

The Purple Press

Official Publication of the St. Paul Open School

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One Tardy; See You At Detention

Bridgette DaSilva
Staff Writer

According to the 1999-2000 Student Conduct Guide for the St. Paul Public School District, the minimum disciplinary action against tardiness is a "student conference, parent notification, and/or a possible referral to a social worker." Central High School, by comparison, reacts differently to tardies. The tardy gets marked down on attendance sheets, and the rest is left up to the Truancy Intervention Program (TIP) in the spring. In other words: big traditional school using standard disciplinary action.

Open School is now the small unconventional school adopting strict disciplinary action.

On November 8th of this year, school officials have decided to eliminate unexcused tardiness through assigning detention. Unexcused tardiness includes missing the school bus, not feeling well, and sleeping in.

This has caused a considerable disturbance throughout the school, mainly from

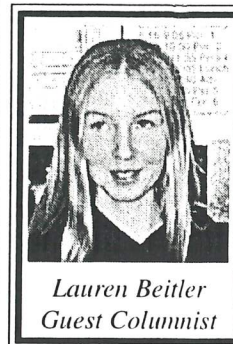
students who are used to conferencing with advisors before harsher disciplinary action is taken. An all-student meeting took place on November 4th to discuss this decision and to brainstorm solutions.

For the most part, students felt that assigning detention for tardiness was not the most effective way to deal with the problem. In fact, possible side effects were mentioned. For example, students who realize that they are tardy may decide not to come to school at all because of the imminent detention. Most claim that this result is not conducive to the learning process at all.

11th grader Brandt Hinterburg said, "If I anticipate that I'll be 15 minutes late, I just may not come at all."

Some complain that, in certain instances, this disciplinary action against tardiness cannot deter being late. Salvador Rosas explains: "I don't just wake up in the morning and say, 'Hey, I think I'm going to be late **DISCIPLINE Continued on 5**

Should Grades Be Allowed at Open?



Lauren Beitler
Guest Columnist

It's that time again. Compromise and the tools of the system have floundered. I'm mad as #&!! and I'm not going to take it anymore. Or so I tell myself. In reality, trying to be calm usually leads to anger and frustration and trying to be angry and incendiary usually leads to my shutting up and acting polite. My last recourse is to write a scathing editorial and become what I like to call an "outside agitator," i.e., a crackpot. Maybe if I am inflammatory enough someone will join me in my quest for justice, we will rise up for what we believe in, and all will be saved. In any case **COMPROMISE Continued on 6**

Things to Look For This Issue:

-Is your backpack too heavy? See page 10

-Is frisbee an issue? Check out our two enlightening stories, on pages 3 and 9

PLUS: He's got hips and he's shakin' 'em! Yes, we've got exclusive (well, maybe not so exclusive) Ricky Martin info! And a scary picture.



Looking for something scary? Check out page 2, full of ghoulish pictures and frightening... well, maybe you should just look.

Media Arts Show Coming to Minneapolis

Mina Blyly-Strauss
Staff Writer

It's titled *Imagining Me*. It's an exhibit of youth-produced, digital artwork. It's a chance for young artists from the Twin Cities, Crookston and Leech Lake Nation, Minnesota to share artwork that they have produced over the last year. It's a showcase of digital photographs captured and manipulated by artists who are part of *In Progress*, a new statewide initiative with strong connections to Open School. And it's opening on December 16th.

Imagining Me is an exhibition containing nearly 300 digital photographs produced by young artists in three media arts programs: The Critical Eye (in the Twin Cities), Fresh Voices (in Crookston), and Sisters in Leadership (Leech Lake Nation). All of the artists are under age 22. Many common themes

include family, friends, community, and personal portraits. The artists will not only display their work, but also curate, assist with PR, and help hang the show as well.

The opportunity for youth to have a show of their own is somewhat unusual. The chance for them to curate is amazing, since most often adults are the only ones allowed curatorial influence. Curating will involve first choosing photographs to be hung, then finding a way to arrange the work from three distinctly different groups, so that it all looks good in the given amount of space available. Many of the artists will also help mat, frame, and hang the images. Some of the artists will also speak to a local community group, which is holding a banquet in the exhibition **IMAGINE Continued on 4**

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Sara Schultz

Adult to Blame
Leo Bickelhaupt



Ann Finseth mathematically teaching her class.

Interim Meeting

On Thursday, November 12th, Julie held an Interim brainstorming meeting during first period. Ideas included: building model rockets, making "funky furniture," a Tarot, alternative health, having opportunities to shadow study, street theater, and rock climbing. The staff will review ideas, and pass them on to Student Government. ♦

Have you seen "Sing a Song of Sixpence?"
*Catch it tonight at 7:00 and tomorrow at 2:00
and 7:00!*

Halloween Happenings

On October 29 Open School's Grand Halloween Gala took place. Nearly everyone dressed-up! At around 9:10 all of Open School clambered downstairs to watch the annual costume contest in the cafetorium.

This year's winners included: Melody Fearing winning first place in the ELC as a spider; Sara Schultz and Kathryn Alexander tied for SLC first place as Medusa and Tinkerbell, respectively; SLC second place went to Derek as Michele Anderson. In the staff portion, Kiara Gilman Buchanan won second place with a home-made Queen Amidala costume; and Leo Bickelhaupt and Tim Leone-Getten ran away with first prize dressed as siamese twins, which they happen to be.

In the door contest, Elizabeth's advisory won first prize for the SLC; in the ELC, first place went to Kathy's advisory.

Besides the costume and door contests, the day included a special performance by Sonny and Cher, as well as a dance in the afternoon. ♦



From top left clockwise; Kathryn Alexander in her prize-winning Tinkerbell costume, including wings she welded herself (which you can't see); Heather Raiter and Holly Ryan, a.k.a. Sonny and Cher, give a stunning performance of "I Got You Babe,"; Leo and Tim, connected at the ribs, as they were as children, before the operation.



