

The Purple Press

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Official Publication of the St. Paul Open School

Clothes Cause Controversy

Maura Shramko
Staff Reporter

On Wednesday, February 17, four students left school after a dispute over what students should and shouldn't be able to wear. Many students were upset about the incident and expressed concerns about freedom of expression. Somehow, a huge issue has been opened up over three garments.

"I think that if they heard my side of it they would have been more reasonable, and I was more than happy to listen to them," said principal Ruth Pechmann.

Returning from a meeting on Wednesday, Ruth was informed by Jennifer Johnson that there were a couple of students wearing clothing that Jennifer and other teachers had objected to the previous day. The male students had been asked to remove their offensive clothing, an ammunition belt, handcuffs and later a pair of female undergar-

ments, and refused, saying that Open School students should have the freedom to wear what they want to wear.



Ted Howard said the issue isn't about the belt, but freedom of expression.

Three students were told that they could not stay if they did not remove the garments in question. All three left and an additional student also left as a show of solidarity. Ruth stresses the point that she did not dismiss them. "If I were to replay that, I would have played it differently," said Ruth, referring to the confusion over whether or not the students had been officially dismissed.

"This isn't about the belt, it's about freedom of expression," said Ted Howard, who had been wearing the ammunition **DRESSCODE Continued on 7**

Do Validations Breed Laziness?

Per Olson
Staff Writer

"The biggest problem with the validation process is that people are human beings and they tend to procrastinate." -Lenni

One of the many things that makes Open School unique is the validation process. Over a period of 25 years, the process has evolved into what it is today.

In the second year of Open School's existence, the school wanted a creative way to show what the students were really learning. A plan was hatched to formalize the learning achieved from classroom work, work outside the classroom, and life experiences. Throughout the years the system changed and improvements were made, like the addition of the science and technology **VALIDATIONS Continued on 7**



The task of completing validations often seems like a monster to students

Read all about it

He's mad!
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Drugs

A Constant Struggle

Mark Dyson and Brian Blakely
Staff Reporters

Many, if not all, high schools are facing the problem of drug use by their students. While Open School is an exception to many rules, drugs appear to be a problem here as they are at most schools.

Recently, the staff of The Purple Press handed out a survey that asked students a series of questions about drugs and drug use. Our results were not surprising, but impressive. The findings were divided by age, and they showed that the group that used the most drugs were the 17 and 18 year-olds. The most common drug used by students is cigarettes, according to the survey. Approximately 30% of all SLC students smoke cigarettes more than once a day, and at least another 45% have smoked at least once in their lives. The same ratio applies for the 15-18 year old age group, with a third or more smoking more than once a day and 40% have smoked at least once in their lives.

Alcohol is a slightly different story. Over half of the Open School SLC students have tried alcohol at least once, but only about 20% drink more than once a month. For the 15-18 year olds the percentage drops to about 10%.

Marijuana is significantly more rare, but still almost 30% of students have tried it at least once. In the 15-18 year old age group, 20% do it more than once a week.

In the 14 to 18 year age group, 20% have used hallucinogens, and about 4% use them more than once a month.

According to the survey, almost all drugs are easily accessible to minors. "Booze, dope, crack, [are all easily accessible], it's a free country!" said on a 15-year old on the survey. But more specifically, marijuana is the most accessible drug, followed closely by cigarettes and alcohol. This seems odd, and most students that were asked why marijuana was the most acces- **DRUGS Continued on 4**

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Warm Feelings Cold Climates

Terry Schanno
Staff Reporter

The week of February 8th was Snow Daze here at Open School, and thus an event-filled week.

It all started on Monday, with the coronation and crowning of new royalty. Lucy Stark was crowned queen, and Lee Moua was crowned king. Monday was Dress-up Day. The SLC winner was Brian Blakely. Tuesday was Pajama Day. The winner was Michelle Cook. Wednesday was Culture Day and Mee Xiong won. On Thursday Kathryn Alexander, who was dressed as Tim Leone-Getten, won the award from Students Dress as Staff day. Friday was Blast From the Past day, and Anna Karl and Anna Aslani won.

There was also a door decorating contest. Vicky's Advisory won in the SLC, and

Cast Lacks Control But Will Still See Production

Desmond Hicks and Krysteenah Garcia
Staff Reporters

"The Madwoman of Chaillot," this year's play, has suffered its share of bumps and bruises. Despite this, it is still steaming full speed ahead towards opening night.

The play will open on Thursday, March 18 at 7:00. Additional performances will be held on Friday at 7:00, followed by two performances on Saturday at 2:00 in the afternoon and at 7:00 in the evening.

Several members of the cast and crew have agreed that rehearsals have suffered at times from a lack of maturity.



Two of Open's thespians in action

This may be due to the fact that the play has a particularly young cast. Bridget said she is confident the play will turn out well even though she has been frazzled at times with the inconsistency of rehearsals.

Bridget, who has close to 30 years of directing experience, said that directing in her first year at Open has taken some adjustment. "I think Bridget is doing more than an excellent job," said cast member, Kathryn Alexander. ◇



Denise's door was named best in the ELC.

Staff were also given awards for the week. Sharon Haldeman got first place, and Bridget Martin got second place. ◇

Welcome to the Xiong-gle

Lee Moua
Staff Reporter

Tou Ger Xiong, a Hmong storyteller, comedian, and rapper, came to Open School for two days in late January. Xiong did two performances, one for the ELC, and the second one for the SLC. The ELC and SLC Hmong students also performed two traditional Hmong dances to welcome Xiong.

After being introduced, Xiong came out banging a homemade drum to catch the audience's attention right from the start. If that didn't catch their attention, then his acrobatics



did. He rolled on the mat, performed a head roll, then greeted the audience, saying nyob zoob, which means good morning in Hmong. He helped the audience wake up by insisting they answer in Hmong also.

One of his first stories was about the Vietnam War. He talked about his immigration to Thailand, when he was in refugee camp. He related his experience about the first time he saw an American missionary. His last story was a Hmong folk tale about dragons, a princess and a poor little Hmong boy who had a big heart. To close up his performance he did a rap.

