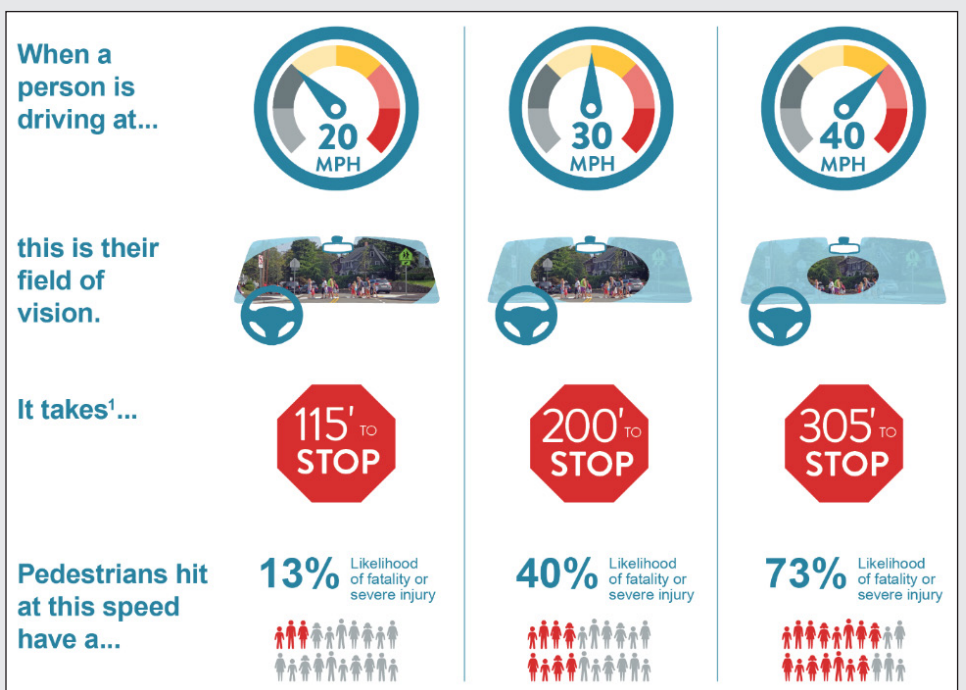
Most of the students who cross the main road are dorm students or students who do not own a vehicle. In the 2023 spring semester, I conducted a small survey of 50 NTCC students and of the 50, 98% believe there should be a crosswalk between both facilities.

An article on saferoutesinfo.org says that pedestrian signage often strengthens crosswalks. A sign that reads "Stop For Pedestrians" serves as a safety beacon to alert drivers to slow down for pedestrians. According to the same website, the average cost of a painted crosswalk in Texas is \$750 and up to \$2,600 for a high visibility design.

Though this is not an overnight project and will likely involve studies by the Texas Department of Transportation, with the community's support this proposal could help make our campus safer.

An article by Brett Pritchard, an attorney at the law office of Brett H. Pritchard firm in Killeen, Texas, says pedestrians have their own right-of-way laws that they must comply with in order to remain safe.

And yes, we must follow laws to stay safe, but how do we follow the rules if there



SPEEDS AND THE RISK OF SERIOUS INJURY TO PEDESTRIANS. ROADWAY DESIGN MANUAL | PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

The illustration above shows the relationship between vehicular speeds and the risk of serious injury to pedestrians. It was published in the TxDOT Roadway Design Manual in Dec. 2022.

are no lines for us to follow?

McCracken said the college needs to be proactive in ensuring the safety of students. In an online TxDOT manual, numbers show that there is a 2.5 second breaking reaction time and higher speeds affect both stopping time and the possibility of fatality or severe injury.

"If you add some fog and you add some high traffic it's a recipe for disaster just waiting to happen," McCracken said.

"What we don't want to happen is wait until something serious happens and then we say, "Well, I wish we could have done that."

A crosswalk for students to be able to cross the road and feel safe no matter the weather or the time of day should be in the campus community's best interest. We should want our students to feel more comfortable walking toward their education.

What truly defines the 'American Dream?'

By **Tobyus Thompson**
Student Guest Writer

Have you ever listened to a song and really took the time to really listened to the lyrics? I mean really tried to understand what it is that the composer is trying to say.

Many times, throughout the music industry's rise to fame, there have been truly masterful poets who put beautiful words to paper.

In a rhythm, these words become a song, and sometimes the artist puts personal experiences into his or her work to try and convey an almost hidden message for the audience to interpret.

Some of these hidden messages can be aimed at a specific person or group of people. Have you ever heard of the band, Five Finger Death Punch? I know that sounds kind of violent right off the start but hear me out.

The musicians really have quite a few jewels that shimmer in the oasis of their music. The band is based in America, and most of the members were in the military at one point in time.

The artists try and give most of their proceeds to charitable events in honor of our troops. Since late 2007, Five Finger Death Punch has composed nine albums and over 33 singles.

One of their more controversial singles is called "Living the Dream." This is a song that pulls on the heartstrings of our motherland. If you've never heard of this band, this song is the one you should start with.

What does "living the American Dream" mean to you? Famed writer and historian, James Adams,

stated: "That dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement."

What a mouthful. James Adams is trying to say the American Dream is a concept in which equal opportunity and lifestyles should be valued. The concept of the American Dream is a bit convoluted. Most people are so entranced with their daily lives that they fail to see the world crumpling around them.

The American Dream has so many faces to it. This makes it almost frustrating to try and talk about the topic in totality. Some view "the dream" as another excuse to place America at the top of the social spectrum, however biased this may seem.

For others, the concept of the American Dream portrays Americans as egotistical capitalist-pushing individuals who are unaware of the surroundings we find ourselves in. At least this explains why some Europeans seem to get so agitated by our presence in their country.

America has demons, just like every self-respecting country. In "Living the Dream," singer Ivan Moody states, "It seems the path we're on was paved with blood and sorrow. No thought about tomorrow, just part of the machine, or so it seems."

The quote stands out so much because America's success was paved by soldiers who died defending our freedom and the wars we have inevitably placed our noses in. The "machine" as mentioned earlier refers to the monotonous routine of

the American people; get up, go to work, rinse and repeat.

How many Americans can honestly say they understand the sacrifices others have made to ensure they can pick up their cell phones to check the latest tweets?

The American Dream is a concept that has too many faces. Ivan Moody describes the American people as "broken toys, beneath your crooked crown."

What the "crooked crown" symbolizes is the tyrannical behavior that a government can possess, whether the government shows that to its followers or not. A government is always going to have a dark side they want to keep hidden, hence why the toys are broken underneath.

We as the people who make up the United States have luxuries that many in other countries would give their lives for. Our concept of freedom varies from those in North Korea, right?

Once put into perspective, the band Five Finger Death Punch, truly hits the head of the nail with the hammer. The band describes the tyrannical behavior a government can possess and how we as the followers are merely puppets to the will of our own system.

The American Dream truly fades from our grasp the farther we travel down this path of "blood and sorrow" becoming a nightmare for those too weak to stand alone.

Many of us have lost sight of what truly matters and is of paramount importance. The freedoms that we take for granted are not free to start with.

Someone paid dearly to make sure you can enjoy your luxuries. How do you honor them?

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