Senior Profile: Sara Schultz



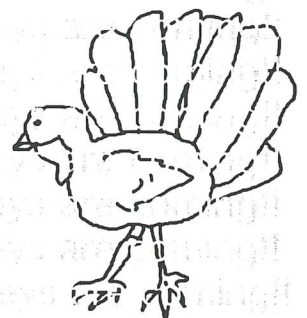
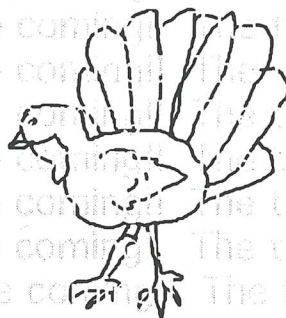
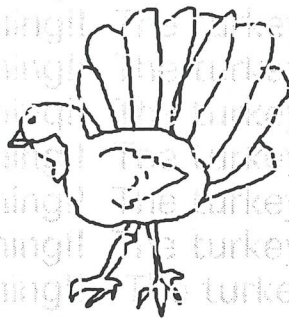
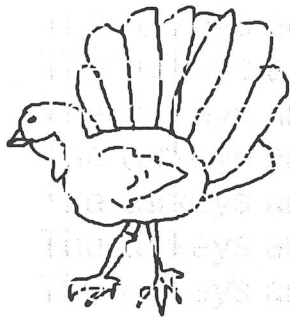
How many years have you been at Open School?
This is my 11th year.

If you could be an animal, what kind of animal would you be?
I don't know. Something nocturnal.

What do you plan to do after high school?
Maybe go off to Art College, maybe not.

Where do you picture yourself in thirty years?
Wherever the path may lead. I have no idea.

What will you miss most about Open School?
The teachers and the diversity. ♦



Frustrated? Try Frisbee Etiquette 101

Arthur Minnerly
Staff Writer

It's a ritual that happens every day. As all the people start filing out of the cafetorium on to the field, the frisbee players gather like usual to play the after-lunch game.

On a good day, the teams are picked and a nice, even match begins. On a bad day, however, it can get ugly: "You stupid @%*\$, just throw the @%*% frisbee!" A few times, it has gotten so ugly that some people decided to walk right off the field.

Some players seem to have a negative influence on the game, and a few players can make it difficult for everyone. It's hard to know how to react when people begin to ruin the game. Sometimes, people try not to react, but the problem doesn't go away.

Now there is the issue of what should be done about it all. "Some of the girls agree that it's turning in to a sexist thing, but others don't have a problem with it," said 10th grader Kathryn Alexander. But just about everyone can agree that a lot of people only

seem to pass to the same people every time. Aaron Schutjer says, "I don't like to play any more because I never get passed to."

It does get pretty boring when you're running around only to see the frisbee get dropped or deflected by someone when you were perfectly open and in sight. One day, several people were so tired of it all that they skipped frisbee and played duck duck goose and freeze tag instead.

The most important thing for players to



A typical day of frisbee

keep in mind are: 1) The purpose of playing is to have fun, not to win; 2) People should call their own fouls; 3) Use all your teammates, not just one or two.

On a lighter note, it's a very fun game that continues to be popular. It is a simple game that doesn't take very long to learn. Frisbee is actually pretty similar to soccer in terms of the passing and the positioning of the players. The main difference is that the player who has the frisbee can't move while his or her teammates can. When the frisbee is dropped, or goes out of bounds, it automatically goes to the other team, no matter who touched it last. To score, a player has to catch the frisbee past the appropriate goal line.

Frisbee remains very popular today among SLC students. Will it die out in a year or two, like four square did, or will it become a long-term staple? Time will tell. It probably depends on how well people are able to get along on the playing field. ♦

The History of Hair

Heather Raiter
Staff Writer

For hundreds of years we have been decorating ourselves with perfumes, make-up, and dyes. We have never been a race of beings satisfied with ourselves. So we wear make-up and change our hair color to get away from ourselves, or just to have fun.

There has never been a problem with the fact that our society practically revolves around new fashions and styles, but then . . . BANG . . . It happened. Not only were people dying their hair normal colors, blond, brown, black, etc, but they were working in rainbow vision.

In the beginning, the early, early punks were using it for shock value, but nowadays it's so common that people's normal reaction is a mere second glance. Of course there is the occasional, but very rare, friendly or snide comment.

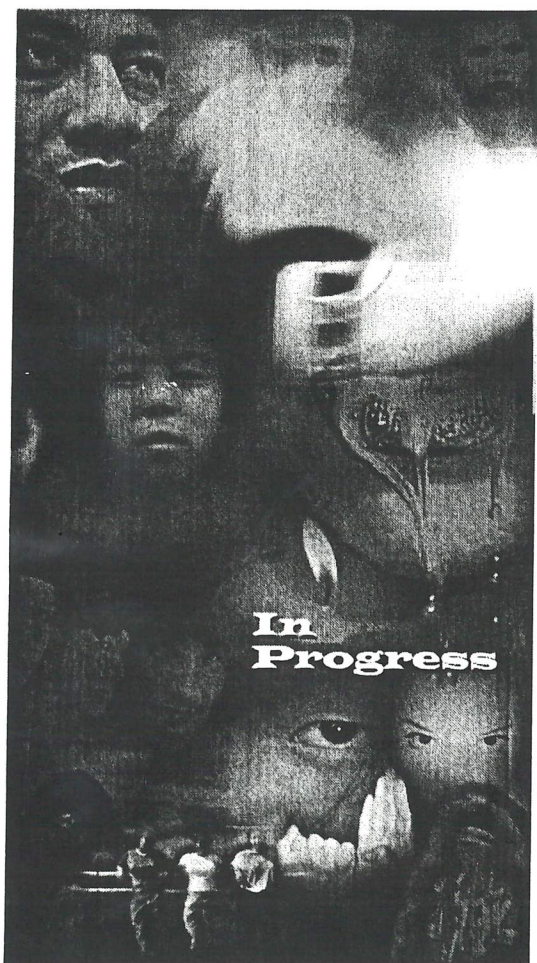
8th grader Geoffrey Freeman said,

"There's this guy who lives on my street that yells profanities at me. He's like, 'Is your hair blue?' I said, 'yeah,' then he said, 'Well, that's #@*!ing dumb!'"

Our school, on the other hand, is used to such styles. 9th grader Emily Cusick said of general reactions, "Nothing really huge, you know, not like oh my god!"

Of course, that's our school where you see pink and green hair every day. But how do other schools react to it?