The students seemed to really enjoy Xiong's performance. "I thought he was pretty cool . . . Instead of just standing there, he did more active things," said 7th grader Heather Cook.

"He was very creative in the expression of his stories," agreed 7th grader Jeremy Bensussan.

After his performance, he went to various classes to work with teachers and students.

On his second day, he worked with the ELC for half of the day. Then he had an Asian Group, where he talked to all the Hmong students about issues like: what it means to be Hmong, where the Hmong people come from, and the existence of Hmong pride.

Xiong, a graduate of Humboldt, started the first Asian Group there. After high school, he went to Carleton College and graduated with a degree in Political Science. He travels around the country as an entertainer and an important voice to the Hmong Community. He has long-range plans to eventually go to Hollywood and become an actor. ◇



Senior Profile

Pat Zemke



How many years have you been at Open School?

14 years.

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

A purple dancing monkey.

What do you plan on doing after high school?

Travel/college, college in Georgia.

Where do you picture yourself in 30 years?

In the middle of my third career, being very, very rich.

What will you miss most about school?

All the people. I've known all the people since I was (holds hands below waist) that big!



Interim Still Going Strong

Mina Blyly-Strauss
Staff Writer

You may remember people coming into your advisory and asking for ideas for this year's interim. You may remember last year's interim. Or you may not have any idea what the last two sentences were about. That's okay, because interim is what this article is about.

Many, many years ago, the Open School community had a dream . . . spend a few weeks learning about a subject that interests students. Interim was the result of this dream, a dream brought into reality by staff and students who worked together and made it work. This meant that students were willing and able to go through the many steps of planning and preparation from interim. Then, after all the base work was done, they went out and did it, what ever it happened to be.

A couple of years ago it is believed that the amount of interest, or the amount of time students had available, dropped, caused the teachers to exert too much energy to make interim happen. Having teachers do all of the planning both wore out the teachers and defied the original idea of interim, an activity planned and supported by students. It also made many teachers feel interim wasn't important to students anymore, so that there really was no point in spending so much time organizing something students wouldn't take seriously. This also caused the level of co-

operation from both teachers and students to drop. This lack of cooperation nearly meant the end of interim, as it was dropped from Open's activities for a year.

Last year interim was brought back to Open. There were two interims, one in the winter and one in the spring. On each of these two occasions, interim lasted two days. There were several different activities that students participated in, including trips to

“Having the teachers do all the planning . . . defied the original idea of interim.”

art museums, arts and crafts, trips to downtown St. Paul and the Mall of America, OM stuff, play rehearsals, fund-raising for a trip to Washington DC, school service, community service/rock-climbing and even a trip to Duluth. Many students had fun doing these things, but the teachers ended up doing most of the planning and preparation.

This year some students in Student Government have been working hard doing preliminary work on interim. Things are coming together pretty well so far; activities have been selected from all the ideas that were received and teachers have been

asked to supervise certain classes. Ruth Pechmann, Open's principal, says that she hasn't heard much about interim, but she knows that people are planning it and that many great ideas have been generated. Some of these great ideas include, but are not limited to: a trip up north, sport activities, street theater, a trip to New Orleans, live action role-playing games, a Simpsons marathon, learning about teen health issues, learning about cats and dogs, a computer game-showdown, Mall of America and Valley Fair. While some of these trips may seem impossible to accomplish this year, the interim committee decided that would be okay because they would make good two-year projects. All of the proposed ideas are very broad and it will be up to Open School's student body to make of them what they wish.

This year's interim will be for three days in the middle of May and it's up to all the SLC students to make it work. Many teachers don't want to do all of the preparation and planning for interim; they want students to gather information and plans for themselves. Keep your eyes, ears and minds open and this year's interim will be great. Or, as Lenni said, “I'm looking forward to an exciting, creative, fun interim this year, reminiscent of the beginning of interim in the early 80's.” ♦

Jennifer, Jenny, Jen; Will it Ever End?

Mina Blyly-Strauss
Staff Writer

There seems to be quite an abundance of Jennifers working at Open School these days. There is Jennifer Schultz, Jennifer Diederich, Elizabeth's student teacher Jennifer, and now there is Jennifer Johnson, too. Where did they all come from and where do they belong?

Jennifer Schultz and Jennifer Diederich have been here all year, and spend much of their time in the computer lab and family room, respectively. Elizabeth's student teacher spends most, if not all, of her time in the art room. Jennifer Johnson, who returned to Open on January 4th, spends the majority of her time in the office, the halls, in meetings, observing classes and almost every other place within Open School.

Since Ev retired, during winter break, Jennifer Johnson has taken over as Open's Program Coordinator. Jennifer has been an SLC teacher for several years and many people attribute her smooth arrival, in the middle of second trimester, to those many years of experience here. When speaking about the practicality and timeliness of Jennifer's return in the middle of the year,

Ruth Pechmann, Open's principal, summed up many Open Schooler's feelings: "Sure, we'd want her back anytime, right?"

Jennifer is glad to be back at Open. She says her biggest fears about coming back was "Being able to juggle being a mom and working," but she really looked forward to

"Jennifer is excited to be back and is taking that enthusiasm into her new responsibilities as Program Coordinator"

seeing the students and staff again. On her first morning back on the job, Jennifer took attendance in Elizabeth's advisory (seeing several former students and advisees.)

Jennifer said that after spending quite a bit of time with Ev, she felt well prepared to

enter into her new position, but she is always learning more. Jennifer is excited to be back and is taking that enthusiasm into her new responsibilities as Program Coordinator. She likes being able to go into ELC classes and see what they're doing. She has been working on class schedules and discipline issues as well as working with the NCA (North Central Association). She has also been updating older materials used to market Open School to parents of prospective students.

Looking into the future with Jennifer Johnson as Program Coordinator, Ruth sees Open "with ELC classes more adapted to fit the new Grad. Standards." She also sees many more students wanting to get into Open.

