

The Boys
are Back
in Town:

The Purple Press

<http://purple-press.dyn.ml.org>

Official Publication of the St. Paul Open School

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Open Slow in Forging Change

Maura Shramko
Staff Writer

As you probably know, last year the state mandated a new set of graduation standards which apply to all Minnesota students, 9th grade and below. The new standards are more similar to Open School's validation system than to the credit system used by most high schools in that students graduate by demonstrating competency in designated areas rather than fulfilling class credits. Adapting to the new system, then, should be easy, right? Wrong.

While all Open School students 9th grade and below will graduate according to the new system, the updated graduation packet is not yet complete nor has it been officially approved by the Site Council.

Despite these logistical problems, many

people feel, all things considered, the new system is better than the system it is replacing. While validations allowed a lot of room for freedom, some students and staff found them too vague.

Art teacher Elizabeth Lehman thinks the new system could help students challenge themselves more in art. "The skills portfolios are covering a wide range of skills and areas that you **... I don't even know that I could get through them, and I graduated, what, thirty years ago.**" might not have focused on with a validation," she said.

The main differences between the new packets, called the Graduation Portfolio, and validation **STANDARDS** Continued on 11

The Chemistry of Biology Needs Work

Emily Cusick
Staff Writer

Did you have trouble getting into Biology this year? Well join the club. Many students were forced to look elsewhere after writing biology into their original schedule.

Two years ago there was extra money, so a Biology and Chemistry class were added. Because these classes re-



Bio. Presentation

quire so much time, since they are usually offered as year-long courses, Biology is offered one year and Chemistry the next. That means that students who miss out have to wait two years to take Biology or Chemistry.

This year, the Biology class was filling up very quickly. The decision was made to limit the class to 10th-12th grad- **BIOLOGY** Continued on 9

Justice is Served in Shields Case

Hollo
Staff Writer

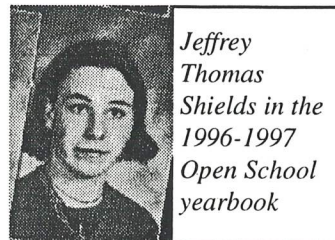
Former Open School student Jeff Shields was sentenced October 13th for the murder of Somali youth Khadar Abdullahi.

"I've been taught that evil resides in the action of a person, not the person, and I'm not prepared to say that you're an evil person, but what you've done is the personification of evil. I don't believe that you've grasped that fact," the judge said to Shields as well as Kenny Starlin

and Pam Keary, who also participated in the crime.

Shields and Keary were sentenced to 12 years for second-degree murder. Starlin, the primary assailant, was sentenced to 38 years for intentional second-degree murder. With good behavior Shields could be released in 8 years.

Shields attended Open School from kindergarten until midway through his junior year. He was a former editor for *The Purple Press*. ♦



Jeffrey Thomas Shields in the 1996-1997 Open School yearbook

"I hate customers, and they hate me." Page 5

"Yeah, we have Mocha, French Vanilla, Irish Cream, Thai, Almond ..." Page 5

Live and Let Skate

Lisa Grotenhuis
Staff Writer

At the staff meeting on Tuesday, September 16, four students made a plea to the staff to keep skateboarding legal.

There have been safety and liability concerns about skateboarding at this school. The staff was concerned about injuries and lawsuits.

The students presented how they felt about these concerns. They said that it was their right to skate at school. At the end of the meeting, there was a



Skateboarding is not a crime

vote on whether or not skateboarding should be allowed in school. The vote came up 26 yes and 2 no. However, the yes votes had many conditions. The most important one is that people who want to skate on school grounds must have parental permission and a waiver on file. In addition, students are restricted to skating during lunch (11:30-12:00), and after school. During these times, they can only skate on the western side of the building and must wear protective equipment.

There has been a group of skateboarders meeting with Paula to discuss these things. You may recognize them as the people selling suckers. With the funds raised, they hope to build a skateboarding ramp. ♦



James Bush has left Open School after being our hall monitor for almost four years. He has transferred to Saturn River Front, where he is a Truancy Liaison.

James said he'll miss the calm atmosphere and the warm feeling of Open School. *The Purple Press* wishes him good luck.