Niccole Vasatka-Prill from Como High said, "Usually girls say, 'Why did you do that to your hair?' and, 'That's bad for your hair' and telling me what I should do with it when it's none of their business." Niccole has green and orange hair and her usual attire consists of baggy jeans, tight black shirts, and chains. ♦



A piece from "In Progress"

IMAGINE From I

space, about their artwork.

In Progress is the initiative that brings the three media arts groups together to display their artwork. *In Progress* is a joint effort between the Minnesota Media Project (media educator and artist Kris Sorensen, program associate, and Open School graduate, Sai Thao, and program associate Mina Blyly-Strauss), the Center For Arts Criticism, and between 30-40 young media artists. These young artists include Open Schoolers Tom White, Erin Boyd, Ariel Slaughter, Bridgette DaSilva, Anna Aslani, Mina Blyly-Strauss, Joseph Moliter, along with Open School graduates Gwendolyn Richards and Sai Thao, and former Open School student Andrew Chervenak (a.k.a. Shervie).

The show will be at Intermedia Arts (2822 Lyndale Avenue S., in Minneapolis) December 16-January 23. Opening night for *Imagining Me* is Thursday, December 16th at 6:30 pm. There will also be a video screening on Saturday, January 15th at 7 pm. There is no cost for admission. Come to one or both of the events. They are sure to be exciting, innovative and unique experiences. ♦

Heather's Magical "How To Dye" Section

Now for all you people out there that want to add a bit of color to your lives here's how you do it. If it's your first time dying your hair I suggest doing it with someone who has experience. The most popular store for purchasing dye and bleach is Sally's Beauty Supply. Sally's has a nice variety of Manic Panic colors, but if you want to use a different brand of dye, for example Punky Colors, you will want to check out some other stores. Manic Panic is a widely used brand here at Open, although Punky Colors also has a good reputation. The cost of Manic Panic dye at Sally's is seven dollars, and Punky Colors will probably be somewhere in that same price range as well. Bleach is around the same depending on the brand and form you buy it in.

Okay, now for the dying. First, decide whether you're going to bleach it. If you have darker hair, most hair dyes won't show up very well unless you bleach your hair; even for a lot of lighter hair bleaching makes the final hair color brighter. Once you decide, follow directions on the container/bottle of bleach that you're using. Make sure that you follow the directions and don't leave it in much longer than directed or you might fry your hair or, in extreme cases, cause a chemical burn on your scalp.

Then get your colors: Manic Panic does have a wide variety of colors but they don't have everything, like orange, so you may have to get a different brand or mix two dyes. As with bleach, follow directions on the container, keeping in mind that the longer you leave it in, the brighter it will be.

One more stupid warning before you go out and do this to your hair. Consider what your family will do to you if you dye your hair. Not just your parents (although they are the most important to consider) but also your more distant relatives, such as grandparents. I know for a fact that when I see them this Christmas I will be all but disowned. So on that note, happy dying and good luck. ♦

AIBO: Not Just Any Toy Dog

Mina Blyly-Strauss
Staff Writer

Meet AIBO. His parents' names are Masahiro Fujita and Koji Kageyama. He is 14 inches long, nose to tail, and weighs only three and a half pounds. He's got a pedigree many dogs could only dream of. He costs \$2,500. He has more motors than a dozen Walkman stereos. He has as much processing power as a desktop PC. He runs on a 7.2-volt lithium-ion battery. And he's the possessor of some of Sony's newest robotic technology.

His real name is ERS-110, but his creators at the Digital Creatures Lab in Tokyo call him AIBO, for artificial intelligence robot. The Japanese word "aibou" also just happens to mean companion.

AIBO does almost everything a real dog does, except maybe mess up your floor. He can sit, walk, play, and stretch. He can express emotions with his eyes (green means he's happy, red means he's angry). He also has many different body postures from com-

pliant to assertive. He can also recognize color and distance through a color CCD mounted in his head, and respond to touch, thanks to a pressure sensitive head. But don't think he doesn't have an attitude. If you tap him too hard he lifts a leg and you hear the sound of water trickling on the floor.

AIBO also can get back up when he falls, "bark" and "chirp", recognize sound, and kick a ball around. He can be programmed with special software on any PC, and his battery charges when he's in his "dog bed."

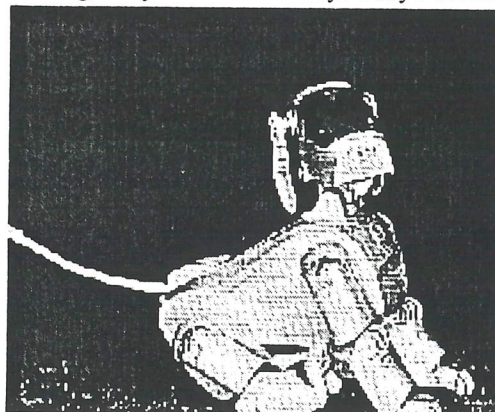
If this all seems a little ridiculous to you,

consider this: all 3,000 AIBO's available in Japan sold out in less than 20 minutes, and all 2,000 available in the U.S. sold out in just 4 days.

If you aren't amazed with AIBO, just wait says Sony's development team. "Today we push a button. Tomorrow we will only have to speak or enter the room for the product to recognize us and [react]."

AIBO's creator, Masahiro Fujita, expects to be able to build a humanoid robot that has the ability to walk in the real world by 2010. But for now he

says that you should "watch out," they're working on an AIBO model that will be able to, quite literally, follow you anywhere. ♦



DISCIPLINE From 1

today." These particular students and staff argue that some tardies are merely accidents, and they shouldn't be punished by coming to school. Chronic tardies, they say, should be dealt with by the ASST (Advisor/Student Support Team).

The members attending the student-run meeting agreed that an "appeals" system may work. This would mean that if the student felt the detention was unjust, they could discuss their reasoning with their advisor. Others claim that this seems eerily familiar to conferencing with advisors, as in the past. The only difference would be that advisors would not have the power to assign detention themselves.

Reasons for this new action was largely due in part to the attendance of last year's students. According to Jennifer Diedrich, last year a quarter of the students should have been enrolled in the TIP program. Open School has to give off the impression that it is doing something to deter those chronic tardies.