Many people miss Ev, and many people are glad to see Jennifer again. With Ev gone, things will most surely change, but only time can tell how much. With so many people's faith in Jennifer, there are few doubts that things will change for the good of all Open School students. ♦

DRUGS From 1

sible drug according to the SLC population didn't really know. But, explained one SLC student, "people don't deal cigarettes or alcohol." This student explained that getting drugs all depends on the right connections, and not many people have that kind of access to alcohol or cigarettes if they are underage.

About 25% of the students surveyed said that they use drugs because they are fun, 20% said they use drugs because friends do it, about 20% use them for escape, 5% use them because they are easily accessible, and 7% use them because they relieve stress.

SLC students think that there is a greater use of drugs among kids than there actually is. 1/5 of the students think that 75% of Open School secondary students use drugs, about 1/3 think that 10-25% use drugs, about 1/4 think that 50% use

drugs, and 1/16 think that 10% use drugs. However, most of them were wrong. Only 102 out of 168 students (roughly 60%) surveyed have ever used any drug.

Also, according to the Open School population, programs like DARE have an impact of about -3 on a scale of 1 to 10.

"It just makes you want to try it more, to see what all the hype is."

"It just makes you want it more, to see what all the hype is," says one SLC student on their survey. Rather, most SLC students think

that a variety of reasons affect students' drugs use, ranging from parental control to one of the most popular beliefs, which is that kids are discouraged from doing drugs mainly from knowing people who have done drugs and seeing the results. As another Open student wrote on their survey regarding programs like DARE, "kids don't listen to you unless you've been through [heavy drug use and rehab]. If you have never been through it, you can't preach about it."

A lot of SLC kids think that drugs have a bad effect on people who take them. The main effects, according to the survey, are bad grades in school and crime rates, but also violence in schools, stress, and a few kids thought that drug use increased teen pregnancy. Also, students think it's rather easy to get addicted to drugs, but that it always depends on the drug and the kid. But one student said addiction

is merely a state of mind: "people only think they're addicted to the drugs."

But, according to Gary Vettleson, school counselor, heavy drug use can have effects on a student's grades and social standing. "If you really get into it, the only people you can hang with are those who get loaded," says Vettleson. "Things that usually seem important become less important. [Heavy drugs use] is a switch of values." Also, in the words of Ellen Murphey, the Safe and Drug Free Schools Specialist here at Open School, "Drugs can be addictive, and therefore destructive. Drug use decreases motivation and pre-occupies kids." Most staff agree that drug use is a negative effect on students in general. Says Lenni Augustine, "I think that there is no place for drug use among kids [in high school], because there are so many other things you need to be doing." ♦

Opinions 'n' Stuff

Some Wounds Don't Heal

Two years ago, my best friend hid the terror of her controlling boyfriend from those who loved her. She made excuses for every scratch and bruise. She came to school several times with black eyes and a swollen face. Then we knew for sure what she was hiding. "I ran into the wall", "I was getting ready in the dark and kneed myself in the eye." These were some of the excuses that we heard.

I believe the reason that no one tried to stop it immediately is because it was something that she had to decide on her own. We did not want to be the reason for him beating her. Nor did we want her to hate us for betraying her. She constantly lied to him, friends, family and mostly herself, in order to escape pain.

We must take seriously the awful things that sometimes go on in the name of submission. Evidently my friend is not alone. The magnitude of the day-to-day abuse is greater than I ever realized. Domestic violence is the leading cause of injury to women between the ages 15-44.

According to The Dating Violence Intervention Project, 33% of women 15-19 who are murdered in this country are killed by their boyfriends. Domestic abuse has become a huge problem among teenagers in America. It affects many people, the victims, parents of both parties, friends and children. Did you know that 63% of young men between the ages 11-20 are serving time for homicide for killing their mother's abusers? This problem affects everyone involved. I know that this problem also affects men, but nearly ten times as many women are abused as men. This is why I speak as if it is a problem that primarily affects women.

Domestic violence can be physical, emotional, economical and/or mental. It seems domestic abuse, like any form of abuse, is a

ABUSE Continued on 8



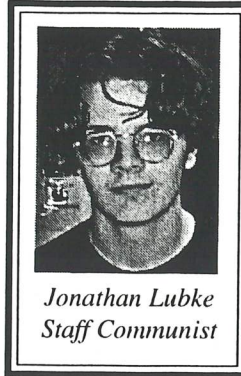
Marlene Otterness
Staff Columnist

Generic Headline #64

I am, and have been since November of 1992, a Baptist. Now, I can imagine many of the images this brings to mind, namely Bible-pushing, gay-bashing, racial slurring, Southerners. Now I, on the other hand, am not.

I happen to be relatively Bible-illiterate, and can't quote it worth squat. I will be the first to stand and defend civil rights, and though I can pull off the accent, I am not from the South. I, and the other members of University Baptist Church (UBC), are liberal Baptists. (Oxymoron or not, it's true.)

Yes we, and other members of the American Baptist Convention (ABC) have only one thing in common: dunking people. You



Jonathan Lubke
Staff Communist

see, the only thing the Baptist label is good for is to justify the tank in the front of the sanctuary. ABC churches cover the whole theological gambit. We've got your liberals, your conservatives, your moderates, your conservative moderates, your moderately conservative liberals, etc.

UBC, I'm proud to say, is on the so-liberal-it-hurts end of the spectrum. With a largely GLBT congregation, an openly lesbian pastor, and more activists than you can shake a redwood at, we have little in common with Jerry Falwell.

In addition, our Welcoming and Affirming motto leads us to accept a lot of "recovering Christians." (Most of them seem to be "recovering Methodists," I don't know why.) They're people wanting a spiritual side without being told to repent by some oily kid from Georgia who's more interested in ratings than theology. They come having been traumatized by or tossed out of, the

CHRISTIAN Continued on 6

When Sisters Attack; Part the 3rd

Sometimes I am so mad I want to shatter glass, rip down wallpaper, break dressers, step on those bubbly package thingies, just do something, ANYTHING, to get my aggression out. It is not often that I get angry to the point of breaking things and/or screaming at anything or anyone that comes my way, but it does happen. And there is only one thing in the entire world that consistently makes me this angry. It is something that I live with on a daily basis, something that has the power to annoy me and at the same time bond with me, something that shares a much-too-small room with me. Yes, this one and only thing is my sister.

