

The Purple Press

Official Publication of the St. Paul Open School

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Grad Standards Limbo

Maura Shramko

Staff Writer

Unless you've been living under a rock or locked away in the closet, you'll know that the Grad Standards, A.K.A. the Profile of Learning, is the new system by which all students graduating in 2002 and beyond will be graduating by. Or perhaps not.

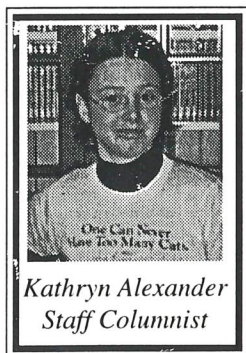
The word on the street is that Christine Jax, Commissioner of the Department of Children, Families and Learning and one of those responsible for the recently-implemented and, some might say, nefarious Graduation Standards, and Education Minnesota are going to be requesting the postponement of these so-called grad standards for another two years. This would mean that the first class actually graduating according to these standards would be that of 2004. The question now is: Um, what about this year's 9th and 10th graders?

Moratorium: "An authorization to a

debtor permitting temporary suspension of payments," or, probably more in context with this situation, "A suspension or delay of any action or activity." That's what Jax and others are asking the Legislature to consider regarding the standards. After two years ago introducing a curriculum which left many people, state-wide, completely disoriented and dissatisfied, they have changed their minds once more because maybe, just maybe, the Profile of Learning wasn't ready for the students when it was first introduced. They are also concerned that there are too many requirements for students to fulfill, making it comparable to a scavenger hunt, as some few, wise souls have said in the past. Chances are that Open School students will be sticking to the newly-created packet, regardless of whether

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Violence: How Does Open Stack Up?



colors. Greg was right behind them, running full-speed upstairs, or so I was told afterward.

It all started 5th hour in physical education. The class was playing volleyball when one of the students got hit by the ball, according to Eileen Keetley, gym teacher. One of the students claimed that it was thrown on purpose. The argument escalated from there. After just a few minutes, the fight consisted of four to five students against two other students, who weren't actually sup-

posed to be in that class. Thursday January 6th, I was in the woodshop working, when two students burst through the door in a rage and grabbed several pieces of wood. They were moving so fast they were merely streaks of

posed to be in that class.

Eileen said that the two students who weren't supposed to be in the class quickly ran out of the gym. She found later that they were bound for the woodshop. Within seconds the two students were back in the gym, but this time wielding planks of wood. By the time Greg got upstairs, the fight was already mostly under control. No one actually got hit with the wood, said eye witnesses, but it wouldn't have taken much to start a very nasty brawl.

Eileen, who has been teaching here for over 20 years, commented: "In all my years of teaching this is the worst fight I have ever had to deal with." Eileen hoped that this was an isolated incident, though she wasn't sure if it was gang-related or not.

With all the violence at high schools around the nation, the recent fight here has me worried. I've always felt incredibly safe at Open School; I feel safer here than I did

VIOLENCE Continued on 3

Just So You Know

Dear Open School Community,

I am writing this letter to you as SLC Student Government President. Many of you probably know what Student Government is for Open School. For those of you who don't I'll now give you a brief introduction to this busy group of Open School students.

First off, the SLC Student Government is comprised of representatives from each SLC advisory. These representatives are elected by their respective advisories, to represent their advisory in matters that are brought to Student Government. The advisory representatives are responsible for attending all Student Government meetings, working on committees to plan social activities (Snow Days, Halloween, door contests, dances, etc.), school climate issues (bathroom sanitation, school security, etc.), and for reporting back to their advisories about what is happening in Student Government.

Student Government has a co-working relationship with the Site Council (our Student Government Continued on 9



Khadija, Lakrisha, and Tyja dressed up for Dress Up Day

Check this out . . .

"Ever thought: 'Hey, this pop is not me?'" . . . Joe, page 6

"But it's not just the boy bands that are guilty of this crime."

. . . Sara, page 4

"I have had many addictions in my years as a student here."

. . . Mark, page 7

"Since I am so upset, I think I will kill someone . . . I mean, uh, write this article."

. . . Salvador, page 4

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Talent Show

The Open School talent show is going to be held on March 17th, at 12:40. Anyone participating in the talent show must participate in mandatory auditions on one of the following dates: February 29th, from 9:30-10:30, or March 1st from 12:40 until 2:00. A schedule for time is on Lenni's door. Acts must sign up.

If you have an act, practices and set up will be on March 17 in the AM. Again performances will begin at 12:40 the same day. Good luck!



Snow Days

Well, Snow Days was last week. What fun. As usual, there was an in-school dance. Unless you were playing volleyball and/or watching *Dumb and Dumber* (possibly one of the best movies ever), you'll know that the dance was very fun. Everyone had a grand time, which is something new.

Another new addition to Open School's Snow Days Festivities was the crowning of the first same-sex set of monarchs. Lenni Augustine, who is in charge of these things, refused to disallow girls to put their name in for king, and boys to put theirs in for queen. As a result, Jon Lubke and Josh Mulligan co-ruled in a very '90's coronation.

Aside from a new and exciting coronation and a surprisingly fun dance, there were the ever-reliable dress-up days. The the first place winners for the SLC are as follows:

Dress-Up Day-- Sierra Blakely
Pajama Day-- Shanna Simon
Dress As Your Idol Day-- Emily Schultz
Twin Day-- Jillian Yang and Mai Thao. ♦



Debbie Martin and Brian Blakely, all gussied up.

Coffeeeeeeeee for Yearbook

Coffee is good. You like coffee. I like coffee. Everyone likes coffee. Drink coffee at the coffee thing and you will feel happy all day.