Some people argue that the TIP program in itself prevents excessive tardiness. Once being put on the program, students are expected to attend a meeting with all TIP members. If students do not attend this meeting with their parents, a court date is scheduled to deal with the problem. ♦

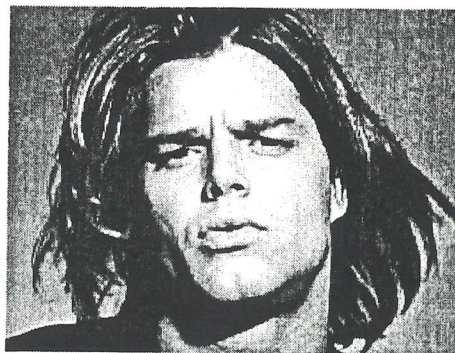
Ricky's Coming to Town

Allie Costello
Staff Writer

There is one concert that stands out from all the rest, Ricky Martin. The hot latin sensation is coming to town.

Ricky Martin's tour has special effects straight out of Star Wars, a lot of frantic dancers, a killer horn section, and a hot superstar who truly rises to the occasion at the center of it all. Ricky's first tour since becoming a phenom is first-rate. There are several entrances and exits made through a maze of trap doors, moving sidewalk, rotating stages, and floating steel cages. He first sings "Livin' La Vida Loca." The million dollar set extravaganza lets everyone have a terrific view. Hey, you never know, you could get as lucky as one person did in Miami. Ricky might crawl through the crowd and give you a kiss.

Ricky Martin's year started at the 1998 Grammys when he blew the crowd away when he performed "La Copa De La Vida (The Cup of Life)." His fourth outstanding album, "Vuelve," took home the award for Best Latin Pop Performance. At the 1999 MTV Video Music Awards he took home at least 3 man-on-the-moon awards.



A rather frightening picture of Ricky.

People like Ricky Martin for his great looks, his saucy attitude, and the way he shakes his hips.

MTV's Serena Altschul asked Ricky what makes him so popular. Ricky replied, "You know what? I'm gonna blame it on the sounds. Let's think about the Latin sounds. I think about ska. Let's think about, you know, those sounds of the '60s. It's fusion. It's all about crossing over not only into America at this moment, but also into different generations, and that's what we're looking for." ♦

COMPROMISE from 1

I'll feel much better.

"What is this crackpot talking about?" You ask yourselves. I'm talking about the recent events involving a certain six-letter word: GRADES. Yes, here in Open School. Pete, a teacher in the ELC, was asked by some of the parents of his students how their children were doing compared to students in other schools. They wanted their children to receive grades, to prepare them for other schools which they will be attending. Pete yielded to their requests, and began assigning letter grades on certain assignments to all the students in his class, including those whose parents didn't ask for them. So then this issue came before the Site Council under the guise of, "What do we do when the parents want something that might go against school philosophy?" The issue was sent off to the School Policy Committee, which will investigate it at its next meeting.

What I fear is that a compromise will be reached. Compromise is usually a great thing, allowing us to get on with our lives. But in this case any compromise will erode the philosophy of the school and further turn us into just another warehouse-slash-detention-center where we put children until they're old enough to get jobs or go to jail. Yes, I'm talking about Traditional Schools.

Let's start with the basic arguments:

1) Students need grades because otherwise they won't be motivated to try hard on tests, etc. There are two major flaws with this.

The first is that motivation by grades is actually motivation by fear, the fear of getting a bad grade. We want students to be motivated, not just to get a good grade, but to learn things and be the best they can be. Studies have shown that giving grades doesn't raise student achievement the way narrative evaluations do, and the more grades students get, the worse off they are. A teacher of mine likened it to pulling up the flowers to see how the roots are doing. I know far too many students who use various ploys to raise their GPA while actually learning very little. A classmate of mine called it "Grade Efficiency." The point is that motives should be internal, not external. Everyone needs to remember their own reasons for learning. This is what will keep them interested in learning for the rest of their lives.

The second flaw is that if students aren't motivated until they are given a bad grade to "wake them up," maybe there's something wrong with the teaching system itself. Students who have that internal motivation,

GAMES From 11

RATINGS (out of five stars)

Summary: I think the best part of this game is the nonstop action. If you like action-packed, thrilling, shooting games, you'll love "Army Men Sarge's Heroes"

"Paper Boy 64,"

System: N64 **Type:** umm..... You tell me **Save:** Yes **Password:** Yes

Max player: One **Training :** Yes

Description, You are to deliver newspapers while avoiding people, dogs, penguins, cars, dolphins . . . etc. You deliver the papers to gain new subscribers, to get to new neighborhoods, to deliver more papers, to get new subscribers to get to new neighborhoods, to deliver more pa-

pers, to get new subscribers to get to new neighborhoods, AND LIVE IN THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT, sorry, I got carried away.

Pros: The papers are easy to aim and you can go around the neighborhood more than once.

Cons: Papers often fall short, and TIME LIMIT (need I say more).

RATINGS (out of five stars)

Summary: The best part of the game in my opinion is being able to nail the guy that looks like Greg holding a coffee cup in the grapes with a newspaper, (for added fun, use the Sunday Edition). If you have ever wanted to do that you will love "Paper Boy 64." That's all for this month, catch you later.◊

which all children naturally do, will want to learn in an interesting and happy environment. Giving them grades is avoiding real problems with the learning environment of the classroom.

2) Students need grades to know how they "stack up" against other students.

Who cares how they stack up? If every student does his or her best, then every student deserves to be called a wonderful student. Every single graduate of Open School who has been motivated to learn and to try their hardest deserves to be called "honors graduate," or "top of the class." Giving students A's doesn't really make them feel good about themselves the way a simple compliment can, and giving students bad grades is incredibly discouraging.

3) Students need grades because in the real world, and in other schools, people will judge their performance, and they need to be prepared.

Where to begin? It's true that most colleges give grades. When I consider attending a college that gives grades, I'm thinking of going there despite the grading system, because other positives outweigh that negative. It's a choice I am making because I can't get what I want at a college without grades. I have already developed an internal motivation which is strong enough that a grading system can't destroy it; and I'm prepared to make the choice. But our students are still developing that internal motivation. We want to protect them from the evil that is grading long enough for them to mature so that in the future they have the tools they need. I can't make colleges fol-

low what I think to be the best system, narrative evaluation. But we can make our school follow the best system. We don't have to put up with grading, because what other schools do doesn't have to effect what we do.