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Pepsi Wins By Landslide

*Daniele Finley
Staff Writer*

Pepsi Benjamin was declared Student Government President after the election held in mid-October. Pepsi has been at this school for 8 years, and knows the Open way. "I would like students to feel comfortable coming to me with any concerns they may have involving our school, because ... your ideas and opinions are of equal importance to me." Congratulations, Pepsi! ♦



Paper Goes Digital

*Moxy Man
Staff Writer*

The Purple Press has recently put up a web page. It is located at <http://purplepress.dyn.ml.org>, and has all of the stories and features the printed version of *The Purple Press* has, as well as some new features only available online.

The site is designed to draw online advertisers, as well as provide access to the *The Purple Press* to people unable to receive the printed version.

Other features on the page include a preview of the upcoming issue of *The Purple Press*, an archive of past issues available for download, a list of all the staff, advertising information, and information about both Open School and *The Purple Press*. ♦

New 'Puters, Again

*Terry Schanno
Staff Writer*

Ever gone to the computer lab and been told that you'd have to wait for internet access, but that you could type on some older computer? Well, that's a thing of the past. This year we received a grant from the state of Minnesota, which was used to buy 19 nifty new computers.

The new computers in the lab are the all-in-one version; the computer and the monitor are together as one unit. Most of these computers are in the computer lab, but there is also one in the Library/Media center.

There are also three desktop units. These machines have nice, large, 17 inch Sony monitors, bigger hard drives, and more RAM. They've also got Zip Drives, which are new to Open School. One of these machines is in the lab for scanning, one in the Art room for art work, and one in Leo's room for production of *The Purple Press*.

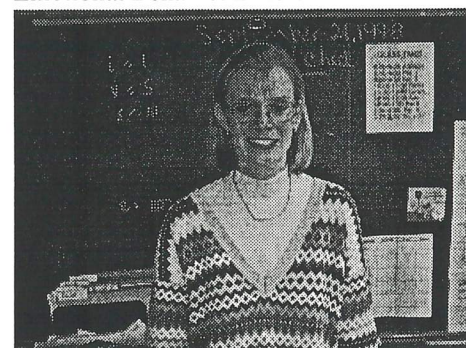
Julie Doble, Open School's science teacher, also received 9 new all-in-one units that are going to be used for a ninth grade physical science class. These machines are sitting in their boxes waiting for the district staff to come and set them up. ♦

Open Welcomes New "LD" Teacher

*Desmond Hicks
Staff Writer*

Sheri Gonsioroski's late arrival was a surprise to everyone. Sheri took the place of Janel, a teacher originally brought in to replace Laurel Rohrer. Janel was dissatisfied with her position at Open and left after less than two weeks. Sheri, who has lasted several weeks already, was appointed by the district to replace Janel.

Sheri lives in Highland Park in St. Paul. She attended Hamline University, where she majored in Sociology and Elementary Education. Sheri now attends the University of St. Thomas, where she is working on receiving her Master's degree and Licensure in Learning Disability as well as Emotional Behavior Disorders.



Some things Sheri likes to do are read, walk, watch movies, and have fun with her friends. Sheri used to teach at Moreland Elementary and she misses some of the kids and teachers there. Her first impressions of Open School were that most of the kids were friendly, nice, helpful, and willing to cooperate. It made her feel welcome. Sheri used to teach 3rd grade, but now teaches LD (Learning Disability) classes. Sheri has been teaching for about four years. ♦

Open Shook by Faculty Turnover

Mina Blyly-Strauss
Staff Writer

On Tuesday, the eighth of September, returning Open Schoolers arrived to not only a crowd of new students, but to many new teachers as well.

In addition to Ev Myers, who announced his retirement well before June, Chris Wintheiser, Dara Sanders-Dokas, Laurel Rohrer and Jennifer (Greer) Johnson had left their positions as SLC staff members.

Some of these changes were expected, such as Jennifer, who had been in training to fill the program coordinator position that Ev would be leaving. Others, however, such as the departures of Chris Wintheiser, the hard-to-replace math teacher who left to teach teachers how to use computer equipment, and Laurel Rohrer, who got a job in Eden Prairie, came as quite a surprise to many students and staff.

Perhaps the biggest surprise of all was the return of Ev, who, after a very short retirement, is back in his old office filling in for Jennifer (Greer) Johnson as program coordinator. Jennifer is at home with a new baby and will return and allow Ev to retire for good in January. Other new faces at Open School include: Carolyn Belle, speech clinician; Sara Barsel, Twice Exceptional class; Kelli Jensen and Pete Sandall, grades 4,5,6; Sheri Gonsiorski, the LD teacher; Kathy Kluth, social studies/ESL teacher; Bridget Martin, English/drama teacher; and the late arriving Sharon Haldeman, math/

physics guru. Also, Elaine Alper has returned after five years to teach Grade 2.