Coffee is mmmmmmmmm mmmmm good. Mmmmmmmmmmmmmmm . . . Coffee . . . It's good.

The Yearbook Coffee House was Friday the 25th in the art room from 10:30- 11:30. Only people that bought a yearbook were invited. There was free coffee. You could also buy pastries from Blue Moon Coffee House. Yearbooks are available through Connye for \$20.00.

STANDARDS From 1

or not the moratorium is implemented.

While one of the major concerns of students elsewhere is whether or not they'll be able to fulfill everything in a class, here in Open School land the standards are much cleaner, better developed, with a student populace better-equipped to handle them. Here, students seem vastly more annoyed than concerned, annoyed that once more the state is playing games with our education.

"I think they should have thought of this two years ago," said 10th grader Kathryn Alexander, part of the guinea pig class of 2002. Other students agreed, stating that the possible postponement would be a "very bad idea."

The purpose of delaying the standards would be to take more time to polish them, and also to reduce the number of standards, as many people are worried that there are too many to complete and not enough time. Teachers have also complained about the amount of paperwork the standards give them. In addition, Education Minnesota would request that the Legislature spend more money on training teachers concerning the grad standards.

The moratorium of the grad standards would not necessarily mean that students wouldn't try to fulfill the standards, just that they would not be required to complete them.

"This is not for teachers to say, 'Oh, good, we don't have to work on the Profile of Learning for two years.' This is that it will not be high stakes, it will not come between a student and a student's diploma," said Jax of the possible moratorium.

Interim is Beautiful

It's that time of year and Interim is just around the corner. On Thursday, February 10th, students went to brief meetings in order to decide what they wanted to do for interim. So far the choices are as follows: Cooking and restaurant management, Tarot and more, Model planes and rockets, Camping and/or climbing, In-camera editing/movie making, Street theater, Hairstyling and make-up, Outward bound, Horseback riding, Bead-making at Bead Monkey, Biking, and seniors who need to work on graduating. So far the dates planned for Interim are, May 3rd, 4th and 5th. Please show up and be involved, otherwise this isn't going to be able to happen.

Was Prompt Too Personal?

Maura Shramko

Staff Writer

On January 26 students in grades 9 and 10, as well as 11th graders who had not yet passed, were required to take the Minnesota Basic Standards Writing Test. Afterwards, however, questions were raised by state law makers that perhaps the prompt was inappropriate.

At first, the idea of a writing prompt being inappropriate may sound a bit unreasonable, people were concerned that perhaps the prompt was too personal for adolescents to write about. The prompt in question is as follows: "Write about one thing you would like to change about yourself. Name that

thing and give specific reasons why you would like to change it." 10th grader Emily Schultz, who took the test, said that the prompt "gives you the message that you should change something about yourself."

Other Open students, 9th graders Emily Cusick and Mark Dyson (who did not take the actual test, but took the practice test) said that while the prompt might not have been the best, it was not necessarily harmful. "Most people automatically would think [the one thing they would change would be] something about their bodies, but it really doesn't have to be," said Cusick.

State law makers decided against a mandatory retesting and decided instead to offer a retake to students who were uncomfortable with the prompt. Open School students tend to think that the whole hullabaloo about the prompt was a bit ridiculous, saying that the state was making "way too big a deal" out of it. Most students expressed sentiments that "what's done is done," and that not all students should have to retake the writing test.

VIOLENCE From 1

at my grade school J.J.Hill, which had neighborhood shootings almost every month. Inside the school was much safer. The teachers didn't get along very well, students didn't know each other and, all in all, it was a pretty stuck-up school. For me Open is different because even though we have a very diverse population, we all seem to get along pretty well.

Open has a really low crime rate (we should be really careful that it stays that way). I've sometimes wondered what makes Open safer than other schools. I usually come to the conclusion that it's because our school is small enough that it's easy for everyone to know each other. I also think that our advisory system doesn't allow students to "fall through the cracks" like they do at other schools.

At J.J. Hill, even when I was in 1st grade, I got bullied mercilessly by a fellow student. I came home crying almost every day. One time, he put a dog's choke chain around my neck and yanked it. Nothing was done to stop him and he didn't stop bullying me until I left the school six years later. I think that in a way Open protects the innocent kids who don't fit into other schools and helps them grow into self-confident people.

If something like that were to happen at Open, I would tell my advisor and it would have been taken care of. That boy would have been expelled or disciplined in a way similar to that. The only thing that actually happened to him at J.J.Hill was that he got the choke chain taken away for a week.

When I was little having a choke chain tightened around my neck was a big deal,



Becky Wilcox

Senior Profile

How long have you been at Open School?

5 years

If you could be an animal, what kind of animal would you be?

I wouldn't want to be an animal. I like being a person.

What is your favorite color?

Navy blue.

What will you miss most about Open School?

The teachers and most of the students.

What do you want to be when you grow up?

A nurse.

but no one treated it like anything. I can't imagine what I would be like if after 6th grade I had attended a school where kids could get away with stunts like that.

Sometimes I think that people have been desensitized to violence. People think it's no big deal until someone gets killed. There are fights every day at other schools and stu-



dents just shrug them off. I don't want Open to be like that. I want fights to be few and far between. This doesn't mean that I want backpack searches or metal detectors at the doors. I just want to know that Open School will continue to discourage students from hurting each other both physically and mentally. ♦

Opinions 'n' Stuff

Hypocrites R Us

When we look back twenty years from now, what will we remember? Undoubtedly, we'll remember the clothes (the name brand craze) and the celebrities (boy "bands"). But will we think we shaped the world for the better, or made a positive impact?