As for preparing our students for the "real world," I think our system gives them the best possible preparation. When students graduate from Open, they are prepared to decide whether they want to enter the part of the world that is competitive and judging, and simply not let that bother them; or whether they want to find their own path outside of that status quo. Or possibly both.

There are many, many schools in St. Paul. All have their strengths. One of our strengths is our system of narrative evaluation. We need everyone in the Open School community to understand that, from teachers to parents to students. The teacher involved here is a good teacher. The parents involved here are good parents, trying to do what's best for their children. We need to help everyone understand Open School philosophy on this issue. Though I'd love to hear everyone's opinions, I don't know what they would say to convince me that Open School philosophy agrees with the practice of giving letter grades. Which is not to say we should be rigid. We simply shouldn't do things that seem to pay off in the short term, at the expense of the integrity of the long term. Open School is an ideal which we all strive for. We need everyone's ideas in this debate but I won't have anyone compromising my school.◊

Opinions 'n' Stuff

Open Schooler Feeds Hunger for Conventional Recognition

I am a perfectionist at heart. Yes, I may scoff at those who spend all their time doing their civics projects and studying for tests, but who's the one crying over poor test scores?

I don't think my life was ever as stressful as it is this year. Reason: Grades. Like, real ones. Letter grades. So maybe it doesn't matter and maybe it does, but I spend too much time worrying about what I'm going to get, analyzing the very nuances of percentages of points defining which grade I am going to get, freaking out about dropping down to a lesser grade. Worrying about something that in a couple of months I won't care about



Maura Shramko
Staff Columnist

anymore.

I was trying to explain to my sister that just because I'm proud to be (hopefully) earning an A in something doesn't mean that Open School's system doesn't count. She just doesn't appreciate the unstressful learning environment of Open. And she certainly doesn't understand how getting an A at a "real" school in a way validates a life spent at Open School. I've always believed for the most part that Open School is a wonderful place to go, not just a slacker's school; a place where real learning can be accomplished . . . But there was always that little voice that doesn't think I'd be able to succeed at a "real" school ("succeeding" and "getting good grades" mean the same thing in this context), not by their rules anyway. Like I would gain knowledge and learn things, but wouldn't be able to satisfy their **GRADES** Continued on 10

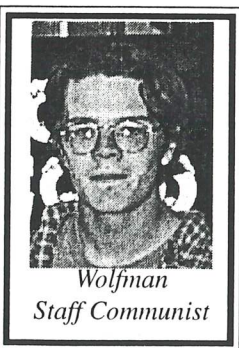
Prayer in Schools Fighting Blind

I've been doing quite a lot of research lately on school prayer, and have moved from a stubborn, "It's against church/state" stance to a more informed, "Not only is it against church/state, it won't work."

First off, I'll tell you all the reasons I've heard in support of school prayer before toppling them like a deck of Christian Coalition cards. Many supporters claim that without school-organized prayer, student's religious rights are being infringed upon.

No. No such legislation has been passed that restricts a student's right to voluntary prayer, nor has any of this fictional legislation been enforced. The stories of teachers suspending kids for saying grace before lunch are false, plain and simple.

What the legislation does is protect those



Wolfman
Staff Columnist

for whom the prayer is offensive, meaningless, or otherwise alienating from being forced to either participate or leave the class, since most organized school prayers are aimed at non-inclusive, just-right-of-center Christians, which doesn't apply to a large percentage of the student population; and the idea of universal, one-size-fits-all prayer being put into effect is impractical and ridiculous. With the wide range of beliefs and the significant atheist population within the schools, messages would have to be limited to "Be good" in order to accomplish such a task.

What is even more alienating to students who do not comply is when organized prayers are made over the loudspeaker, which most schools have in the halls as well as the classes, thus forcing the student to leave the school building entirely to avoid the practice they find objectionable.

The actual effects of the current laws allow students to express their views and exercise their beliefs without infringing on the

PRAYER Continued on 11

Please Pass The Tofurkey

"You're a vegetarian?" Comes the inevitable question, asked in a tone of blame and disbelief. Many times there's a barrage of follow up questions like;

"Do you wear leather?" and "Do you consume animal by-products?"

I then sheepishly muster up all my thoughts and begin my animal rights/ environmentalism tirade. I ration leather to shoes because plastic "veggie" shoes aren't biodegradable, thus wreaking havoc upon all living things.

Sometimes it seems as though I'm resented by those desperately trying to defend their carnivorous ways, but perhaps it's just a last attempt to shroud their jealousy over vegetarian willpower. Either way there seems to be an intense desire to justify this lifestyle choice.

To tell the truth, I started because of my distaste for meat and because of the health benefits. I thought saving animals would just be another benefit in my campaign. Although I'm getting more and more life sensitive. I go to all lengths to save spiders and other insects from impending doom, yield to squirrels in my biking path, and am known to reprimand my little brother for picking flowers.

Yes, I guess I am neurotic.

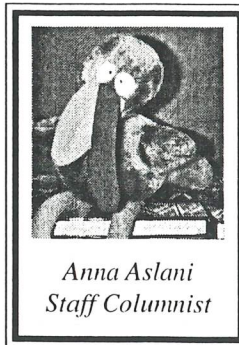
But enough about me. My intent in writing this article was to address "meatless holidays." As you may imagine, Thanksgiving is one of the more difficult holidays to work around. Some veggies make this holiday their yearly meat indulgence. I can't seem to condone this action after being taught this song in my early impressionable youth:

"A turkey once sat on a barnyard fence as he sang this sad sad tune,

Thanksgiving is coming gobble gobble, gobble gobble,

and I know I'll be eaten soon, gobble gobble, gobble gobble,

TOFURKEY Continued on 9



Anna Aslani
Staff Columnist

Miller's Crossing: Best Mobster Film Ever

If anyone paid any attention to me last year, I'm sure they remember all my Star Wars stories. Star Wars, Star Wars, Star Wars, all the time.

I was having a lot of fun with that, even if it drove everyone else nuts. This year though, the hype from Episode I has died down, and the Episode II hype is still far away. A few of you will be relieved to know that I've found something to fill the gap. This summer I found a new favorite movie. That's right, there's something in this world that I'm more addicted to than Star Wars.

