

The Purple Press

Official Publication of the St. Paul Open School

Nauga Takes Third

Bridgette DaSilva
Staff Writer

On January 14th, when everything was said and done, the Open School National Engineering Design Challenge left for the state competition with the encouraging words of Connye LaCombe: "Well, guys, let's get loaded." (For the confused, the statement refers to loading the project into the van.)

Open School's NEDC team took third place this year. The team was also happy to receive awards for Creativity and Market Research. The other five teams were from Benilde St. Margaret. Unfortunately, the other five schools registered to compete never made it to competition. During the lunch break, the host of NEDC went off in search of the team

from Sibley, but came back empty-handed.

After the awards had been given out, one of the judges made a point to talk with the team. She noted that although the product was great, and the ideas involved were innovative, the presentation was lacking. This was the greatest reason for the point deduction. Unlike DINI, the NEDC presentations are expected to be more formal and professional.



Aimee working on NEDC

One reason for this haphazard performance was due to the fact that Open's NEDC team was unaware that they were even registered to compete until early this month. The re-

NEDC Continued on 2

Site Council Questions Detention Policy

Bridgette DaSilva
Staff Writer

Gayle Daneker, chair of Site Council, held a Task Force meeting on January 18th. This meeting included members from the Purple Press, Site Council, and Student Government, as well as Jennifer Diederich and Ruth Pechmann. The purpose of the meeting was to clarify what exactly the Open School detention policy is about, in order to avoid confusion between students and staff.

According to the procedure for assigning detention, the first one to three unexcused tardies will be handled by Jennifer Diederich through discussion with the student. A half hour detention is then assigned for tardies that occur after that

talk.

That was also an opportunity for Site Council to question why this new policy did not go through the Policy Committee before it was mandated on November 8th.

Students with exceptional circumstances will be able to discuss their concerns with their advisor and Jennifer Diederich upon receiving a detention slip. ♦



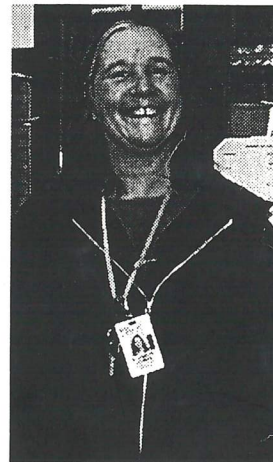
People at the discipline policy meeting

Art Teacher On Leave

Mina Blyly-Strauss
Staff Writer

Friday, January 28th will be Elizabeth Lehman's last day at Open School, before a nearly two month long absence. The reason she will be leaving is "because my daughter has been asked by a manager/agent to audition for a pilot in LA," reports the enthusiastic art teacher. She expects to be back March 25th, just in time for spring conferences.

The history behind this offer is as follows: Elizabeth's youngest daughter, Julia, took a lot of acting classes from the Academy for Film and Television and won some awards at the IMTA conference last summer in New York. At the IMTA conference she met



Open's art teacher,
Elizabeth Lehman

agents and managers. She was also included in an audition tape that was sent from there, to a firm in LA. Then, early in November, Julia got word that she was chosen from the audition tape, to go to 6-8 weeks of training/auditioning in LA.

Elizabeth's husband and daughter went out to California to

ELIZABETH Continued on 2

Check this out . . .

"The people trying to ban them are depriving the world of a good book." . . . Tiffany, page 3
"Then I realized that I was not the unloved little girl or boy." . . . Daniele, page 4
"Z is for . . . Zealous am I not" . . . Sara, page 8

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Darth Vader And Mona Lisa, Hand In Hand

Is Star Wars fine art? Is Star Wars even art at all? According to the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, the answer is yes!

"Star Wars: The Magic of Myth," a collection of costumes and props from all four Star Wars movies, is coming to the MIA later this winter. The tentative dates are February 27th through June 4th, 2000. Tickets will cost \$10 for adults, \$8 for students, \$5 for children (ages 6-12), and free for children less than six years old. (If these prices seem a bit high consider this; The MIA just finished a massive renovation, and the exhibition itself is expected to cost \$500,000 just to put-on.)

This may not be the kind of exhibit you would expect to see at the MIA, and there's a good reason for this. The museum is putting aside traditional "fine art," in an attempt to attract a younger audience. They expect to attract nearly 200,000 people (or about 14,000 people a week) by bringing in "Star Wars."

If you like traditional art, however, have no fear. Yoda and friends will be directly followed by a collection of American Impressionist paintings. ◇



NEDC from 1

quest for money to fund the project was sent to the district. Unfortunately, the district never replied, and eventually denied funding. The team was notified that they indeed could compete one week before the competition was held at St. Thomas. This rush to build and write an abstract invariably affected the content of the presentation.

It is interesting to note that NEDC's opposition has an impressive metal shop with their own engineering department. This, however, did not discourage Open's figure of twigs and Elmers glue. Okay, all right, it was pine with the hurried application of duct tape, nicknamed McUgly. Alas, the designs were judged not on beauty, but content. I should mention that Open's design hosted actual living amenities, a raised platform, a curved roof so that rain could fall into a rain collector, and capable of the installation of electricity and plumbing. ◇

ELIZABETH From 1

check things out. Eventually the family decided to go for the full training in early December.

This may seem a bit sudden, and the reason for this is that it is! Even Elizabeth wasn't expecting to be going to California to support her daughter to reach for her dreams, but she feels strongly that "when the doors of opportunity open, you should walk through."

Elizabeth told Ruth Pechmann, Open's principal, she wanted to take an absence for her daughter's training the week after she found out. Ruth said okay. "I was sad, but I know that she needs to do this for her daughter, so I understand that too." Then, after she was sure that it was okay with Ruth, Elizabeth told her advisory. The following week she told her classes.

After she had decided to go to LA, Elizabeth still had to find a long-term sub that would be able to teach her classes, and take care of her advisory. She found a graduate from Macalester College, Siri Davies, who had volunteered at Open School in the past, and was willing to take the challenge. Elizabeth says that Siri knows how to draw really well, and knows about clay also. Siri will also be writing evaluations for Elizabeth's second trimester classes, with some help from Elizabeth. They will stay in contact through phone calls and email.

While in LA, Elizabeth will be supporting her daughter through the strenuous process of auditioning for sitcoms, movies, soaps, and commercial prints. She's also going to be working on her own artwork, home-schooling her daughter, and studying the film industry. She says that she'll "miss everybody, and worry." She also says that she hopes to "come back with renewed strength, and new ideas."