My relationship with my sister is ever-fluctuating. In fact, it changes so constantly, it's predictable. At school, we either avoid each



Maura Shramko
Staff Columnist

other or go out of our way to be conversational, mockingly. In her first year in the SLC, I have somehow managed to maintain a schedule completely different from hers.

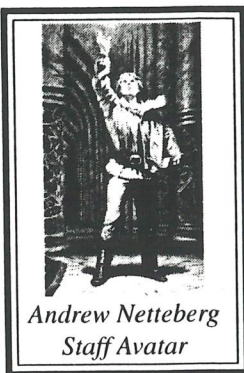
At home, however, things are completely different. At home there are two basic ways we treat each other. There are plenty of times when we are really close. We understand each other better than anyone else. Like this one time I had to clean up all the doggy poopoo from the yard, and my sister had to help me. We went out into the yard, and my sister went right to it, shoveling snow over the poopoo so that no one could see whether or not we had cleaned it. After an adequate amount of time had passed, we went in. I was silent, not revealing whether or not we had done our duty. My sister, however, was oh-so-willing to cover our tracks. Together we acted as if nothing was wrong and together we achieved our ultimate goal. Slack-ing off chores with my sister is one of the most wonderful experiences. When we are like this, we agree on many things, siding

SIBLINGS Continued on 6

We Didn't Start the Fire

But Our Heads Are Turnin' From the Blame

Recently I saw an episode of the Simpsons that I believe struck a little close to home. It was about how we, as teens, are blamed for everything. I feel that this is true. In the episode, Homer and his drinking pals get blasted, then go out and trash the school where Bart and Lisa attend. Since there is little proof as to who committed the crime, the officials blame the destruction on kids. Homer's car was totaled and that too was blamed on the kids (it was actually destroyed when Homer drove it through the school hallways). This situation, although a bit far-fetched still rings true. Adults screw up in some way, in my opinion, by failing to raise their children properly, and then blame it on the kids.



Andrew Netteberg
Staff Avatar

America Night Manager, is a survivalist and goes nowhere without his trusty AR33 assault rifle and drills poor Bobby with half a clip. The cops then say that this sort of thing is usually gang or drug related and the majority of these crimes are the fault of the teens.

Well, that reassures the voting, taxpaying, upper-middle class people who don't have to work three jobs, all overtime to feed their kids. Unfortunately it hurts the lower-middle to lower-lower classes who live with these "dangerous teens." Right about now most of you have thought or will think; "I smell a sermon." Well, you're right. Blaming crimes on the teens is an easy out, one that makes the taxpayers feel better about their country, and coincidentally, keeps votes and cash rolling in (cue "The Money Keeps Rolling In" from Evita). But are the teens to blame? Not completely. Are the parents to blame? Sort of. The truth is it's a little of both.

If the parents stopped letting TV raise their kids and started spending more time with them, then maybe the kids would feel comfortable asking their parents for help. Maybe if the teens took the initiative and asked their parents for help we could solve this issue. Who knows what the real answer is? Right now we need to compromise. Look, like the commercial says "we're listening." You hear that? We hear you. We do sometimes pay attention. And adults are also listening to us. School counselors, pastors/priests, parents, teachers, all of them. They're listening and waiting. They aren't taking the initiative because they're scared by all the stories of the big, nasty, Teen. But they're listening to us. So talk. ♦

SIBLINGS From 5

against my parents and/or brother, and being all around nice to one another. We unite through a common goal, a common enemy. Times like that are when living with her is pleasant.

The other way of being for my sister and I is a state of constant bickering. We fight over every little thing, refusing to give in. We share a room and hence have quite a range of things to bicker about: That we can't use each other's stuff, that we can't have any of our stuff touching the other person's stuff, that we can't have any of our stuff on the other person's side of the room.

And then there are those times when she'll do something that is not infuriating to

"Besides, I'd get sick of her if we were bestest friends."

the point of destructiveness, but annoying nonetheless. Those times I either ignore her or do the same back. This is probably the most common mold of our relationship.

To be fair, I am sure there are plenty of things I do that my sister thinks are absolutely idiotic, and by writing this I am not saying I am right and she is wrong, but that our relationship as sisters is ridiculous but somehow just as it should be. We may not act like sisters are supposed to (but then what are sisters supposed to act like?) but we do have an annoying and constantly entertaining friendship. Maybe that's what comes from living so closely with somebody for all your life. I have to say, however nice it may sound, I don't really want a Little Women-type relationship with my sister where we are the best of friends and tell each other everything. Our relationship now might be considered inferior to something like that, but I think I'd rather just keep our relationship just as it is. Besides, I'd get sick of her if we were bestest friends. ♦

CHRISTIAN Continued From 5

abusive church they were brought up in. What do they find with us, a friendly community atmosphere without all the gossip and backstabbing mixed in with potlucks and sermons.

Why are we so friendly? Well, aside from being Minnesotan, we are as we say, Welcoming and Affirming; a motto we take to the extreme. The primary method of our welcoming is through inclusive language. That means we change all the words of everything.

For example, God is not male. Period. I

mean, think about it, why give an almighty being gender, when that being doesn't sexually reproduce. That's just wrong. Wrong and senseless. Besides, since no one has ever seen God, we couldn't be certain anyway. But if we were to discern whether God was male or female through gender-based characteristics, God would be female. If you feel like debating, don't quote verses like a parrot, do the research.

Well, I'm done with that tangent, so where was I? Oh, yes. Inclusive language. It serves as a great filter against Bible-

belters, seeing as they leave in disgust after the first verse of hymns, to which we've inclusified (I know that's not a word, but I'm keeping it anyway.) all the lyrics. In truth, the only downside is tripping up every year around Christmas time when we sing carols.