This question arose as I was watching MTV; A channel devoted to young impressionable viewers, where the faces of Britney Spears, Ricky Martin, The Backstreet Boys and dozens of other faces that the media has dubbed, "idols," are seen twenty-four hours a day.

When MTV started in the early eighties, a channel devoted to music was unheard of and skeptics thought that it would never last. Well, it has and with the advent of music television, MTV, the youth would forever be represented by an image.

But the channel is certainly more than just "music." Want to see what happens when strangers live together in a house with cameras in their faces all day? The drama unfolds on *The Real World*. But they have reason to fight and be unhappy, a beach-front property in Hawaii, completely furnished - the real world can be tough.

If all of that feuding reminds you of your family gatherings, then certainly *Road Rules* will remind you of a family car trip. Again, strangers of different backgrounds are forced to live together - this time in a Winnebago. The team follows clues from destination to destination completing missions (some have included: skydiving, flying planes and performing in a circus), and on completion of the final mission, are rewarded.

Fashion seems to be the most important thing to MTV creators. *House of Style* originally hosted by Cindy Crawford, explored fashion from a celebrities perspective. MTV has also had their very own model search. Fashionably Loud gave teen girls across the country (well, those 5'8" and up) a chance to win a modeling contract.

But doesn't it seem odd that between their



The Rock Machine is Your Friend

Well, it seems that a section of my last article got cut. Since I am so upset, I think I will kill someone . . . I mean, uh, write this article. Heh, heh, heh. Everyone just be cool. Okay, I was going to do a "1999: the Year in Music" kind of thing, but since I'm not convinced that people are getting smarter, I decided to turn it into more of a rant, you know, for old times sake (and because Jennifer Schultz keeps begging me). So, my current position on rap, hip hop, rap metal, boy bands/pop stars, and R&B is . . . Oh, I love it. MTV tells me to worship it, so in accordance with all the other sick, zombie-minded teens throughout the world, I must bow down and get on my knees for MTV . . . Hahahaha!! I'm sorry, I couldn't



Salvador Rosas
Angry Young Man

say that with a straight face. That statement is completely false, in case I accidentally persuaded someone with my eccentric form of sarcasm that I actually like MTV. Suckers!

I'm very puzzled by why such a large number of people like these kinds of music, so I feel like analyzing it. Above all, most teens just want to feel acceptance, and maybe that's not such a bad thing, but what lengths do they go to feel it? That doesn't only apply with listening to the same kind of music as everyone else, but stuff like wearing all the hip trendy Tommy Hilfiger, FUBU Abercrombie and Fitch junk and of course doing the same drugs as everyone. Bottom line, most teens just want to . . . well, let's just say have fun.

There's just this level of ignorance that teens display in order to feel like they are wanted, like anyone gives a damn. What I've noticed is there's a lot of pressure out

SALVADOR Continued on 8

Pop Music Is Bad

I'm sure everyone knows about this current phenomena called the "boy bands."

You'd have to have been living in a cave for the past few years not to. My question is . . . where is the band?

It seems that all too often these days the most popular musical artists have only their voices and one or several synthesizers backing them up. This hardly constitutes a band as far as I'm concerned. Not to mention the fancy editing equipment used in recordings that help the singer(s) out by making their mediocre voices sound good. But it's not just the boy bands that are guilty of this crime. Oh, no. There are also several very popular solo female artists, who are, for some odd reason, all blonde, perky teenagers who rely on imi-

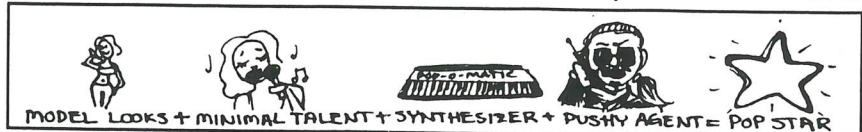
tated instrumentalists.

Another thing that drives me insane is the fact that most of the songs are not only written for the artists instead of by them, but that the lyrics are incredibly trite. (You know. . . "ooh, I love you baby, come back to me, yadda yadda") Now, maybe I just don't understand the appeal behind this type of music, but I've always thought that it takes at least one person who can actually play an instrument, or at least sing very well, to create a good song or two or fifty. But, unfortunately for me, that's contrary to the popular beliefs of the average teenager.

I don't know. Maybe I'm just old. Or maybe pop music is just supposed to be like that. Either way, I don't like it, and there's not much I can do about it. However, I can't help but wonder if this trend will continue and worsen as the years go by, and all the truly great musicians will fade into the shadows. That, for me, would be a devastating tragedy. But I guess I'll just have to grin and bear it, and hope for the best for now. . .



Sara Schultz
Staff Columnist



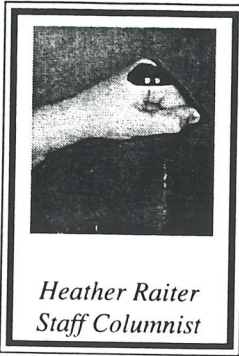
The Wave of the Future: Spam??

While they walked down the hall, William started explaining the project to Frank.

"As you know we have just released 'Horme-Flavored Sealed Ham' and now we are moving onto bigger, better things. We are trying to put together the wave of the future of meats. We want to make canned luncheon meats that will be able to be stored in pantries and shelves. They wouldn't need to be refrigerated unless they opened the can," William ended enthusiastically. They walked through the large swinging doors leading into the lab. "Well, here we are." William waved his hand in the air.

Frank looked around. He had never seen a more marvelous kitchen in his life. It had the most high tech equipment, the knives, the meats and the huge freezers in the back. Frank was spell-bound.

"Amazing. I didn't know we had the funding for such high tech equipment."