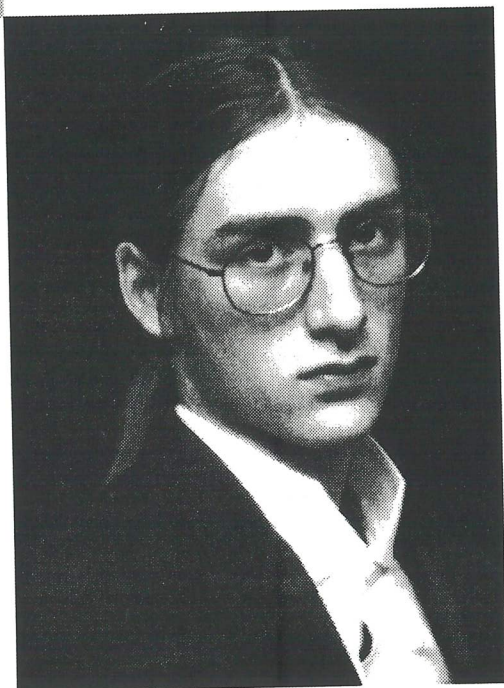
Elizabeth's husband will also visit LA when possible. Thus, if you're one of the sentimental types you may want to note that Elizabeth's family dog, Sadie, "has a brother, Jack, so she'll go over to his house," when the rest of her family is in LA. ◇



- Snow Days will be Tuesday, Feb. 22-
- Friday, Feb. 25.
- The days are as follows:
- Tuesday - Dress-Up Day
- Wednesday - Pajama Day
- Thursday - Favorite Actor/Hero Day
- Friday - Twin Day
- There will be a Snow Days Dance on Friday, Feb. 25, in the afternoon.



Senior Profile



How long have you been at Open School?

"This is doofus's sixth year." -- Leo

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

A homo sapien-sapien. Creatures so nice, they named us twice.

What is your favorite color?

"A stinky one." -- Bridgette DaSilva

What will you miss most about Open School?

All the teachers that make the place seem like the Batcave.

What do you want to be when you grow up?

In a cubicle.

Question of the month:

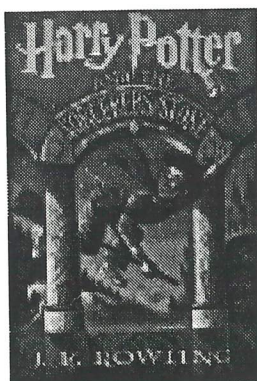
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Harry On Trial: Witchcraft Suspected

Tiffany Lehmann
Staff Writer

Some school libraries are threatening to ban J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter books, the #1 New York Times Best Seller. While the books remain popular, some conservative groups claim they encourage witchcraft and therefore aren't suitable for children.

Harry Potter, the main character, is a normal, intelligent, skinny, and kind of nerdy 10-year-old. He lives with his Aunt Petunia, Uncle Vernon, and Dudley, his fat, spoiled brat of a cousin. Harry's Aunt and Uncle blame Harry for almost everything that goes wrong around the house, mostly because Harry is the son of a witch and wizard who died when Harry was a newborn. Harry, as it turns out, has magical powers,



too.

The main critic of Harry Potter is the Family Friendly Libraries, or FFL. The FFL suggests that these books have occult themes, violent content, and an anti-family bias. The FFL says that the Potter series is "not meant for public school classrooms," and should be checked out of school libraries only with parental permission.

The complaints that the Harry Potter books have faced has prompted many to defend the books, from librarians to authors. Oft-challenged author Judy Blume said: "If children are excited about a book, it must be a suspect. At the rate we're going, I can imagine next year's headline: 'Goodnight Moon Banned for Encouraging Children to Communicate with Furniture.'"

The New York Times published three more letters on its October 25 editorial page under the heading "Harry Potter vs. Censors." Said one letter, "Those of us committed to a rich, varied body of literature for young children must stand our ground

against the fearful and narrow-minded people who would have our library collections neutered."

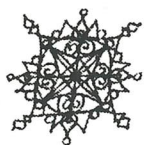
The idea of banning these books seems ridiculous, according to most Open School students who have read them. "The books are encouraging kids to read," said 8th grader Sierra Blakely.

"I think (Harry Potter) is very good. It sets up a mystery, and at the end the solution is perfectly simple but unexpected. I love them," 7th grader Aaron Schutjer said.

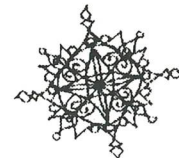
"The people trying to ban them are depriving the world of a good book. (The books) aren't really evil, they're just imaginative," added 8th grader Heather Cook.

If you are interested in learning more about these books, go to barnesandnoble.com or borders.com.

The next Site Council Meeting will be Tuesday, Feb. 8. The meeting will be held at 6:30 p.m. in the Kindergarten room. All students are welcome!



Opinions 'n' Stuff



So Much For The Bell: High School So Far



Aimee Gervais
Staff Columnist

I didn't anticipate feeling so completely lost this year. I didn't anticipate the questions, "So, how are your validations coming?" and "What are you doing after you graduate?" making me physi-

cally ill. My friend in Oklahoma emailed me awhile ago to tell me she might actually have a plan for after high school, and I just think, "At least someone does."

I try to talk about my last year of high school and what I'm up to next year without sounding all teen-angsty, but it just doesn't seem to work. I still sound like that bad teen drama coming-of-age movie that you run across between infomercials on TV at three in the morning, but at least something this year is being consistent. I saw enough of those movies and enough episodes of *Saved by the Bell* when I was in elementary school that I thought high school would be an even mixture of hanging out with friends at the pizza place and bad poetry. Too bad all the goofing off was confined to 11th grade, and 12th grade gets all the bad poetry. Or bad columns, as the case may be.

My brother starting junior high when I was in 5th grade was the first image I got of what high school would be like outside of TV. He didn't seem to change much, and he seemed to react to school the same way. He took the school bus to a different building, he stood with his friends at the bus stop, and the rest of us were very impressed and scared of the big junior high kids. He seemed to have more homework, or at least more important homework. He had big scary tests to study for, while I stayed put in front of the TV, wondering what I'd be like when I was his age.

When I started junior high and he moved on to high school, I was sort of disappointed. My brother was still so much older than me, and 7th grade seemed no different than 6th.