So, in conclusion, you don't have to hide in an atheist shell your whole life. There are religious options that don't involve the 700 Club or moving to Waco. Come join the American Baptists. Hey, it was good enough for Martin Luther King. ♦

DRESSCODE From 1

belt. Other students were concerned about the way the episode was handled. "I think that Open shouldn't have a dress code all of a sudden. I also think that the student-teacher relationship shouldn't be 'do it my way or leave'," said 9th grader Lisa Grotenhuis.

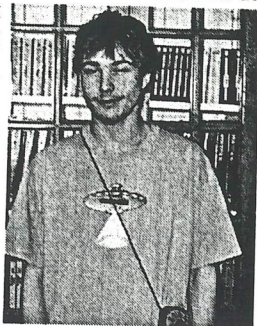
There was some disagreement over whether or not the belt was a violation of the school's weapon policy. Some argued that the bullet shells were empty and therefore harmless, but Ruth brought up that fact that a gun with no bullets would not be allowed in school, and neither should the ammunition belt.

"It was disruptive and it sent a negative message," said Ruth.

Eileen Keetley, gym teacher, agrees: "Guns in themselves are violent, because of the way society uses them. Machine guns aren't used for hunting, but usually in times of war."

The handcuffs represented a more difficult gray area. The student handbook for Open School says, "A student may exercise individual choice in his/her manner of dress unless it interferes with his/her health and safety or the educational environment. Common sense and good taste will be used as guidelines by the school."

"It was only the circumstances that Tom White got in trouble for," said Sarah Bozeman, 11th grader. Ruth admits that had the



Tom White was asked not to wear handcuffs.

handcuffs not been coupled with the ammunition belt, they probably would have gone unnoticed.

That same day, Andrew Chervenak was walking around school with a red bra and a pair of red underpants over his clothes. Ruth asked Elizabeth Lehman, art teacher, to ask him to remove those garments. Andrew refused. Again, Ruth says that this was not an official dismissal.

"That's really not very good taste," said Ruth, "It's almost harassing to a female, making fun of her body and what she has to wear." As Eileen bluntly puts it, "Bras were meant to be worn as underclothes."

In response to these events, a group of Open School students arranged for a meeting to take place Monday, February 22. The meeting was a place for students to voice opinions about the incident and the issues it raises. At the meeting, some students expressed dislike or even disgust for the direction the school is taking. One opinion expressed is that Open is turning more and more into a traditional school. "We didn't go to Open School because we wanted to go to Central," said senior Dania Tuscano at the meeting.

Junior Notah Gyorgak, on the other hand, pointed out that Open School still has more freedom than most schools, and students take that for granted. "The District is very strict about a lot of things," he said, "You never see Ruth asking people to take off their hats." ◇

VALIDATIONS From 1

validation and the improvement of the mathematics validation.

A packet of all the validations is made available to students beginning their ninth grade year. But it appears that often many students do not take the validations seriously until it is nearly too late. Validation work is "over and above the usual class work. It is not 'scripted' into the regular day," said Bridget Martin, drama teacher. But once students get started, and start getting their validations "down on paper, it is not so daunting. A lot of the experiences have been done, it is just a matter of getting them down on paper."

Seniors and many others do not find the time to get their validations done ("It's easy to say: 'Oh, I can do that tomorrow,'" says Pat Zemke). There is plenty of help available -- for example, help was offered during interim, a project skills class has been offered in the past, and during summer school. In interviews with six students, each student said they had time to do their validations, they just don't get at them. They don't use their time correctly. "Validations can be time consuming if you want to do them right," according to Julie Doble, science teacher. Perhaps students may fear doing the validations wrong, so they procrastinate so they won't get them wrong. Perhaps the students need to be nagged by the teachers -- "encouragement, shame, and the whip," according to Julie. In other words,

"put pressure on the students; give them deadlines," says Bridget. However, it would not be fair for Lenni or Gary to be the "Validation Police."

One suggestion offered would be for seniors who are behind on their validations to talk to underclassmen about how important it is to do their validations.

According to the students interviewed, it may be that the hardest part is finding a validator, and perhaps writing up the requests. Once the request has been given to the validator, it is in their hands. The student must follow up the request to be sure the validation gets done in a timely manner.

But a number of questions can be asked: Are students being taught properly the importance of validations? Are students taught how to approach and follow up with validators in order to get the validations submitted on time?

Being given a book of requirements is not the same as having the importance of those requirements (validations) stressed. Gwendolyn Richards, student, claimed that the validation book was not all that helpful for writing the requests and the validations. She said, "It would have helped to understand the validations better when I was younger. If I had known more, I would have started sooner."

Are students taught properly the correct way to format validations, ask mentors for evaluations, and submit validations to their

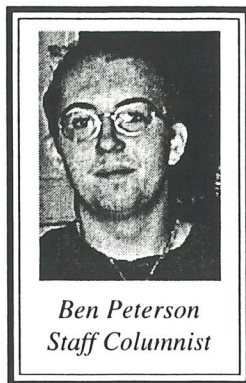
folders/graduation committee? Thematic Journeys class is supposed to help students prepare for high school validations. One student suggested that more emphasis and class time should be offered on the process of writing validations in the proper order and time. In addition, each class taken where it could be a validation should have the teacher explain what validation this class would cover, and how to format the validation for submission.

Likewise, the validators may need increased information on how to write a validation. Make validations a high priority among advisors, with trimester checks of the validation process of students by advisors, not just year-end assessments. For some newer teachers, however, developing Open School lesson plans are of primary importance, with validation help falling into a distant second. The teachers must learn their way around Open School, as well as the validation system. Perhaps some full advisory days could be used as validation workdays, again stressing the importance of the learning and validation process for both students and new teachers.

There needs to be more communication between advisors and advisees, and with validators. It appears that we may need to develop safety nets to keep students from falling behind, and better ways to get validations done. But all of this is useless unless the student makes the commitment, and this is the ultimate solution. ◇

Standards Need A Standard

The new age in graduating is here. Sort of. The new set of Minnesota Graduation Standards have come bounding through the door, to run headlong into a quagmire of political and bureaucratic nightmares.