Heather Raiter
Staff Columnist

"Well, we don't. At least not for your old sector. Ok, well it looks like nobody's here so why don't we get started. First let me show you what we have made so far." William walked over to one of the freezers; while he was digging around for the future of meat Frank started peeking around. When William reappeared with a large Tupperware container in the crook of his arm, he found Frank looking at the seasoning cabinets.

"Frank, come here, we have a lot of work to do."

Frank slowly sauntered over to the island in the middle of the kitchen. The marble counter top felt cold under his fingers.

"Well, come on man, it won't bite," William smirked. He slowly opened the container. Inside there was a pink gelatinous mass of meat that loomed up at Frank.

"That's it? That's the wave of the future?"

"At least the start. Here, let me cook some up for you." He reached down under the island and brought up a hot plate.

"You know, maybe later. Why not just give me a list of ingredients?"

"No, no, I insist. Just try a bite." William started up the hot plate.

As William started frying up some of the

luncheon meat, Frank picked up a piece of the gelatinous mass and molded it into a small ball. *I wonder what he would do if I hit him with this*, Frank thought to himself.

"Here, just try a bite" William held up a spoon full of brownish colored luncheon meat.

Frank reluctantly took the spoon from William "Are you sure it's edible?"

"Yes, it's perfectly fine and, if I do say so myself it tastes pretty good for the first recipe we've made."

Frank closed his eyes and took a small bite of the frightening substance. In the next moment Frank found himself keeling over a large waist bin relieving himself of that horrible brown substance posing as meat and his lunch.

"If that is the future, let me die now!" Frank coughed.

While Frank was cleaning himself up a rather disgruntled and hurt William started to put stuff away and got Frank a list of ingredients.

Once Frank got the ingredients he went home to see if he could wake up from this strange nightmare that has become his life.

The Others

Emily Schultz
Staff Critic

I recently watched a new show called "The Others." The show sort of stood out for me, just because I'm into ghouls and goblins and things like that. It was surprising that they came up with a show about those very things, so I was, as you can imagine, very excited.

In a nutshell, there is a group of six people who call themselves "The Others." Each one of the people in the group has a special power, a psychic ability. They meet every week to discuss what kinds of eerie things have happened to them, and what they've learned from it. The characters include Miles Ballard who is the founder of the group, but has no special powers of his own; Albert, a blind psychic who suffers from the sixth sense (he has visions of dead people in his mind); Warren who is pretty much a psychotic psychic; Mike Gabriel, what most people call an empath, picks up on other people's emotions; Elmer Greentree, an eld-

erly man, who has the strongest psychic power of them all; and Ellen Sitory who uses her psychic powers to contact dead people, in order to help their still-living friends and family. Last but not least there's Marion Kitt, who sees dead people.

The first episode mainly revolves around Marion Kitt. Miles recommends she join their meetings after hearing of her experiences. Marion begins having visions of a dead girl who had previously lived in her college dorm room. She had killed herself a year before. At first, Marion is very skeptical about joining the group, but due to her creepy encounters with the dead girl, she confides in Elmer to help send her away, and joins the group at the end of the show. She finally realizes that her power can help herself, as well as others, and decides that the group is just what she needs to get through her scary encounters.

"The Others" is like The X-Files, it's just

there are no detectives; every episode is about supernatural stuff, like ghosts and people with special powers. The suspense and constant enthusiasm from the characters keeps you glued to the television for the entire show. It has its share of corny scenes, but what show doesn't? Its a great mix of drama and sci-fi and manages to keep you entertained with its various creepy scenes.

To be perfectly honest, you probably won't like the show if you're not into ghosts and things like that like I am. There isn't any conflict between the members of the group, and frankly, you can call it anything BUT a sitcom. It's mostly a big jumble of different people "experiencing" things, and that's it.

Overall, I definitely think the show was worthwhile. "The Others'" spontaneous jumbles of conflict make it seem interesting. If you're interested, the show airs on Kare 11 at 9 PM every Saturday. Enjoy. ♦

Do You Know Your Pop?

Joe Levine
Staff Critic

Do you have trouble finding a pop that is right for you? Don't know if that pop is too strong or tastes bad? Ever thought: "Hey, this pop is not me?" If you answered yes to these questions, read on (if not, pretend that



you did, please). Worry not . . . this is the guide to your perfect pop.

I am your guide. If you need a pop to match your preferences, or are

thinking of switching pops, read this issue's top ten later (also good for comparing your pop to others.) My selection consists of pops most commonly talked about at Open.

Lets start with . . .

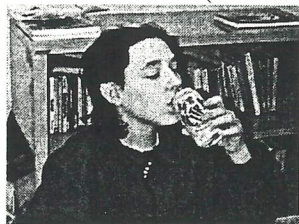
Coca Cola: (Colith Kero) It has a strong flavor, not a good one, but strong. After lunch this cola is preferred, whereas morning is to soon, and after 6:30 it is too late due to the power of this brew. TIP: Drop grungy pennies in this stuff and watch them shine.

Pepsi: (Pepi minus) Coke's rival is smooth and tastes good and not too strong. Because of this, it's good all day. TIP: Try drinking upside down to relieve tension.

Cherry Coke: (Cherry kero) This is quite a popular drink. Like coke, the robust flavor is not too great but there is something you just can't put your finger on. Good from 8AM to 8PM. TIP: Drop a can in the snow on your way to the bus and check it on your way back.

JOLT: (Caffinith Crap) The fabled drink of double caffeine. Well, I have news for you. Anyone who has tasted it will agree, it tastes horrible! I don't recommend it any time of day.