AIMEE Continued on 7

Alas, The Joys Of Siblinghood

My brothers. They are two unique individuals, so alike and yet so different.

My first two years in the SLC I denied their existence. When anyone questioned me about them I said that they were just the boys who lived in my house. Nothing more, nothing less. Finally in 9th grade I let the truth be known. There was more to the boys who lived in my house than just living there: They were my brothers.

Before I go on, let me give you some background on these boys of which I speak. The eldest of the two, I shall call him Thelma, is 13 and heavily into role-playing games and his beloved Play Station. He is highly sensitive and tends to take things way too personally.

Louise, the little one, is 12 and tends to



Miranda Byrne
Staff Columnist

be more of a loner. His favorite thing to do is "play games" in his head. Now, what I mean by "playing games" in his head is this: He paces back and forth making battle noises and other odd sound effects while waving his arms wildly about, acting out the story that is going on in his mind. Once when he was playing a game in his head I asked him what he was doing. He told me that he was pretending to be a movie star who was the lead role in an action/adventure movie. Since then I have avoided asking questions. Frankly, I don't want to know. Another thing you should know about Louise is that he has a temper. He is like a bomb that is constantly on the verge of exploding. He has gotten better, but still . . . when he gets mad, avoid him at all costs.

Over the years, my brothers have become better at controlling their emotional outbursts, although they still happen on occasion. When they do happen, I am so accustomed to them I barely notice. I find that ignoring them and staying out of their way is about the best thing you can do. You cer-

BROTHERS Continued on 10

Attack Of The Unsaint Nick



Daniele Finley
Staff Columnist

When I was a little girl, the holidays always brought this feeling that my parents must not love me. The fact that they gave me no gifts on Christmas dismayed me. It didn't help that this big fat old red man always got me lots of presents. I mean, I had only met him once or twice, and that was in department stores. What's more, he scared me and I cried.

At one point in my early childhood my conspiratorial imagination was led so far astray that I believed that my parents didn't love me at all, and were trying to get rid of me, but the only person who wanted me was a grizzled old man that ate cookies and had little men with pointy ears attending him. Looking back, cookies and little pointy-

eared people attending me . . . why, I would have had the time of my life.

Then I realized that I was not the only unloved little girl or boy. Apparently Mr. Claus was running a worldwide present fund to children whose parents didn't love them enough. That's around when the whole thing started getting a bit fishy.

"But if Santa has enough money to buy all of us presents every year, then why doesn't he just adopt us, if our parents don't like us enough?" If I had been a bit more learned, I would have realized that if he had adopted all of us, his taxes would have skyrocketed, and we'd be the largest welfare family in existence. Well, if none too bright, I was at least inquisitive.

However, as it is widely known, curiosity killed the cat. In the first grade, I had finally come to master many of the world's mysteries, such as the tying of the shoe, and the speaking of ABC's. Along with these

SANTA Continued on 11

Spam, Spam, And More Spam

A story, in pieces, about the freakish origins of Spam . . .

You have ventured into a column beyond the boundaries of fact or fiction, beyond spoilage. You have entered the Spam column.

The year is 1926. New things are being invented, things that will change the course of history. This takes us to a small laboratory in a small building in a small, isolated town. To the Hormel company, where a small insignificant worker named Frank Lipman is hard at work blending pig parts and spices into delectable luncheon meats, unaware that he will soon unleash a substance that will haunt America for years to come. And that he will soon find himself stuck in . . . the Spam column.

For 13 years Frank has worked for the Hormel company, perfecting the hot dog and creating new bologna mixes. He leads a very satisfactory life until one day . . .

"Mr. Packstone will see you now." The young typist behind the front desk smiled at Frank.

"Is there no way to get out of this?" Frank asked himself rather loudly. The typist's smile broadened into a grin. "He's waiting."

Slightly blushing, Frank walked into Mr. Packstone's office.

"You wanted to see me sir?"

"Ah yes, come in, my boy, come in. Here, have a seat." Mr Packstone gestured to the chair in front of his desk. After Frank sat down he continued. "Now, Frank, you've been with us for 10 years now, haven't you?"

"13, sir." Frank, dreading the corporeal boot, hoped that his years of devout service and loyalty would save him.

"Don't interrupt, son, it's rude." Packstone pulled a cigar out of his pocket and lit it. "You smoke, son?" Frank shook his head. "Good, Now you've been working here for 13 years and I've been watching you and with all that you do around here and everything, you know about our company. I would hate to lose you but . . ."

Here it comes, Frank thought. I knew it was too good to last.

"... But our competition is gaining ground and could easily bribe you to join them so I



Heather Raiter
Staff Columnist

am offering you a new position."

Frank was speechless, "Well, sir, I . . . why me, sir?"

"Didn't I tell you already? You have the required experience, the knowledge of the way our company runs and you know all the ingredients that we use."

"Well, I don't know about all of them, but most, yes, I do."

"Then you'll take the job? Great, you'll start right away. I'll have Cindy send William Vanwho down immediately!"

"William Vanwho?"

"Your lab assistant. Oh, Frank, this is great. With you on our team we'll beat them all into hotdog meat!"

"Sir, before I meet this William, what am I going to be doing?"

"Why, you will be creating the future of meat, my boy, the future of meat."

Frank walked out of Mr. Packstone's office rather dazed, everything seemed to be happening so fast.

"Mr. Lipman?"

"Hmm?" Frank looked up and standing before him was a young man looking to be in his mid 20's, tall, rather pudgy with dirty blonde hair.

"My name is William Vanwho. I am your lab partner or . . . hehee . . . canning assistant."

Frank gave him a questioning look.

"Um, well follow me, I'll show you to the testing facility."

"Listen, Will, I've had a long day and just need a break so I'm going to go now and-"

"No, Mr. Lipman, we have to start immediately! Mr. Packstone gave me strict orders to get on the job as soon as possible. So come get acquainted with the other people in on the project."

"Very well." Frank sighed and slowly started to follow Will down a long winding corridor.

To Be Continued . . .

Salvie's World!

The voices in my head (and my imaginary friend) thought it would be a nice idea to review albums from bands that kind of go away for a few years and then come back and make their best albums to date and unfortunately, some of their least successful, and I agreed that it was a good idea. So then they tried to convince me to buy some rap CD's, and I got all mad and I was like, "What?! This will never happen! Not while I'm alive!!" And then they-- sorry this could go on for a while, I think I'll just get to the article.