*Ben Peterson
Staff Columnist*

rent Profile of Learning packets look nothing like the original ones. She also predicted they would change completely many more times before they were finished, "I see the Profiles of Learning changing dramatically over the next six months."

In fact, according to a poll taken by Education Minnesota, a teacher's union, there is an overwhelming opinion amongst teachers that although they want the standards, and think they are needed, they also don't want the Profiles of Learning. Sandy Peterson, co-president of Education Minnesota, said, "Everybody wants to know our students are succeeding."

In addition to the ever-evolving standards, there is also the problem that the students have been left virtually clueless. A good number of teachers feel that a very small number -- about 5% -- actually know, or at least have some concept as to what's going on. The rest have no clue. This is not to say they don't understand what it is, or they aren't smart enough to comprehend, it's just that they haven't been informed yet.

Now this is where I have a question. If these standards are what the 9th grade students are supposed to be working on to graduate, why hasn't anyone given them some starting ground to begin their work?

It's now the end of February, and they still haven't a clue what they're supposed to be doing. Doesn't this give them a slight disadvantage towards graduating, seeing as they'll be shorted almost a whole year's worth of work?

I'm not saying that the staff hasn't been working hard. I believe they've done an excellent job streamlining Open's philosophy to meet the new standards. I'm not sure I agree they should have, but that's a different column.

There is, I should point out, actually some advantages to proceeding with the slow pace Open has taken. By not completing a quick set of criteria, they've been able to take the bombardment of changes passed down by Minnesota. Instead of having to deal with all these changes as a proverbial monkey-wrench in a set system, they've been able to incorporate them into the still developing program they're working on. Some other schools have been left spinning, whereas Open still has room to accommodate. Julie agreed, "I think Open School is doing it the right way."

Once these standards get the kinks worked out, it should be a good, solid, complete system. But, they shouldn't have been made official until after they were done. ♦

ABUSE From 5

vicious cycle. Most of this abuse is found in dating couples. One in four dating couples experience abuse. A woman is beaten every 15 seconds. Battering is not only a momentary loss of temper, but a recurring factor of abuse. Battering is the establishment of fear and control in a relationship through violence and a series of behaviors which include intimidation, threats, psychological abuse, isolation, etc. to coerce or control another person. Violence may not occur often, but it is a hidden recurring factor.

Why did she stay? You're probably asking yourself this question. Why does anyone stay? I believe mostly out of fear and because they are victims. We have become a nation of victims looking outside ourselves for the power we hold within. When victims hide things from loved ones, it is most often because of fear. Another reason they hide the abuse from others is the fear of them telling the abuser, causing more pain for the victim.

At least this is how it was for my friend. She did not want to leave or deal with the stress of people knowing what she put up with. Teens believe that abusive actions are reinforcing their love. In my opinion love heals and not hurts. Ralph Waldo Trine, who is a new thought philosopher said, "Love is everything. It is the key to life and its influences are those that move the world." It is difficult enough for teens to find a place in the world, and even harder for them to believe that they belong with people who destroy them in the name of love. Some of these women are convinced that their actions cause the violence, and that these actions are used to discipline them.

This relationship continued for some time and we constantly showed our support and concern. I believe that is all we could have done shown her that we would always be there if she needed our help. We could not force her to leave. Once she decided to leave, she left. This was probably one of the hardest things she's ever had to do. "One need remain in hell no longer than he himself chooses to; and the moment he chooses to remain no longer, not all the powers in the universe can prevent his leaving it," said Ralph Waldo Trine.

However, leaving an abusive boyfriend does not always end the problem. After one has left, the fear grows even stronger. 73% of women injured in domestic violence cases were injured after separation. Another common problem is that women who are abused believe that abuse is what they deserve. It is like taking a fish out of water. A person when in this state must be retrained how to live.

My personal experience with this dilemma has led me to believe that it is a common problem among teenagers, a lot more common than people think. Teens are very vulnerable whether they like to admit it or not. We should be protected, not limited or abused. I believe strongly in the importance of counseling and support of victims and have made a life long commitment to being of help. If you have any questions regarding this article or just would like to talk, feel free to contact Allison Dagen or Myself. Also feel free to call The National Domestic Violence Hot line: 1-800-799-SAFE or TDD for the hearing impaired: 1-800-787-3224, for emergencies call your local police at 911. ♦

I'm Sorry, But No . . .

I've noticed many of you complaining about my articles on how certain kinds of music really suck. What can I say? The truth hurts. I wouldn't write about it if I didn't feel strongly about it and if I didn't think it was truthful and meaningful. And I know with each one of these articles that the rate of death threats increase, but that is just the response that I expected.

Did you people think I would just be all afraid and naive to what sort of response I would get? I knew from the beginning that the people to whom my articles were being directed can't read too well and that their eyes only see the phrase "rap sucks" and would not bother to read the rest of my explanation.

The way I look at it, people should look at music as an art and not as a way to complain about their dumb addictions and get lots of money by doing it. The only reason

"The way I look at it, people should look at music as an art and not as a way to complain about their dumb addictions and get lots of money by doing it."

these "artists" rap is to get money, because they are the real sell-outs. It's funny when I see these guys rap, because they all look so angry, and what do they have to be so mad about? Oh, I make millions of dollars, I hate my life. Just shut-up already! These rappers should be grateful that there are dumb suburban white kids that think they can relate to life in the Ghetto, because without them half of these guys wouldn't have jobs.

Some counter that it's really difficult to rap. Come on, isn't it mainly talking really fast about stupid little problems? Sure, put me in a studio and give me a few months.



Salvador Rosas
Angry Young Man

I'm sure I could figure out some stupid lyrics and put some phat beats in there too. The sad thing is that it would probably sell. No wait, I would have to buy some Tommy Gear, some Nike stuff, and a lot of gold chains. But, damn, how am I going to get all the money to do this? I might have to get a job or I could take the easy way out and rob people and sell drugs like most rappers tend to do.