Mountain Dew: (Dewdadow) It's not too strong, quite weak truly, but what a flavor! Best noon to moon. TIP: Fizzless Dew tastes exquisite.



Joe, testing pop

Miranda



Miranda Byrne
Staff Columnist

Dear Editors,

I am writing this column in response to articles that have been written in the past about women in the media. The articles have all been fairly different but mostly com-

plain about the same thing; all the women you see on TV are thin and wear skimpy or tight-fitting outfits. All I have to say is this: quit your whining.

I am not saying that it is OK, or a good thing that TV shows have their female characters running around scantily-clad, but lets be honest, no one is going to watch a show about ugly fat people. I know nobody wants to admit it but it's true. It is just another one of those harsher realities of life. People watch TV to escape, to leave their life and their problems behind and concern themselves with the not-so-big problems, that almost-perfect people have in TV land. People on TV have to have that special unrealistic quality to them. If they didn't no
MIRANDA Continued on 8

BayWatch: Goodbye, Hawaii

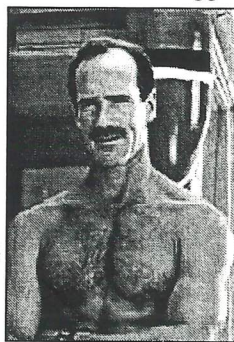
Lucy and Miranda
Staff Critters

These are sad times we live in. Truly sad times. People are dying, new diseases are being discovered every day and Baywatch Hawaii may be taken off the air. For good! I'm very sorry, but that's no joke.

One day while riding the bus we heard some very disturbing news. The new form of Baywatch (Baywatch Hawaii to be specific) was having some financial difficulties. The ratings have dropped by about 90% from 1994 when an astonishing number of people watched the show starring David Hasslehof (we adoringly call him Dave) and Pamela Anderson (we lovingly call her Pam). The creator of Baywatch, Greg Bonann is asking the state of Hawaii for about two million dollars to work with. Greg is hoping to use the money for a new set and some new cast members to boost the shows ratings. This is truly sad news.

We remember when we first discovered Baywatch Hawaii. It was a cold and gray afternoon. We were flipping through the channels when we saw an astounding sight. Lifeguards running across the beach

BAYWATCH! What else could it have been? The old and popular Baywatch delighted everyone! Lonely boys and frightening old men and even some weird teenage girls who are really easily amused. Dave and Pam and a wonderful cast of very talented (well, sorta talented) people ran around in reddish-orange bathing suits saving lives and discovering their inner selves. Bit by bit the old Baywatch lost it's charm. Lots of the good cast members went on to bigger and better things (but how is anything better than Baywatch?) and the show just lost it's charm. So when we saw this new and exciting Baywatch we could hardly contain ourselves. What we saw was pure genius. A new and wonderful cast including some old favorites (Michael Newman as Newmie has been on the show



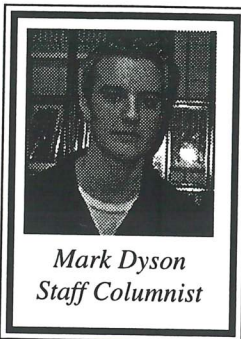
for 10 years) still had some daring rescues and steamy love affairs. Possibly the most drastic and exciting change of all was the bathing suits. Instead of the boring old ugly red colored suits, the cast is now wearing new and very exciting bright yellow suits! Can you believe it? We think the new show is thoroughly enjoyable for everyone! But the question on everyone's mind is: Will the state of Hawaii feel the same way? It's highly unlikely that the Aloha State will fund Baywatch Hawaii. And if the show doesn't get some really good ratings or some big time money Baywatch is doomed for good.

"Baywatch will be over forever," says Greg Bonann. "The ten year legacy will come to an end."

All we can say to you is this: Watch Baywatch Hawaii and love it just like we, the scary old men and the lonely young boys do! Appreciate it before it's gone. And when the show is truly over, remember the good old days. Remember Mitch and Newmie and C.J. and Stephanie! We know they'll remember you, the loyal fans.

Return of the Nerds

I have had many addictions in my years as a student here. I have written about them for the paper, too, whether people liked it or not. It started with 4-Square. I was completely in love with



Mark Dyson
Staff Columnist

that game, but people just didn't care. I didn't understand, but now I think I do. I could care less about football, but half the state is crazy about the Vikings. Now, of course, I think 4-Square is a dumb game and I am ashamed that I ever played it, but it seems that I continue to need a new addiction to make my life interesting.

Earlier this year, that addiction was Ultimate Frisbee. I went out every day at lunch, whether it was 90 degrees with 99 percent

humidity or 33 degrees and sleeting, and played for my half hour, irritating Dino to no end because I refused to come in until 10 after. However, now that the playing field is blanketed in several inches of wet snow, I have returned to one of my earliest addictions from my formative years: computer games.

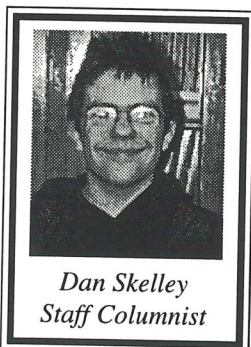
Yes, that's right. I've gone from being a Frisbee nut to a common nerd. I play computer games when I get home from school for hours, finally shutting my bloodshot eyes to restless sleep dreaming of rocket launchers and sniper rifles only after I've fragged (blown up, maimed, killed, gibbed, shafted, exploded, splattered, railed, flamed, spooed, smacked down) thousands of virtual enemies. My computer case, after I have finished playing, is hot enough to fry an egg on. I think about the games, if not constantly, then whenever I have nothing else to think about. I sometimes catch myself playing the

games in my mind, putting it into so much detail that I even imagine getting killed and seeing the scoreboard with made-up scores. Sick, eh?