So get ready to applaud, laugh, maybe even cry, as you begin to read the best newspaper review article OF ALL TIME! Roger Ebert says, "...This article is the only thing I have to live for! Two thumbs up!" Leonard Maltin raves, "This article has enough jazz in it to kill a horse, an earthworm and a small monkey of some kind!"



Salvador Rosas
Staff Columnist

Nine Inch Nails: The Fragile

"I didn't ask to save rock and roll," says a slightly cocky Nine Inch Nails frontman, Trent Reznor. He continues, "I don't even like rock." Who could blame him with all this Limp Bizkit crap out there. And yet he's made an excellent album that is his version of "The Wall" for this generation and establishes what rock should be about, and that's songwriting. And he does it with lyrics that are menacing ("broken, bruised, forgotten, sore. Too f--ked up to care anymore."), personal and poetic ("In the blur of serenity, where did everything get lost? The flowers of naivete buried in a layer of frost."), and different landscapes of sounds. Also, The Fragile steers to a more mainstream but mature sound than their previous works, especially on the jazzy pop instrumental, "Lamer."

What: The Fragile

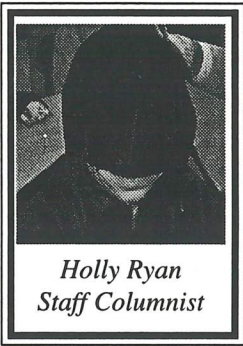
Rating: * * * * (out of 5)

Should you buy it: Well, not buying it could cause blindness, impotence, possibly even bad breath (yes, you should buy it).

What type of music: Hard Rock/Pop with

SALVADOR Continued on 9

Triumph of the 2-D Leading Ladies



Holly Ryan
Staff Columnist

You have just finished dinner, the dishes are done. Time to slack off for an hour or two in front of the old television. So you get comfy and flip it on. The first image you see makes you want to throw

up everything you just ate. What is this stomach-turning phenomenon? Ally McBeal in a skin-tight shirt and skirt suit, doing her thing in front of the court.

So, grossed out by the sight of Calista's bones protruding from her skin, you switch the channel. Next up, NYPD Blue. This is the show where female cops wear skin-tight

tops, and spend the day talking about all of the relationship problems they have while the male cops go out and fight crime. Lets try again. Next up is the show where female characters hop into medical vans wearing short skirts and perform amazing feats without getting dirty, messing up their hair, or ever smudging their makeup.

Now back the fashion train up just a little bit. If I tried to do all this in an outfit that I couldn't move in, my skirt would be up around my neck, my
WOMEN Continued on 11



Brigette's Word: Advice From An Expert

As a writer for The Purple Press, I get dozens of letters each week. People often write to ask my advice about relationships, career choices, and baking. This issue I decided to answer some of these questions, from people like you.

Dear Brigette,

I'm a farmer. Lately my cows just ain't been happy. Any advice?

-Farmer Bill

Brigette: Dear Farmer Bill,

I don't know much about cows. But when I drive by farms, I notice that the cows look awfully bored. I can't blame them, eating grass and staring at the same scenery everyday. I think a trip to Hawaii is just what they need.

Dear Wonderful Writer,

I have a pair of lucky shoes. I've had them since sixth grade, but each year I notice that they become more snug than the previous. Why do you think this is?

-Lucky Shoes

Brigette: Dear Lucky Shoes,

I'm no rocket scientist, but perhaps your problem is that your shoes are shrinking. Walking through all of that rain and snow is probably causing your problem. Have you changed the kind of socks you wear? That could be a factor also. Try to avoid wet surfaces and changing your sock brand. Write back on your progress.

Dear Master of Writing Whom I Bow Down to,

I had a little mishap today. First I got gum stuck in my hair, my dog tried to chew it out and is now stuck to my head. When I tried to get him off, my foot got stuck in a pail and my tongue stuck to the fence outside of my house. Please help!

-Uncomfortable

Brigette: Dear Uncomfortable,

Wow. Looks like you're in a jam. Unfortunately, this has to be in to the editors so I don't have time to answer. Tell me how it turns out.

Just a couple of the letters from folks like you. Hopefully the answers to those questions answered some of yours. Bye for now. ♦

Clocks Are The Devil!

It all started about a year ago. My family went to North Dakota without me, leaving me home alone for the first time ever for a couple of days. Living in a house with four other people with lives of



Maura Shramko
Staff Columnist

their own, I don't get much time to myself, so these four days were blissful. I got to run around and do whatever I wanted. I ate in the living room, which my mom doesn't like me to do. I watched movies until 2 in the morning. I had a blast.

But, my fun-fest had to end sometime right? Suddenly, it was Sunday night. I found myself in the precarious situation of having school the next day, which wasn't so bad in itself because I missed seeing actual people (I had spent most of the weekend socializing with dogs). The problem was I wasn't tired. After staying up to around two the previous three nights, it was no wonder. But, for the sake of myself the next day, I tried to get to sleep. Tried. Key word. I attempted, oh the attempts. Woe is me, this night was a night of evil.

I started out downstairs on the couch. I was there for an hour or so, with the TV on to provide some kind of background noise,

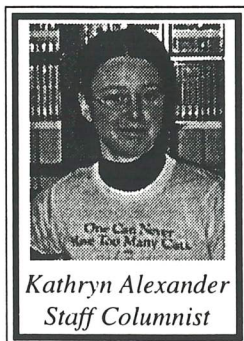
something to tire me out a bit. After that failure, I transferred upstairs to my sister's bed and tried to sleep some more. I stayed there for sometime, till about 2 am, but to no avail. At that point, I freaked out and lay down on the floor instead.

I was miserable, to tell you the truth. Here I was, trying so hard to get my necessary sleep, and to what end? I remember distinctly counting the number of hours of sleep I would get if I fell asleep right at that second. Three hours after my rendezvous with the floor, I dragged myself, defeated, back downstairs to watch a movie the remaining two and half hours before I had to go to school. That day I went without that which I craved more than anything: Sleep.

After that, my first time not being able to sleep, I had a bit of trouble every now and again. During the summer, when I went on vacation with my family, and I found myself in unfamiliar beds, I once again had major trouble falling asleep. For a little while, I was wearing ear plugs to bed, which helped me because they drowned out the background noise.