It's called *Miller's Crossing* and I think maybe two other people in the school have heard of it. And that's just because they've had to listen to me ramble on about it. Well, lucky you, now it's your turn. It's a mobster movie, the best one out there as far as I know, though I still haven't seen *The Godfather* because I'm a bad person. But somehow *Miller's Crossing* is also one of the most overlooked mob movies, despite the recent

"It's a mobster movie, the best one out there as far as I know, though I still haven't seen *The Godfather* because I'm a bad person."

success of its creators, Joel and Ethan Coen. The twisted Minnesota natives have spent some time in the spotlight lately with the success of some of their other works like *Fargo* and *The Big Lebowski*, but for some reason *Miller's Crossing* never made it off the back shelf.

The same thing seems to happen with all my favorite movies. A few people have seen *Foxfire*, and just today I found a post about *Grosse Pointe Blank* on a messageboard about cult films, but I still get funny looks when asked about my favorite flicks. I'm sort of starting to wonder if I'm cursed.

I guess part of the problem is that I never got around to seeing any of my favorites in the theater, so I sort of missed my chance at any kind of hype. *Miller's Crossing* was made way back in 1990, and I don't think little eight-year-old me would have been able



Aimee Gervais
Staff Columnist

Come See A Real Film *Beauty*

Brigette McKern

Staff Critic

Stuck. Summer movies have gone, and holiday movies are yet to come. What's in between? I was beginning to fear that my movie-going would be put on hold; nothing seemed to interest me. Scary movies and mediocre comedies, was this my fate?

Generally I don't pay too much attention to movie suggestions from others, because they're usually my worst movie experiences. But it was a fellow staff writer, let's call her Aimee G. or how about A. Gervais? I decided to take the risk and see the movie A. suggested, *American Beauty*.

This is the part where I turn into a cheesy movie critic. *American Beauty* was truly the most wonderful movie I've seen in a long time (and you can be equally as cheesy and quote me on that). After seeing this movie, I felt as though I had been rewarded for the many hours I spent in theaters seeing bad movies.

American Beauty isn't one of those movies that when asked what the movie is about, you can punch out a basic plot line. Instead, the movie leaves room for - gasp! interpretation.

My interpretation is that the movie explores the idea that society has formed an ideal beauty for each individual, but rarely do they fit those ideals. That is very much the case with the characters portrayed in the movie. Yes, it is about a dysfunctional fam-

ily, but not in the humorous way that Hollywood likes to showcase them. Instead, each character is rich with their own problems that can't be solved with a hug, new puppy or even by the end of the movie.

Kevin Spacey, Annette Benning and Thora Birch give outstanding performances. I'd say Oscar-worthy, but the academy isn't that smart.

The writer deserves just as much praise, if not more. To be able to write a screenplay that is as rich as any novel and intelligent, and to convince a starch-suit studio head to buy it, takes skill and drive.

If you haven't gotten the clue yet, I recommend seeing this movie. However, it should be noted that *American Beauty* is rated R for language, nudity, sexual content and is for mature



Kevin Spacey and Annette Benning
give their vibrant talent to *American Beauty*

viewers.

Besides absolutely loving the movie, I had perhaps the best theater experience. Everyone in the room was enjoying the movie, no immature side comments, laser pointers or tall people in front. During the credits, the majority of the audience stayed in their seats, taking in what they had experienced.

An outstanding movie and movie-going experience, that rare occasion when all of the elements that make a great movie and experience come together. It almost makes me have a tiny bit more respect for studio heads (almost). Happy movie watching! ♦

GENDER From 9

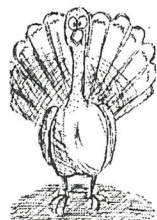
one has seen them play.

Let's now chat about how the games play themselves out. Some guys tend throw to each other. For some reason (I think it could just be a genetic defect) guys tend to throw to other guys and not see the other more-than-willing and able players ready for action. Most of the time when this happens either the team gets a lot of points and those three guys feel good about it and the rest of the team feels useless, or they do horribly and drop it all the time. Guys seem to have this thing where they only pick up other guys like a thermal sensor or something. Or maybe a ping goes off and only hits other guys. I'll call it the Guydar. Meanness in frisbee, however, is not always gender based. A lot of times it has more to do with just a mean person.

Well, I don't think it's too big a deal, because I still really like to play. And gender issues don't always affect the game, but sometimes they do. I'm not whining about not being thrown to, that's not the point of this article. I'm just stating that it's not always easy to play with the guys. ♦

TOFURKEY From 7

gobble gobble gobble
I'd like to run away-ay-ay-ay-ay
gobble gobble, gobble gobble,
gobble gobble gobble
I don't like Thanksgiving day!"



This song, along with "Puff the Magic Dragon," single-handedly stole my childhood innocence. When I was about four I grew attached to a stuffed (animal) turkey at my father's office. "Mr. Gobbles" and I now share a pleasant life together.

The first "veggie" Thanksgiving I encountered, I let my mom take care of the cooking... I ended up with a single squash. Not that I minded, I fancy squash. My nutritionist, however, would have had a heart attack. I can see her lecturing me in my mind's eye. "Anna," she'd say, "I'm worried that you're not getting enough protein."

She seemed to think that my daily protein intake was that of a kidney bean. As I reflect on it, I'm surprised to think that she didn't instigate putting me on the Atkins or another one of those "fad" protein diets.

Anyway, on my second Thanksgiving I was feeling more ambitious. So I set to work concocting a "prize-winning" tofu casserole of sorts. Highly impressed by my perseverance on this five-hour culinary endeavor, I anxiously articulated my first bite... At first my eyes began to water. I ran into the kitchen and stuck my head under the sink faucet. Note to self, "Definitely too much pepper."

Maybe this year I'll get lucky and my mom will buy me a "tofurkey." Until then, I'll stock up on squash and kidney beans, and I'll keep The Lotus on speed dial. ♦

Discrimination Present on Frisbee Field?

Emily Cusick

Staff Columnist

Gender. Is it a problem when playing the game of Ultimate Frisbee at Open School? After all, frisbee is a sport, and everyone knows that big, strong guys are much better at sports than small, little, mousy girls.

In my opinion, gender isn't really too big a deal, even though there might be a few problems. I have examined some stereotypes to see how Open School frisbee fits in.