"Sick" is exactly what all those suburban right wing fundamentalist George Bush-loving soccer moms would say if they saw me bent for dear life over my keyboard and mouse, polygon-rendered giblets of human flesh bouncing around on my screen as my speakers proudly announce "MONSTER KILL!" Well, let them be morally offended, write letters to their Congressmen, and go on news shows with somber faces and earnestly say that the game companies, along with homosexuals and liberals, are "corrupting our precious children." I'll just sit home, honing my deathmatch skills to a razor-sharp edge until the moment that I have reached "Nerdvana" and am one with my computer. ♡



Got Records?



Dan Skelley
Staff Columnist

World Records can be fascinating. This column examines some of my personal favorites, from categories such as "Look what I can do," "Big Food," "Great Collectors of the World,"

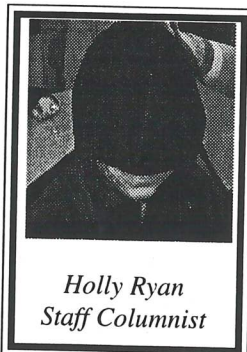
"Man that is expensive," and "That is just bizarre."

Let's start with the strongest neck in the world, which belongs to John Evans of The United Kingdom. He balanced a 350-pound Chevrolet on his head for 12 seconds at the Master Locksmith Pub Derby in England on November 4, 1997. He also once balanced 95 three-pound crates on his head for 10 seconds. I have one thing to say about that: ouch!

Next, I don't know how they did it, but they did! Ali Bandbaz balanced his Brother Massoud on two 14 and 1/2 inch daggers with a tip width of only 3/8 of an inch. They set the record for most weight balanced on a knife. The brothers are from Tehran Iran. Massoud, who weighs 150 pounds, was balanced unaided for 29 seconds. How did they do it?

Now its time for Homer's dream land, *GUINNESS Continued on 8*

Don't Touch That Sign!!



Holly Ryan
Staff Columnist

Imagine yourself with a great idea. Imagine people coming along and saying that it won't work. See yourself making publicity posters for your new idea, then see rude people coming along and writing stupid things on them. This is not a dream and you don't have to imagine it. It's happening now, here at Open School, you know, the school that is supposed to be about freedom of choice and expressing your ideas.

The whole thing started about a month ago when a friend and I decided to start a dance team. While Open has no sports teams and couldn't compete with other schools, we still thought it could work. We got the coach, Stephanie, and then we tried to start spreading the word. Wow, excuse us for trying to do what Open school preaches.

Ever since the posters went up people have been coming along with comments like "the dance team posters are perverted", and "I don't think its a good idea." The most insulting thing happened to me just a few days ago when I walked by one of our posters and saw one of the greatest acts of intelli-

gence yet. The said intelligent one(s) wrote "whatever" on the poster and scribbled out the words. This kind of vandalism sends the same message: Open is no longer a place that people can express themselves freely. This is not a new problem, Open has had problems with everything from art vandalism to door handles being ripped off.

What makes me the most angry is the fact that people could have ignored theses signs if they didn't like them. I hate to see Open start losing its uniqueness. The idea of someone trying to start a team or club on their own, or even with the help of others, is something foreign to other schools. It is something Open school has been able to do freely, until recently.

Anyway, the dance team is still on, and we encourage anyone in grades seven through twelve, male or female to join. Not many people have joined yet but we hope that once people get the general idea they will want to join us. The point of the dance team is to get people together that enjoy dancing. We would like to perform once more after the talent show. We will be performing at the talent show, and hopefully it will show that there are still people at Open who aren't afraid to go for the things that they love in the face of a school becoming like so many others. Maybe we can make a little difference.

GUINNESS From 7

other wise known has "Big Food." The world's biggest Doughnut was made by two bakeries and a radio station in Utica, New York, in 1993. The Jelly doughnut weighed 1.5 tons and was 16 feet in diameter. As homer would say "That's a big doughnut"

The biggest Chocolate candy bar was 8 feet 10 inches long, 3 feet and 11 inches wide and 1 foot deep. It weighed just over a ton. It was made in Birmingham, England, on October 5, 1998. One ton candy bar, yum.

It's time for Pack rats. . . I mean Great Collectors of the World. Hey, who needs 680 lawn mowers? Evidently these two do. Andrew Hall and Michael Duck of Windsor, England have a collection of more then 180 different lawn mowers. They say you need a hobby.

Biggest Star Wars collection belongs to Jason Joiner of London, England. A special-effects expert who worked on *The Phantom Menace* has a collection of more than 20,000 Star Wars toys, including one of the origi-

nal C3PO robots, an original R2D2 and a original Darth Vader costume. Are you as sick of the England records has I am.

The Biggest Garfield the Cat collection belongs to Mike Drysdale and Gayle Brimmam of Los Angeles, California. They have about 3,000 Garfield items. Their house is crammed with videos toys, crockery etc. I know Egyptians loved cats, but this is ridiculous.

Now let's move on to "Man that is expensive." The most expensive Barbie doll is worth \$82,870 dollars. It was made in March of 1999 by Mattel toys in association with the diamond company De Beers. The doll was unveiled at David Morris Jewelers in London, England. It contains 160 diamonds set in 16 karat white gold.

Who needs Board Walk and Park Place when you have a 2 million dollar Monopoly set. It was made by Jeweler Sidney Mobell of San Francisco in 1988.

The board is 23-karat gold and the dice are made of diamonds.

Join us now for "that is just bizarre." How long could some one have the hiccups? About 68 years. Charles Osborne from Anthon, Iowa, began hiccuping in 1922 and didn't stop until February 1990. He was unable to cure him self. He was able to live a "normal" life, marrying twice and fathering eight kids. That is bizarre, do you agree?