This still happens to me from time to time. I can't get to sleep right away, I freak out and I then proceed to keep myself up worrying about the amount of sleep I'm going to get or my inability to fall asleep. I get to a pretty desperate stage where I am ex-
SLEEP Continued on 10

Standardized Testing Blues



Some of my worst childhood memories had to do with taking a test. Whether it was a spelling test or a MAT 7 test, the truth was, I hated taking them.

Sometimes I would get so nervous that I would start crying in the middle of the test. I remember when I was in 3rd or 4th grade, and I was taking the reading section of the MAT 7's; some people were already done and they were talking and laughing. They made it impossible for me to concentrate. I totally freaked out, thinking what if I couldn't finish the test on time? What if I got a bad score? Well, as any little kid would do, I started to cry. Finally, when the test was over, I talked to my teacher and got about ten minutes to make up the time I missed.

Now when I take a test I usually forget about it until the last minute and just show up and get it over with. This year when I took the PSAT, I didn't even sign up until the morning of the test. Since I got my scores back, I've been thinking a lot about my test-taking abilities. Now this is not to say that I got a horrible score, but it certainly wasn't what I was expecting.

Wanting to find out just how many tests students take a year, I talked to Gary and here's what I found: 1st graders take the MAT 7 once a year. 2nd and 4th graders

take a total of four tests a year. This includes the MAT 7's and the Basic Standards Tests. 3rd and 5th graders each take five tests a year and 6th graders take two MAT 7 tests a year. In the SLC, 7th graders have a year of freedom and don't take any tests, 8th and 11th graders take two tests a year, 9th graders have one test, and 10th graders have a whopping four tests a year. Seniors aren't required to take any tests but most take the SAT or the ACT which are college entrance exams. So, in total, the average student from 1st to 12th grade will take approximately 32 tests.

When I was in grade school, the only thing that kept me from having a total breakdown during a test, was telling myself that it didn't matter if I got a "bad" score because the test was just telling me what I needed to work on. The MAT 7's teacher booklet actually says, "Today you are going to take a test to see how much you have learned." That isn't true any more, says Gary, now if a student gets a bad score on the MAT 7's they might not be able to move on to the next grade. This is, at least, what Patricia Harvey, our superintendent would like. If a school as a whole does less than average on the MAT 7's, the school might go on probation. So, not only do kids have their parents pressuring them to do well, they also have their teachers, principal, and even the superintendent pushing them. Maybe now the test will read, "Today you are taking a test to see if you are smart enough to pass on to the next grade. We don't care how much you have

TESTS Continued on 11

AIMEE from 4

Sure, I got a locker, I had a nifty class schedule, and for once I had friends, but I didn't look as mature as my brother had. And he was in high school, junior high was just practice for the real thing. So although I felt I had outgrown *Saved by the Bell*, I still watched him and tried to picture myself as one of the cool high school kids. I imagined I'd have stacks of complicated looking text books with cryptic diagrams inside, I'd have to write long papers all the time, and I'd worry about tests. I'd also hang with my friends in the hallways, and have a complicated social life that got way more attention than school, but, of course, it wouldn't matter. Those *Saved by the Bell* kids always had a perfect balance of both.

I forgot about my *Saved by the Bell* delusions by the time I started high school and realized it was actually no different from junior high. I was still far from being one of the cool high school kids that my brother was, and I stopped worrying about tests and

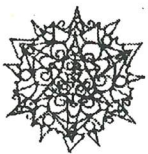
"I forgot about my 'Saved by the Bell' delusions by the time I started high school and realized it was actually no different from junior high."

writing papers altogether. They never did homework on TV, and it made no sense for me to have anywhere near the amount of homework my brother did, since he was still one of the big kids.

I didn't realize until this year that he's always going to be one of the big kids, whether he's starting junior high or college. Even when I'm the same age as he was when I was trying to imagine myself in his place, I don't feel grown up at all. It's not supposed to be so hard just to get through my senior year, and my plans for next year aren't supposed to be such a tough choice. All through high school I couldn't wait to be given a choice about my education, and now that I have it, I just want to go back to elementary school and experience high school by watching my brother and the TV.

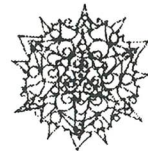
My parents always sound so together in their "When I was your age" stories, and I wonder if I will sound that way too someday. But right now, I can't even imagine what I'll be like next year, let alone when I'm an adult. Maybe it's all no different from junior high. ♦



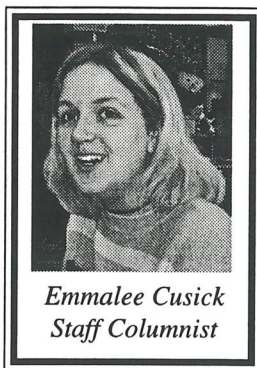


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Cusick's view



Emmalee Cusick
Staff Columnist

It is possible that when you read this I will be dead. . . My hopes are this letter will save me . . .

Losing work. I'm sure it's happened to you. Hate is my backpack, where everything goes and the important stuff is lost.

I was working on a story about substitute teachers, the different kinds and how they act in our Open School situation, but all was lost on Monday the 10th of January when I searched, frantically for my story. Leo was impatiently awaiting it's

arrival from the depths of my backpack so it could be turned in only a day late.

Knowing eventually that I wasn't going to find it, I searched my much slowed down mind for an excuse Leo hadn't heard, or one believable enough to buy me some time. I went through all the normal ones, my dog ate it, my sister took it, left it in my locker, and someone took it. I knew none of those would work on Leo so I settled for "I must have left it at home." Leo looking upset sent me off to rewrite my story, calling my fib.

Losing home work isn't just a newspaper thing. Losing homework has been a disease I, and from the few I talked to, others have been fighting to find a cure for most of their student careers. Even though it seems at times that you will never heal from the wounds that lost work might make, but there is hope. They could find a cure by the time you hit college. You have to be hopeful.

This rewriting would have been great if only I remembered how my story felt, or at least the beginning. With pen and paper in hand I knew I wasn't going to get anything done and my mind wandered to the thought of what makes people lose their work. I know for me at least that if I think I know where the assignment is (note book folder, crumpled in my pocket, folded and in my backpack) but don't check at

least three times before leaving for school, it won't be there when I need it. But is that just me or does it happen to everybody? I talked to a few people, and they admitted to losing homework. They said about once every two weeks, a lesser rate than by far. Is it an

CUSICK Continued on 9

Schultzie's view



Emily Schultz
Staff Columnist

I've had this problem my entire life. It only started getting REALLY bad when the school year began. It's a terrible disease, and very contagious. The doctor's say there's nothing they can do. I'm doomed to live with this disorder for the rest of my life. You guessed it . . . it's Writer's Block-itis.