Assumption 1) Guys are more confident at sports, giving them mental dominance which makes them more intimidating than girls. Assumption 2) Guys tend to be taller than girls. Assumption 3) Guys tend to have very poor sportsmanship on the field. Assumption 4) Girls are not as "good" so they are picked after the boys.

Now given these assumptions, you can see how it could be a problem when you're a 5'4" girl who just wants to play.

Lets see how the stereotypes fit into Open's well rounded teams of both short and tall people.

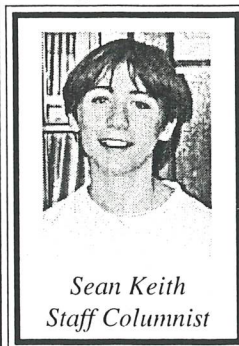
Assumption comparison 1) I don't think that being a guy makes you better at Open. There are some great female players here at Open. Caitlin Rude and Maura Shramko, for example. These are two great players who take the limelight away from the male sex. What makes them really good is their speed, ability to know where the frisbee is going after the throw, experience and last but not least, their decision-making ability.

As for height, guys are generally taller than girls. This gives them a small advantage on higher passes. Fortunately, there are short guys here at Open, and I think skill can often compensate for height.

As for sportsmanship, well, at Open I sadly see it slipping. But the worst thing is that it's not just the guys. Girls and boys will criticize a player for a bad throw, but (at least from my perspective) girls aren't as loud and mean about it as some guys. Girls also seem to have to "prove" themselves before they are accepted, and a small fault sets them back farther than a guy. When new people are playing, then, guys will tend to be picked before girls, even if no

GENDER Continued on 8

Stadium Debate Rages On



Sean Keith
Staff Columnist

On November 2nd, 1999 the St. Paul voters voted down the stadium tax. So did my mom and dad. They made a big mistake.

St. Paul needs a new stadium. The Metrodome is horrible during the summer

because of the air conditioning and at least during the winter we'll be breathing real fresh air if we have an outdoor stadium. Also, the Twins might leave.

Look what happened when the North Stars left. Minnesota almost totally lost hockey. Now you have to travel way out of the Twin Cities before you get to a real hockey town. Do you really want this to happen to baseball?

We would have gotten economic benefits out of the stadium too, when out of town fans would come in to see the games. They would have eaten at St. Paul restaurants and slept at St. Paul hotels. The stadium would have also provided jobs for people who need them.

Have the multi-million dollar owners pay for it. That probably won't happen because they don't want to spend that much on something. Now they might take the Twins to a different state, or sell them to a different state.

We're also going to have to get a new stadium sometime, so why not now? I mean, the Vikings want a new stadium too, and they're not the dream team like last year. What are we going to do when they start really trying to get a new stadium?

Well at least they might build one in Minneapolis. It'll be better than nothing. So I'd like a stadium no matter what. ♦

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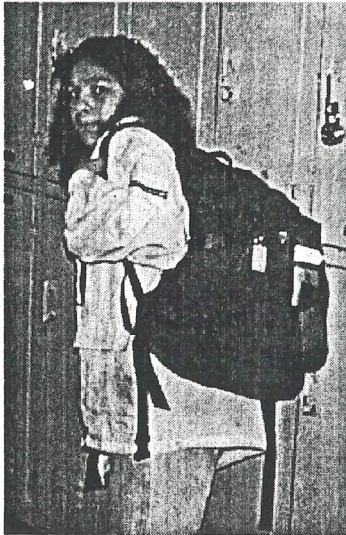
As you get ready for school in the morning you may be thinking about whether you'll have time to eat breakfast, why you didn't do your homework last night, how much time you'll have to play frisbee after lunch, and how you'll carry your 40-pound backpack around all day. Again.

Oversized school bags are a reality that hundreds of millions of junior-high and high-school students face all school-year long. You may be familiar with this scenario: The first day of school you bring this new, nearly empty bag to school (okay, maybe it has notebooks, pencils, and such, but it doesn't weigh very much). Then you start going to classes. Boom!

Huge math book. Boom! huge science book. Boom! large history book too. Boom! Boom! Calculator, a lab book, a protractor, a ruler, colored pencils, graph paper. Sound somewhat familiar? Anyway, by the end of the first week of school you have amassed a 40-pound collection of junk

to carry around, all the time, like a large growth.

How does this happen? Any ideas? Here's one: As our generation is growing



Allie Costello is weighed down by The Man.

taller, older generations are getting nervous. That's right, they've realized that by the time a kid reaches about age 13, they start presenting a serious threat, they start being taller than their teachers.

The way teachers cope with this fear of having their students being able to see the top of their heads, is by weighing them down. They do this by making them carry huge, heavy backpacks that make it nearly impossible to stand up straight, to their full height. They enforce this plot by giving students large amounts of heavy stuff, a.k.a. textbooks, to carry around.

Using this plan, they are often able to retain the appearance of equal height throughout the time that they are responsible for teaching the students. Later, when they see a former student, they can quite easily remark "My, you've grown so much over the last few years." ♦

GRADES From 7

oh-so-different-from-Open standards. Getting an A proves that I can be flexible and do things differently.

But the amount of stress I put on myself in order to obtain that elusive letter is probably not a good thing. I stress myself out, worrying and such. All for a grade that in my mind both counts and at the same time doesn't. Here's what I mean. As above stated, getting an A is something that I always said I could do but really wondered about; it was something I had to attain to prove to myself that I am as smart as I think I am. The flip side of that is that I think grades are a bad way of ascertaining what students are learning.

In my experience, 80% of the grade depends on test scores while the other 20% depends on homework. So if you diligently do your work, dedicating hours to your homework, simply trying to comprehend and exercise what you've been taught, it

doesn't count. All that counts are the test and quiz scores, in which nerves can play a large factor. I personally feel uncomfortable sitting in a room full of people who can't talk at all, feeling guilty that a stray glance will be misinterpreted by my teacher as cheating. Tests cannot accurately gauge how much a person has learned. Realistically, it would seem that nothing can, but tests do not seem to be the answer. Deciding how someone's doing in class should be a combination of class participation, homework and tests. The teacher should try to judge by a student's attitude and actions what they have learned. Incidentally, that seems to be similar to how things are done at Open School.