The Longest Hand Raising record, is held by Amar Bharti of India. He clams to have kept his right hand up for 26 years as a gesture of devotion to the Hindu god Shiva. His fingers have withered into his hand. His knuckles are white with rot and his finger nails are long and twisted. That is beyond bizarre.

Now for the last worlds record I'm going to share. The most popular comic strip is Peanuts, created by Charles Schulz in October of 1950. It is published in over 2,620 different news papers and in 75 different countries. He died on February 12 just after he finished drawing his last Saturday comic. We will miss you Charles Schulz!

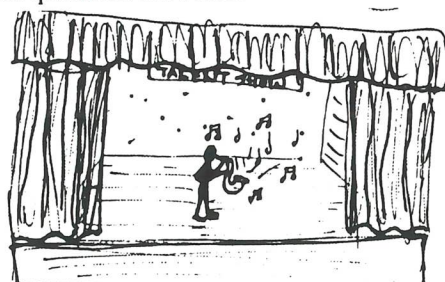
SALVADOR From 4

there, for all kinds of people. I mean, shouldn't they just change the name suburbs to conformity land, or something like that? I have cousins that live in the suburbs and they have practically been brainwashed into doing what everyone else is doing, not necessarily because they want to, but because they don't know if they'll fit in if they don't. People give in too easily. It's not only the suburbs, I guess it's everywhere. From idiot, wigger teens in farmlands to minority teens in "ghettos," the pressure of the roles society has given us all to play in this sick world exists. Why should I feel like, "Oh I'm Hispanic, I live in an urban area, therefore I should listen to rap, and I should wear Tommy Gear and do all this crap that I wouldn't normally do, just to feel like I belong?" If people don't like you for who you are, but only because you look a certain way and do certain things, why would you want to be a part of that? I'd rather have quality of friends over quantity.

Okay, getting back to the music part. The reason I don't like these different kinds of pop music (and rap is considered pop music), is, well, I can't see anyone still liking it 10 years from now, partly because I see myself destroying it (but that's a whole other story), but also because I don't see it changing or evolving, which I hope will make people realize how boring and repetitive it all is. I mean, rap is at it's peak right now. These guys talk as fast as they can right now,

which I'm not saying is talent, but that's the only thing they could have done with it and they've already done it. Sometimes they can't even do that! For instance, Dr. Dre's performance with Eminem on the American Music Awards was awful, really bad, he wasn't even on the beat. He was winded halfway through the song! Maybe he should cut back on all the pot he smokes.

One of the things I can see happening, is that rappers, in a pathetic attempt to keep record sales up, will try to mesh rap with other kinds of music. They've already done it with rock . . . Bastards! I think it has to do with there being a loss of love in this world. Sure, you could say everything has been done so we have to resort to this kind of music, but it's more that people aren't inspired to do anything creative. And that's difficult in a world that isn't too inspiring. And you'd think that some people would be inspired and try to set things right, but oh well. I guess people like being in their cages, just living out their life, no questions asked, no questions answered.



MIRANDA from 4

one would ever watch TV. In fact the only shows people would watch would be the news and daytime talk shows. Those are the only shows that deal with "real" people I can think of that anybody watches. Even then the newscasters are always inhumanly perky and the people on the talk shows are extreme. Let's face it, people don't want to turn on the TV and see your average Joe-shmoe struggling with his average, everyday life. Evidence of this dates back to the 1930's, during the great depression. In those years of hardship and struggle, the only movies made were about rich people. Peoples lives were crappy enough as it was, they didn't want to go to a movie to see someone else's crappy life. They went to movies to be swept up into a fantasy world. A world different from the one they were living in.

As long as people use TV as a way to escape, women on TV will be portrayed the same way as they are now, because that is how most women wish they looked and what men like to see.

I don't like it, but I know that it is the way it has to be. That is what gets the ratings, not "real" people. So unless people plan to stop using TV as a way to relax and escape the rigors of everyday life, they have no right to complain and should realize that they are only contributing to the very cause which they claim to be so strongly against. ♢

OPEN from 1

dent Government representative to the council is Student Government Secretary Adam Hurt), and with Open School's staff (Lenni Augustine is the staff representative, with consultations with Ruth Pechmann, and other staff as needed). Important issues -- such as bathroom cleanliness, the family room, textbook shortages, fights in school, the tardiness policy, appropriate dress for students, the new Site Council Vision for Open, and others -- are talked about first in Student Government. They are then brought to these other channels, through memos and/or discussions, to make students' thoughts and concerns known and addressed.

The other major, and often times more fun part of Student Governments' work is planning social events. Yes, it's true, tal-

ent shows, dances, and coronations aren't a part of the curriculum, or a part of the new Graduation Standards. So far this year Student Government representatives have worked hard planning the Fall Door Contest, the Costume Contest, the Fall (Halloween) Dance, the Peace Poster Contest, the Valentines Day flower and candy sales, Snow Days, the Coronation, the Dance, and the Talent Show. SLC Student Government has worked in partnership with ELC Student Government in planning some of these activities, as well as for the ELC Dance Party that happened on Wednesday.

Some more Student Government planned events to look forward to are the ELC/SLC Talent show on March 17, a Career Day sometime this Spring, and Prom on May 5 (all of which promise to be wonderful!).