Everyone suffers from it at one point in their life. Sadly for me, my condition is much worse than anyone else's. Headaches, nausea, fatigue . . . I suffer them all. No one knows for sure how I caught it. It's very rare that you catch it at a young age, but it's happened before. Look at me!

It's an on and off thing. Usually it hits near the beginning of a new newspaper issue or when I'm assigned a writing project. I

haven't quite found the connection between the two yet. I usually pull through by deadline . . . usually. Leo believes that my condition wouldn't be so serious if I "researched a topic" and weren't so "lazy." I don't think Leo understands how painful it is for me. Someone like me has to take things slowly. I don't want to exhaust myself, now do I?

Statistics say that 99.9% of writers suffer from writer's block-itis. Well, that's what I think anyway. Chances are you suffer from writer's block, but don't know it. Have you ever had a loss for words while writing something? Has it ever taken you more than ten seconds to write three simple words, and you couldn't figure out why? Have you ever eaten a cheese sandwich? If you answered yes to at least two of these questions, you have writer's block-itis. But for those of you who only said yes to one, don't think you're getting off so easily. You may be a target, so beware! Avoid essays and in-class reports. And for god's sake . . . don't run with scissors!! Trust me, I know.

Well, somehow I've managed to survive through yet another story. I don't know how I do it. I think I underestimate myself sometimes. Chances are my writer's block-itis will kick in again when I have to come up with another story topic for issue five. Why must I suffer this way? Why, god? Why? ◇

The A, B, C's of Procrastination

Sara Schultz

- A is for . . . After I rest for a while
- B is for . . . Because. . . umm. . .
- C is for . . . Can't do that right now
- D is for . . . Don't feel like it
- E is for . . . Excuses are a procrastinator's best friend
- F is for . . . Finish it later
- G is for . . . Going to soon
- H is for . . . Haven't quite finished it
- I is for . . . I'll work on it
- J is for . . . Just gimme a little more time
- K is for . . . Keep waiting, I'll be done eventually
- L is for . . . Later today. . . or tomorrow. . . or the next day
- M is for . . . Maybe if I ignore it, it'll go away
- N is for . . . Not right now
- O is for . . . Oh! . . . I forgot
- P is for . . . Prolong
- Q is for . . . Quit bugging me, I'll get it done
- R is for . . . Reset due dates
- S is for . . . Soon, soon. . .
- T is for . . . Take your time
- U is for . . . Umm. . . I give up
- V is for . . . Virtually no time on my hands
- W is for . . . Well, I can't do that right now, I have to watch TV
- X is for . . . X-tra time. . . I'll finish it when I have X-tra time on my hands
- Y is for . . . Yeah. . . I almost started working on that
- Z is for . . . Zealous am I not

SANTA from 4

new dimensions, I started voicing my wonderment at this Crinkle Man.

This would have been all well and good, even then -- however, my best friend in the first grade was Jewish. Her mother and family loved her, you see. They gave her real presents, and for 8 days long no less! She told me the secret, that Santa was only a figment of my parent's imagination.

I was horror stricken. To think that my parents could be so silly as to believe in something as obviously invented as that. That they could be such fools! But then further realization struck. My parents weren't the only ones thus deceived. Mommies and daddies all over the world actually believed that this bearded old fellow could not only afford all these presents, but could fit down their chimneys, all in one night. Something had to be done.

Thoughts of conspiracy and sorcery struggled through my mind. Could it be that this red, old, ho-ho-hoing fellow could have cast a spell over all people, that they thought such odd things occur. And what was in it for him? Were children supposed to think, as I did, that their parents felt no love for them, and come instead to him, to be his Army of Claus? I was shocked, amazed, and dismayed. It was obvious that I had to do something. Nobody else knew about this travesty of holidays. And it was obvious that my friend cared little for my holiday of

wreaths and blinking lights.

I confronted my parents about the existence of this mythical, magical, and -- dare I say it -- evil man. Dad first. It was obvious the old fool knew nothing, his face was a blank stare, as though mesmerized. He was

"Mommies and daddies all over the world actually believed that this bearded old fellow could not only afford all these presents, but could fit down their chimneys, all in one night. Something had to be done."

obviously too far gone in his trancelike state of belief. He stammered a little, and told me to ask my mom. I proceeded to her wing of the home.

"Mother, is it true? Is Santa all just a lie?" She wavered for a moment, looking as though she would deny it. Then something seemed to snap inside of her. She gave me a pained look. She looked a little, I must say, as though her world had crashed down on her. But in the end, I forced the truth out of her.

She obviously wouldn't go into great detail. Maybe a spell of silence was on her. But she did give me a little lead in into it.

No, there was no Santa. It was her and dad who put the presents under the tree. It seemed I could force no more out of her. At least I had cracked the truth -- that "Santa" put parents into a trance where they did his will and put the presents under the tree, without knowing or remembering a thing. At least I had gotten my mom to understand.

But there was the problem of my younger brother. It seemed obvious to me that he wasn't bright enough to crack this problem himself. As it was, he was two years old. I would have to give him clues, before it was too late -- before I became too old, and was myself under the spell of the one they call Santa. I worked at it for years, and finally my somewhat slow sibling came to a half-truth. He realized there was no Santa. But it never occurred to him, the full conspiracy. He might never know.

And now, in that state of transition -- no longer a child, not quite an adult -- nothing but a withered half-alive teenager, I too, must carry out the will of the wicked red-clothed white-bearded one. I am not so far gone as others. I, at least, know the truth. And in my last attempts at what is right and just, I have managed to type out these truths to you. Please, if it is not too late already, bring the word throughout the world of the great horror being worked over our land! Bring Santa to Justice! ♦

SALVADOR From 5

industrial implications.

The Red Hot Chili Peppers: Californication

It's been out since the summer, but it's still worth mentioning. Back from a 4-year hiatus, the Chili Peppers are back with guitar prodigy John Frusciante for their 11th and best album to date. It's kind of a theme album, in that they have a theme this time. The term "Californication" is not a sexual reference, but rather how California has had such a powerful and mostly negative impact on the world, "Tidal waves couldn't save the world from Californication." And these guys can still rock.