In a somewhat related event, it was brought to my attention that The Beastie Boys have been declared Rolling Stone's "artist(s) of the year" by a supposed fan. Now, when I found this out, I was a little confused until I realized that the people who voted for them are 14 year-old white kids that do not know jack about music and only jump on these dumb music scenes to look cool and because they like that "Intergalactic" voice. Yes, The Beastie Boys have been around since the 80's, and yes they are musicians, but isn't that kind of sad that they have not evolved as a band since then? I can't find anything appealing about the Beastie Boys' music, mainly because it all sounds the same, but also there's just something about their synchronized annoying voices that makes me want to rip off one of my ears and throw it at them.

The teenie boppers of America must be stopped. They are the ones that are responsible for these horrible music trends that come and go. Trends like the Spice Girls. Don't get me wrong, the Spice Girls had a decent band, but where are they now? They've pretty much faded out from the mainstream. Also whatever happened to Hanson? They aren't Mmm-bopping that much lately, are they? I wouldn't get so mad if people wouldn't use music for their image. If I ask you why you like or dislike a certain band, you should say something about the music like how talented the drummer is or the guitarist or whatever and then you honestly tell me if it doesn't suck. Usually the responses have very little to do with the music. I swear I've heard someone request a Metallica video on MTV, and this is why they wanted to see it: "because there are cars in it, and I like cars." If any of you give me a response like that, I can't be held responsible for my actions. ♦

Top Ten Uses For Unwanted Valentine's Day Gifts

- 1: Smelt the chocolate into a big sweltering mass and use it as a canopy to block harmful U-V rays.
- 2: Eat all the roses and dry out the candy to use as potpourri.
- 3: Give all candy to *The Purple Press*.
- 4: Elvis
- 5: Wait until the chocolate hardens, and play croquet.
- 6: Pretend you bought those flowers fresh yesterday and use them to bribe your way through 2nd trimester evaluations.
- 7: Attach feathers to the roses, and use them for archery (you can finally get Cupid back).
- 8: Those little candy hearts make great slingshot ammunition.
- 9: Carve the candy hearts into pumpkins and use them for Halloween.
- 10: Put magnets on the back of the candy hearts and make sentences on your fridge.

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intentionally left
blank to appease the
top ten list's space
needs.**



The Conspiracy Pages

The views expressed on these pages do not necessarily represent the views of *The Purple Press*, or its staff.



Don't Cry For Him: Valentino

Matt Pajunen

Schizo in Training

February 14 hit the world by storm. A barrage of feelings and billions of dollars spent, all on one simple concept of love.

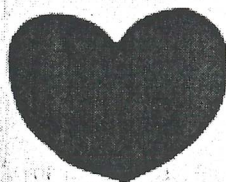
This day is Valentine's Day. A day inspired by Saint Valentine, or so everyone thinks. It was actually created by Romans hundreds of years before 496 AD, which is when Pope Gelasius dedicated it to Saint Valentine. It was called Lupercalia back then, and young boys would run through the streets screaming and lashing people with strips of leather, the lashes supposedly assuring fertility. Also during Lupercalia, the names of Roman girls were written on some paper, placed in jars and drawn by young men. The female name which was drawn by a boy would be the sweetheart of that boy for a year.

Where does Valentine come in? Well, I'll just get to the point. When Emperor Claudius reigned over Rome, he decreed that soldiers were not to marry or engage and thus were unable to participate in Lupercalia. Valentine didn't like him doing this, so Claudius got wind of that and arrested Valentine. On February 14, the eve of the Lupercalia, Valentine was beheaded. When Rome converted to Christianity, members of the church moved the holiday to February 14 and dedicated it to that dead priest, now Saint, Valentine.

Today, we do not lash people, draw names from jars, or run screaming through the streets (well, not as often). We need to do

that sort of stuff more. We need to get back to the root of the holiday. We must celebrate Lupercalia once again, lashings and all. Valentine's Day is really more of a responsibility than a holiday now, because of advertisements, forcing it on children, and Hallmarkian brainwashing. Hallmark is behind every major holiday and we are all puppets to its great intents and purposes. We are but slaves to that vile corporation and slaves we shall remain unless we stand up for the rights of humanity and renounce Hallmark, that outpost of evil and darkness in our modern world!

The only way to renounce this evil is to say "No" to store-bought cards, "No" to expensive candies and "No" to forcing this upon the young ones of this nation! It is also recommended to do odd things on Valentine's Day to confuse and cause chaos in the ranks of Hallmark. Such things as: Throwing bovine hearts at any person who wishes you a happy Valentine's Day, fish beatings, melting romantic records, compact discs, and tapes and most of all, by showing your significant other love through romance, not gifts. Might be good to sacrifice some Hallmark cards to the Gods of Chaos too (although that would be supporting Hallmark). Will the Gods of Chaos be able save us though? If not, we the human race, must forcefully eject Hallmark from our society. It may be rife with bloodshed and pain, but some things must be done. ♦



Sittin' With the Stars

Brigette McKern

Staff Reporter

Recently, *The Purple Press* had the honor of interviewing one of today's hottest teen groups backstage after one of their concerts. The hot new sensation, Sneakers. For those of you who don't know, Sneakers have been climbing the charts with their hit song, "We Wrote This Song" from their debut album, **We're Dreamy**. Their success can be credited to their enormous talent, but it also might have to do with their good looks. The Sneakers are: Danny Tano (20), Booker Fresner (18), Lucas Keen (21) and Chris Pasner (20). Here's the interview.

P.P.: Where did the name Sneakers come from?

Danny: Well, we really wanted a name that described all of us.

P.P.: So, you're sneaky?

Booker: No, we all wear sneakers.

Danny: We seriously considered socks because we all wear those. Except for the days that we wear sandals, then we don't

wear socks so it didn't work.

P.P.: Of course, then you weren't wearing sneakers either.

Booker: Well no...but...um...

P.P.: How did all of you meet?