My hopes in writing this letter are to let everyone know what Student Government is and what we have been doing, and plan to do this school year. Maybe you'll even try being a part of it next year. I hope that this is all fairly clear to you now, and I want you to know that if you have any concerns about Open, or any ideas of neat things we could do, you should let Student Government know. You can give your comments to one of your advisory representatives, or to any of the members of the Student Government Executive Committee. This year's officers are President - Mina Blyly-Strauss, Vice-president - Jenny Bartel, Secretary - Adam Hurt, or Treasurer- Tyja O'Neal.

Sincerely,

Mina Blyly-Strauss

BRIGETTE from 4

preachings of being yourself and the rights of youth of the world, that pouty-faced teens encourage you to shop at The Gap?

Yes, MTV seems to contradict itself often. A campaign called, "Fight for Your Rights," promoted tolerance of others, the prevention of violence and the importance of gun control. Yet, when a well known rap star and his gal-pal were found with a gun in their car - MTV embraced them. His videos were still being played and sympathy went to his gal-pal. After all, laws shouldn't apply to celebrities.

Along with gun control, MTV has aired specials on teaching the facts about AIDS,

safe sex and drugs. Although the videos they air show scantily-dressed women as men's possessions, and people drinking and having a good time.

I've become quite convinced that MTV doesn't even have phone lines. TRL (formerly known as Total Request Live), asks viewers to vote for their favorite videos. But why does it seem that there's always one video that stays at the top? Even the most devoted fans get sick of the same single.

My guess is a pay-off. It happens in radio, so why would MTV be any different? In a pay-off the artists record label or management will offer the radio station - or televi-

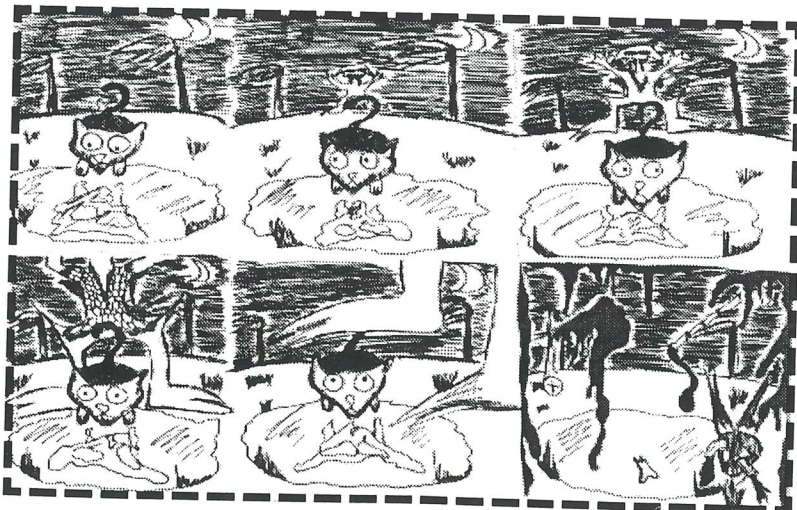
sion station perks for playing the artist's song. These benefits will include interviews, in studio performances, and any other perks the stations could possibly want. So is it a coincidence that there's familiar faces to MTV? Probably not.

MTV seems to be shaping pop culture, but giving our generation a bad name. There are many young people out there doing good, we care about social and political issues. So why let MTV speak for us? Have your own mind and do your own thing. And when you accept the Nobel Prize, don't forget to thank the most important person of all - yourself. ♦

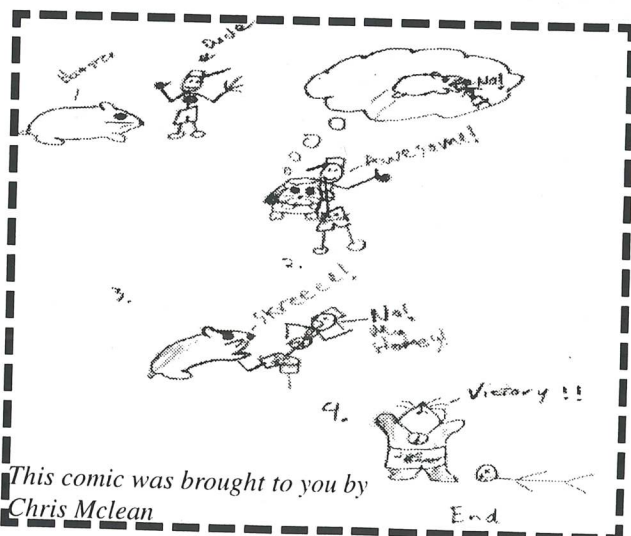
Purple Press Comic Section

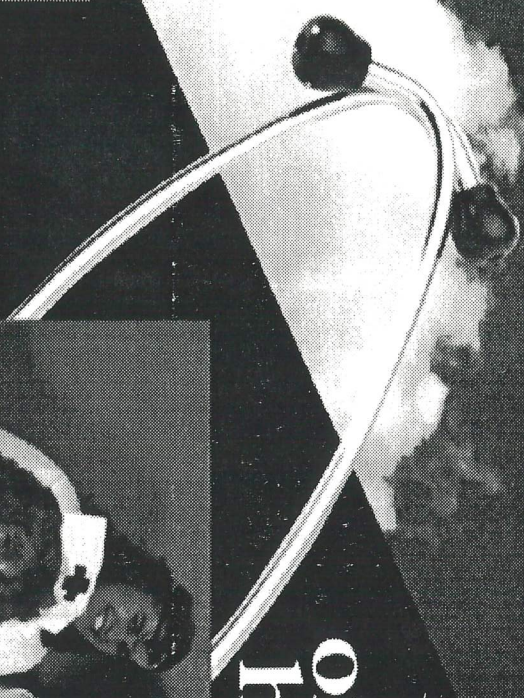
Cute, fuzzy things can get squished too

By Quinn



Return of the Hamster





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