What?!: Californication

Rating: * * * * (out of 5)

Should you buy it?: Yes, if you want to live an extra five days.

What type of music: Rock/funk/pop

Filter: Title of Record

Filter's Title of Record is no exception to my little theme. Richard Patrick, the former Nine Inch Nails guitarist has often been

criticized for trying to sound like a grunge version of Nine Inch Nails, but on Title of Record he breaks away from his old sound, with acoustic guitars and a lighter feel, but rockin' enough to be the soundtrack for "Fight Club."

What?!: Title of Record

Rating: * * * 1/2 (out of 5)

Should you buy it?: You know it.

What type of music: Rock/Pop

Ok, well, these last ones don't fit into my theme, but oh well, you will just have to live with it. I'm not apologizing for anything. Alright?

Rammstein: Live Aus Berlin

The big German industrial band is back with an awesome live album. Although they received criticism for being a favorite band of those idiots at Columbine, the band doesn't condone Nazism or any other discrimination. They only receive criticism because they're German, if they were some rap band no one would even care. They pull out songs from their 1995 album "Herzeleid" as well as their 1997 album "Sensucht."

What?!: Live Aus Berlin

Rating: * * * 1/2

Should you buy it?: 3 out of 4 voices in my head recommend it. And even my imaginary friend likes it! Dynamite!!

What type of music?: Hard rock/industrial

Marilyn Manson: The last tour on Earth

Obviously the "Rock is Dead Tour" wasn't exactly the last tour on earth, but don't tell that to Mr. Manson (you'll hurt his feelings). Like any good live album, you have to balance out your new material with some of your old stuff, and all that is here. He pulls out his old guns from "Smells Like Children," and his newer ones from "Mechanical Animals." It's pretty good, although the cover isn't too tasteful: what looks like a cross burning is actually a bunch of stacked TV's.

What?: The Last Tour on Earth

Rating: * * * 1/2

Should you buy it?: If you enjoy the phat beats and merriment of Marilyn Manson.

What type of music?: Rock . . . Hard rock. This is the end, my only friend, the end. ♦

BROTHERS From 4

certainly don't want to talk to them. That would be disastrous. I can remember back in the day when you could so much as look at Louise in the wrong way, and one of the dining room chairs would be hurling through the air in your direction. He hasn't done this lately, which I am greatly thankful for. Now when he gets mad all he does is scream a lot, stomp up to his room and start banging on his door.

I can remember one particular incident that happened about a year ago. I was in my room reading and my mother and brothers were downstairs watching TV. All of a

“Louise was at the top of the stairs with his hands and feet duct taped together, looking like he was about to take a dive.”

sudden I heard Louise screech, Thelma laugh mockingly at him, and my mother ordering Louise upstairs. This is usually how their fights go. Thelma provokes Louise until he loses control and has a temper tantrum. Then my mom gets mad and they both end up in trouble. A few seconds after the yelling began I heard Louise's angry stomps coming up the stairs, along with his choking sobs.

“Why me? Why me?” he wailed, and with a loud slam of his door I knew he was in his room. This sort of thing tended to happen quite a bit back then, so I just ignored the noise, and tried to keep reading. Of course this wasn't an easy thing to do since he was constantly slamming his door and moaning about how much he hated Thelma. After awhile he finally stopped and all was quiet. Curious to see why he had stopped, I decided to investigate. Boy, was I in for a surprise. Louise was at the top of the stairs with his hands and feet duct-taped together, looking like he was about to take a dive.

“What are you doing?” I asked a bit skeptically.

“I am going to throw myself down the stairs,” he growled.

Now, I knew no good would come of this, so I went and told my mom what Louise was up to. She put an end to his little plan right

away. Now you know what I have to put up with. I talked to some other people who had little brothers to see if it was just me, or if other people had brothers like mine. One person had a little brother just like mine who she couldn't stand to be near, while another adored her brother and referred to him as her “lovely.” With this valuable information, I have come to a conclusion: there are two main types of little brothers, the kind you have a loving relationship with and actually get along with fairly well, and then the kind where you hate each other because your little brother(s) are emotionally unstable.

Granted, my brothers have gotten better over the years. Louise's tantrums don't occur on a daily basis anymore, and it is hard for me to remember the last time Thelma broke down in tears, wishing death upon himself because he was asked to wash the dishes. Still, it scares me to think of what they will be like in 10 years. I can see Louise serving time for committing some sort of crime or misdemeanor. Maybe not serving time, but doing something that is in violation of the law and having to pay for it. Thelma, on the other hand, I am not too sure about. He will probably have invented some sort of fantasy/adventure role playing game or something else related to that. What can I say, he might even be somewhat normal. All I know is that in 20 years I fully intend to have cut off all relations with them. Hopefully I will only have to come in contact with them when we get together for special family occasions. In the mean time I put up with them the best I can. Who knows, maybe by then they will actually act like normal human beings, and I could actually have a conversation with them without having to worry about saying the wrong thing and setting them off.

My mom tries to mold us into a family who actually gets along and like each other but I know that that is never going to happen. She tried having a family game night but that idea was quickly shot to the grave when it ended with Thelma in tears and Louise going into a mad twitch whenever anyone would talk to him. We are from totally different worlds, my brothers and I. Them from some weird messed up world, me from Earth. Although times are changing, who knows, maybe one day along the line things will change and I will appreciate their quirks. ♦

SLEEP From 6

tremely upset at my lack of control of the situation. I want to get an adequate amount of sleep, you know, not really have to worry about it, but then I can't fall asleep, and my plans are wrecked. Sometimes when I can't fall asleep, I find it a little depressing that I'm the only one still awake. Everyone else in the house is sleeping soundly, and here I am, awake and upset. It was really horrible when my parents were in North Dakota and I couldn't sleep. That was my first experience of this kind, and there I was in this house by myself, not able to sleep. I was on the verge of calling my parents at two in the morning to whine that I couldn't sleep. What's even more depressing is even if I did do that, my parents couldn't do anything.

On the Internet, there are a wealth of sites about insomnia and not getting enough sleep. At the National Sleep Foundation's website, they posted the results of a survey they did in 1999. According to the survey, more than half (56%) of American adults experience symptoms of insomnia. There are three different types of insomnia. The first is transient insomnia, poor sleep that lasts for a few nights. The second is short-term insomnia which is two to three weeks of poor sleep. The third kind of insomnia is chronic insomnia. This one is poor sleep lasting for three weeks or longer. Obviously, people are not going to fit neatly into these categories, but that just gives you an idea of what insomnia is. There are also other types of sleeping disorders, but the most information available was for insomnia. Another thing to keep in mind is just because you are having trouble sleeping doesn't mean you have a sleeping disorder.