Students at Highland (where I take classes) do not seem especially pleased to be there. Obviously. Walking down the hallways (which are smaller than ours yet are inhabited by a population about four times larger) I see almost no one I know,

The Top Ten Things Turkeys Will Be Wearing This Thanksgiving

- 1) *Pretty, plastic, yellow mesh*
- 2) *Snowsuits that will blend in with all of the other turkeys walking the streets at this time of year*
- 3) *Feathers*
- 4) *Elvis*
- 5) *Sheep's clothing*
- 6) *Lime Jell-O Marshmallow Cottage Cheese Surprise!*
- 7) *The chic new fall fashions from Gobel Poltre of Milan.*
- 8) *Biker jackets*
- 9) *Fig leaves (for that "Garden of Eden" look)*
- 10) *Bread pudding*

which could be due to the fact that I only know about five people, but still. The basic point is that at Open School you are far more likely to actually know people, and knowing people does tend to grant some sort of concern for your fellow students.

I'm not saying kids at Open are jumping for joy to be at school, because they're not, but the learning environment here seems so clearly superior on the whole that it's strange that it's an "alternative" education style. I'm also not saying that an Open School learning environment is right for everyone, because again it is not. Open School has somehow managed, however, to obtain a system of grading which not only allows students to learn but relieves them from the yucky stressful learning environments that I am now subjecting myself to. A's are nothing compared to Open School and the overall wonderfulness of the school. I'm tradin' in my "real" school shoes and takin' out my own, ol' Op'n Skoo' shoes. ♦

Reviewer Reveals All:

The Down and Dirty on Two Special Video Games

Joe Levine

Staff Video Game Reviewer

This is the first in a series of video game reviews. Each month, I will try out two games and tell you about the results. I have two VERY different games this month: "Army Men Sarge's Heroes" and "Paper Boy 64."

"Sarge's Heroes"

System: N64/Play Station **Type:** War Game **Save:** Yes **Password:** No **Max players:** Four **Training:** Yes

Description: You are Sarge of the Green Army who is, always has been, and probably always will be at war with the Tan army. At the beginning of a stage you are given a mission, then dropped in the middle of a chaotic war zone to carry it out.

Pros: Vast array of weaponry, and many good hiding spots.

Cons: Pain in the butt to obtain the weaponry, and the Tan army can also use the hiding spots.

GAMES Continued on 6

PRAYER From 7

rights of others. The school cannot endorse any particular religion, or religion at all, but may allow religious groups to be organized outside of the class time (Before/after school, during lunch) so long as those groups do not affect the school as a whole.

A second argument is that of church/state itself. This, I admit, is one backed up by factual evidence. Proponents of school prayer point out that there is no mention of separation of church and state in the Constitution. It was an interpretation brought up in a letter by Thomas Jefferson a few years later. Where they start to go astray with this is to say he meant church/state separation purely as a protection of church against state, but there's more to it than that.

I read the letter (yup, way too much time on my hands.) and he states quite clearly that in order to protect church from state, one must protect state from church. The major reason the Founders were all big on religious liberties was that back home in the old country everything was ruled by the church, the one church. They knew that in order for liberty to work even to some smidgen of a degree, we couldn't be living in a theocracy.

The final major argument is the one most wrought with inconsistencies. Proponents argue that the absence of prayer in schools is the direct cause of such "societal ills" as abortion, violence, teen sex, and a general decline in the nation's morality.

For starters, not one shred of hard evi-

dence can be found to attribute any of the above to the lack of school prayer, thus proving the argument effectively false. Some say that the massacre at Columbine (yes, even I will reference it in an article) would have been avoided had the Ten Commandments been posted in the halls. In other words, if God was present in the school, none of this would have happened. Well, any seminary student with a positive IQ will tell you that since God is omnipresent, God is in the school, but that's beside the point. The point is, religion isn't synonymous with morality.

Religion is not what was needed at Columbine, it was ethics. The idea that some things are fundamentally right and others fundamentally wrong goes beyond religious doctrine. It's entirely possible, and in fact probable, for an atheist to believe murder is wrong.

So, why did the Trenchcoat Mafia go postal on their classmates instead of cowering in fear of eternal damnation. Simple. Since they had no moral code they followed, their only setback was the legal ramifications. People follow the Geneva convention because there are tangible results for failure to do so; there are no such consequences for breaking the Ten Commandments.

What is needed to combat these ills, (well, personally, the only one I have a problem with is sociopathic acts of gratuitous violence, but who cares?) is a chance for America's youth to see that right and wrong can exist without proselyzation.

So, in conclusion, as soon as people like Pat Robertson stop assuming that the only way to values is through his God, maybe this country can become a little nicer. Granted, I just hope our values aren't all the same as Pat's. ♦

AIMEE From 8

to convince my parents that a violent, R-rated mob movie was quality viewing. No matter, since I didn't even hear about it until last summer. I was cruising around the messageboards on the Internet Movie Database (www.imdb.com) when someone posted a really snazzy bit of dialogue on the, "Name that quote" forum:

"How did you know it was me?"

"You're the only one I know who would knock and then break in."

"Your other friends wouldn't break in, huh?"

"My other friends want to kill me, so they wouldn't knock."

I was hooked. As soon as someone picked it up and posted the title, I hiked down to the video store and rented it. Shortly after watching it I realized the problem with liking a movie no one else has seen. Nobody to spout off with about things like characters, plot twists, or Sam Raimi's cameo. I wound up calling my friends and excitedly giving them bits of

random dialogue that they didn't understand. They probably thought I was nuts. But I guess I sort of was.

After a week, I picked up my very own copy of the movie, and resorted to terrorist techniques in order to have a real discussion about my new obsession. I kidnapped two of my friends, herded them into my basement, sat them in front of the TV and made the cat sit on them to make sure they didn't try to make a break for it. Luckily, they both loved it, and now I've got someone to quote things with me so I don't have to do dialogues as monologues until someone has me committed.

Sometimes it gets annoying that incredible movies like *Miller's Crossing* are overlooked while things like *Double Jeopardy* sit in the top ten for weeks and weeks, but sometimes I think a movie's obscurity is part of its charm. But hey, who needs charm? Go rent *Miller's Crossing*, or I'll send some guy named Tic-Tac to break your legs. ♦

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