Lucas: Well, Booker and I were in eighth grade and wanted to form a band. One day we were walking home from school when three boys threatened to beat us up if we didn't give them our jackets. After we gave them our jackets and they beat us up, we asked them to join the band.

P.P.: How did you guys finally become friends when you had been enemies for so long?

Danny: That's where the music came in. We took those feelings and made songs out of them.

P.P.: Like the song, "I Want To Beat You Up?"

Danny: Yeah. Chris wrote that one.

P.P.: At the beginning, there were five of you, what happened to the fifth member?

Chris: Phil Hubber. He quit shortly

after the band formed, he had to dedicate all of his time to the team.

P.P.: Football?

Chris: No, debate.

P.P.: You guys come from Boible, Wyoming. Where exactly is that?

Booker: Well, if you stood exactly on the border of Wyoming-

Lucas: The West border.

Booker: The West border of Wyoming and-

Lucas: Exactly in the center.

Booker: Yes. The center of the West border and walked in a perfectly straight line for 24.3 miles, you'd run into Boible.

P.P.: Who discovered you?

Chris: Leonard Freed-

Lucas: Sir Leonard Freed.

Chris: We were singing at the Boible Yogurt Fair. He offered us a record deal that day.

P.P.: You refer to yourselves as a band,

STARS continued on 11

but we only hear you sing. Do any of you play instruments?

Booker: I spent a whole summer at music camp when I was thirteen.

P.P.: What instrument did you play?

Booker: The triangle. A very difficult instrument. They let me play on our album. The very last note on the song. "Hey, Baby." That was me on the triangle.

Lucas: I don't play any instruments. I didn't have time to take lessons, I spent all my time on my trampoline. I wanted to join the circus.

Chris: I played the triangle also. I was at the same music camp as Booker. Of course during that time I hated him, so I beat him up and took his triangle. (Everyone laughed except Booker).

Danny: Do you count hitting ice cream buckets with spoons an instrument?

P.P.: Where do you see yourselves in ten years?

Danny: I'd really like to have my own cologne.

Chris: Still recording albums.

Lucas: Ditto.

Booker: Married. (Everyone laughed except Booker).

P.P.: Speaking of which, do any of you have girlfriends?

Lucas: None of us do, it's against our contract. (A few minutes of silence).

P.P.: I'm sure you influence many young wannabe musicians. Who are your idols?

Booker: James Dean.

Lucas: Frank Sinatra.

Chris: The king, Elvis.

Danny: Henry Winkler, definitely the Fonz.

So there you have it, the interview of a lifetime. It makes you realize that there's more to famous people than what you see, much . . . much, much more. ♦

Mall, or Matriarch?

Emily Cusick

Staff Conspirator

You know at the mall how you see a group of adolescents walking around together not really doing anything? Not shopping, just "hangin'?" Well here's what's really going on. It's kind of like guys and the garage. Do they go there to work? Or is it a secret place where they contact their Mother Ship?

Are malls really just a place for teens to get together and contact a home planet? I've done some studies and now we have reason to believe that it is. The studies were conducted because it appears that teens rarely buy anything at the malls. This made us suspicious.

I've been watching some graphs on how many people come and go from Area 51 and I've noticed that the majority of people going and coming are teens. I've done some more research with a team well equipped to look, at like teens. For instance, they have been trained to say successive amounts of the work :like." My team has come up with what that Area 51 really is . . . A MALL! A mall where all teens can go and call up their home planet. Or is Area 51 where their home planet really is? There isn't much evidence on that theory yet. We are still working on all the stats.

Question of the Month

Who writes this stuff?

One thing my team and I can't figure out is: Are the teens in control of themselves, or are they being controlled by the other aliens in space? We thought that they might not be in control of themselves because of the excessive desire to look like each other. I think they call it fashion. Why would the aliens want to be on Earth? We think it's to make peace with us. They are waiting for perfect time to kill everyone and take the planet for themselves. Why would they take the form of teens? We're not sure why. We think it's because we say the kids are our future, but little kids are just too young to do some things. These are all things we are working on. We have been working almost 'round the clock to understand and make peace with the teens. We've tried making them stay home when they ask to go to the mall. We've tried letting them run free. Whatever we try, they continue to rebel. Are these the real teens showing through, or are these the aliens? This one still puzzles the smartest of scientists.

We'll try to get to the bottom of this, but if you have any information, please contact me. Through this whole story I have implied that teens are aliens, and they have a home planet. You might think that this is all just weird, but from what we know this is all a true story. ♦

This Ain't Yo' Typical Office Party

Dan Skelley

Staff Conspirator

I'm sure you have heard about the new TV show Dilbert. Dilbert has the social skills of a mouse pad and he'd rather surf the Internet than Waikiki. Dressing for success means wearing a tie that turns up at the end a white short-sleeved shirt along with extra-white socks. In spite of all this he's a likable guy who keeps trying.

Dilbert, Dogbert, and his friends are there to entertain you. But there is something else you should know. A dark cloud hangs over this show. There is something sinister going on.

Genetically, Dogbert is a dog. A talking dog, but still a dog. But he's no man's best friend. He treats people with disdain, reserving special contempt for Dilbert, who's no master or match for Dogbert. His ambition is to conquer the world and enslave all humans and he doesn't care if every one knows it. Dogbert is sure humans were placed on this earth to amuse him and that life is a big game which he plans to win.

Dogbert's plan involves many phases and involves many pawns. The first phase was the comic strip, which seemed innocent enough. The second phase was the move to selling office supplies. The third phase, the TV show, is under way. A movie could be next, and don't be surprised to see a Dogbert & Dilbert home shopping channel, where you can buy products like Dilbert shampoo and Dogbert brand computers.

The final steps of this evil plan involve a talk show called Dogbert Coast to Coast. Once the talk show establishes itself in the ratings, Dogbert plans to send mind control waves right into viewers' heads. With the most powerful countries under his control, he will invade the rest of the world.

At this point Dogbert is now building his mind control device. I must destroy it and the blueprints before it goes online or the world is doomed. There is nothing you can do if this infernal machine is not destroyed.

So for now, beware of TV. ♦

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