What I concluded after not being able to sleep every once in awhile is that certain factors contribute to how well I sleep. The times when I have trouble sleeping are usually when I'm uncomfortable (like I have a cold, the temperature is too cold or warm, etc.) when I have late dinners, when I do something active like run around right before I get to bed, or when I'm anxious about something the next day. The websites I went to agreed with most of what I had already decided for myself. According to www.shuteye.com/ exercising two to three hours before you go to sleep can leave you feeling kind of awake. Also, eating things with sugar or caffeine can keep you up as well.

With caffeine, I pretty much stopped eating that except in the morning during the

SLEEP Continued on 11

SLEEP From 10

summer. Occasionally, I'll have some, but on the whole I avoid it. Depending on your caffeine tolerance, it can be a bad idea to have coffee, tea, chocolate or soda six hours before you go to sleep. This is subject to adjustment depending on how much or little caffeine affects you.

Another thing that is bad are clocks. Having a clock someplace visible presents the temptation to count down the hours, and worry about the amount of sleep you're going to get. Clocks are evil. And the websites agree with me there, too.

So, another thing people wonder is how much sleep they actually need. We've probably all heard the average of about seven to nine hours, but what you really need is enough to feel awake and alert the next day. Some people, like my mom, go on five or fewer hours frequently. Personally, I need

CUSICK From 8

organization thing? I think I'm pretty organized in other subjects but as far as homework and paper, I'm a mess. After thinking this through my head one too many times my thoughts trembled back to Leo . . . How was I going to tell Leo that I 1) couldn't remember and 2) I didn't have another story idea.

This issue is supposed to be our best, so far this year. I'm pulling blanks, how could this be? Normally if I apply myself I get at least something down on paper. All seemed lost, there was no hope. I was doomed to the fate of Leo's wrath. All I could hope for was that this small letter would lighten the blow and, lighten the consequences I faced.

This is the hopefully still alive Emmalee Cusick signing off. ◇

TESTS From 7

improved, we just care that you get a better score than everyone else."

In essence this system would be rewarding the kids who are born with more intelligence than others, or who are rich enough to send their kids to some private school. It isn't rewarding the people who try their hardest to do well. No, those kids get pushed off to the side, labeled as "learnig disabled."

I think that everyone has bad testing days and some people are just better test-takers than others. I have improved a lot in the matter of staying calm during a test but I really think that these new uses for the MAT 7's are horrible. Why are we training kids to be good test takers instead of good people?◇

about seven to be fine, although I can go on very little.

Since cutting way back on my caffeine intake, hiding all clocks, I have developed a few habits which are probably not the best. My first habit is my window fan. During the summer, I bought a window fan, and subsequently became addicted to it. Every night I needed to hear that constant hum that

“Having a clock someplace visible presents the temptation to count down the hours, and worry about the amount of sleep you’re going to get. Clocks are evil.”

helped me to sleep. So, yeah, I became dependent on it. It was comforting. It was beautiful. When September rolled around, and it wasn't exactly fan weather anymore, I tried pathetically to prolong its stay in my window. But with the going of summer I had to wean myself of the fan. The thing is, I could go on forever about how much I loved that fan. It really was wonderful. I could always fall asleep with it fanning away beside me. Sometimes when it was chilly I would still leave it on and just use a comforter to keep me warm. I would get really chilly, but I didn't care because of my fan.

It was hard getting along without the fan at first. It wasn't until winter vacation that I developed my second habit. I wear this winter hat to sleep. It blocks out all other sounds and I can sleep nicely. I find that I don't like the idea of being dependent on a hat, so I am trying to break myself of this habit, too.

Maybe the best way to deal with not being able to sleep is figuring out what's wrong

and trying to fix it. I know that if I worry about how much sleep I'm getting, I won't be able to. I've also figured out that it takes me at least an hour to fall asleep. The most important thing for me is to not think about if I'm going to fall asleep or not. Just thinking about other things sometimes cuts it, and eventually I can fall asleep. Another method I have used is the drowning-out-all-other-sound method, as with the hat and the fan. I like listening to the radio at a really low volume so that I can't understand it, I can just hear the hum of it. While I've read things to the contrary, for me when I'm in bed, and can't sleep, it's more productive if I just lie there until I fall asleep rather than get up and try and make myself tired.

What helped me to sleep well again was keeping a regular sleeping schedule, going to bed before ten, getting up around eight or nine. When I keep this up, even on weekends, it's easier for me in the long run. One other thing is that I know if I didn't sleep tonight, I will be pretty tired tomorrow night, and I will be able to sleep. (Not to delve into something else, but the absolute worst is when you're really tired and you can't fall asleep. That is terrible.)

Anyway, I feel I could go on forever about this, and I probably could. But what everyone should know is that no matter how little sleep you got, Leo got less.

A list of websites for the interested:

www.shuteye.com/

www.iris-publishing.com/sleep.html

www.simmonsco.com/sleep.info/

www.sleepnet.com

Anyone interested in finding more should try doing a search on insomnia. ◇

WOMEN From 6

hair would be in an afro, and I would look like the garbage man after his five AM shift.

This is not an unfamiliar phenomenon to teenage girls today. We all watch television, we all see it. It wouldn't be so bad if all this were true to life, but how many women do you see at Regions Hospital wearing a lycra tube top and a skirt that could pass for underwear? What's wrong with hospital whites? That's what my mom wears.

Not only that, but it seems like the cartoons have gotten in on the deal also. Many of the characters on shows like *Mortal Combat* and *Batman* have very few female characters, and the ones they do have are dressed in skin-tight clothes. It seems as if the image of ultra skinny girls is everywhere. I believe it's sending an irreplaceable message to females who aren't a size one. Women get the idea that they can't achieve anything if they don't look like models.

So in closing I would like to ask all the networks out there to pay attention to what kind of message they are sending to the teenagers of this country. I would also like to thank all the real women for being decent role models to young girls who are growing up in a size one world. Now I'm off to meet with my favorite flannel shirt and my ripped up jeans. I know that even in an outfit like that I can take on the world with no problem because my beauty lies within. ◇

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