The process of finding all these new teachers was anything but simple. Ruth called the district. Sounds simple enough, right? Wrong! According to Ruth, she really "beat the bushes" trying to find the very best teachers.

Asking around, it looks like all of Ruth's time and effort searching for the right teachers really paid off. The teachers seem to like it here. Kathy says that the other staff members are "way cool," share common interests, and are really positive. Sharon also thinks that the staff are great, outgoing and helpful.

"... she really 'beat the bushes' trying to find the very best teachers."

The new teachers aren't the only people that seem happy about the placements. Students also think that the new teachers are doing a good job. Brigette McKern, one of Bridget's advisees, says she likes advisory a lot this year. In addition, many students in all grades have remarked about how nice the new teachers seem. Julie Doble, goddess of the science lab, says that she didn't find out about all of the staff changes until the week before school started. She was panicked when she found out that the school year would be starting one math teacher short, but she thinks that things are

great now, "They like it here and we're glad that they're here." Ruth also thinks that the new staff members are fitting in well.

As far as first impressions go, Open seemed to have looked alright to the candidtaes. Sharon thought that the school seemed friendly, comfortable and unique. Kathy also thought the school was nice. "It's wonderful that students have input," she remarked.

Backgrounds, backgrounds, backgrounds. Kathy has subbed here before, she subbed at the old building, she subbed for Julie a few years ago and at the beginning of last year she subbed for Paula. Sharon has a strong science background, and in addition to teaching math and physics, she plans to teach biology next year (rumor is, Tuesday/Thursday period 3/4). Bridget was born and grew up in England and had also lived in Malawi and Spain before moving to Saint Paul.

Here's some other useless but interesting information. Kathy wore a hat to her interview with Ruth and once the weather is colder you can expect her to be wearing one more often. She also has a maincoon cat named George, likes to sew, can change car oil and likes watching Victorian films. As far as Sharon goes, well . . . She would like YOU, whoever you are, teachers, students, anyone to go talk to her, she's not scary and won't bite. ♦

Overcrowding Bolsters ELC Productivity

Jessica Haug
Staff Writer

Imagine 50 kids in one classroom. It may sound like a nightmare, but its a reality this year at Open School, and according to teachers and students, it seems to be working.

Many parents voiced concern when the decision was made to put two advisories together in the school's largest classroom, room 105. A meeting was held earlier this year to discuss the issue with parents. "[The] parents were really upset," says Pete Sandall, one of the teachers of the two 4/5/6 grade advisories sharing the room. Fortunately, as the year has progressed, the kids' positive attitudes have rubbed off on most of the parents, Pete said. Also, on the first day of school, both teachers sat down with the kids and they talked about respect and the new conditions.

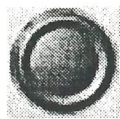
Pete's advisory shares the room with Kelli Jensen's advisory. Kelli is currently on maternity leave and has been temporarily replaced by guest teacher Kim. The room is separated by low book shelves in the middle, making one side Kelli's advisory, and the other Pete's. That means there are approximately 50 kids work-

ing in the same place everyday. "At times there is a distraction," Pete admits. The most distractions, he said, usually occur right after lunch, and last only 5-10 minutes. "It's a great group of kids," he says.

The students don't seem to mind the situation. "It's okay," said Chelsea Jane. Alyssa Albrecht and David Christen agreed. All three are from Pete's advisory. Tata Matadi, from Kelli's advisory, says, "It's fine." Games, Math, Math games and English were some of the joint-advisory activities they said they like to do.

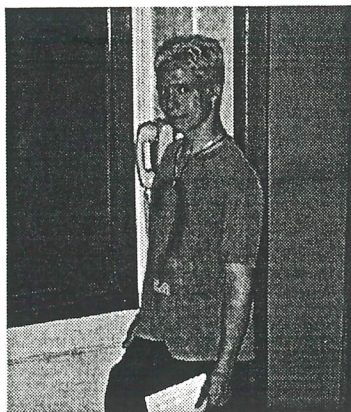
Pete said that if he had kids he would "absolutely" want them in this kind of environment. "It's a very interesting grade to mix," he says. He said he likes watching the older kids work with and help the younger ones.

"I just think it's a very positive thing for the fourth, fifth, and sixth graders," says Pete. He said that it gives them a good opportunity to speak their minds and have interaction with a lot of different people in a "community atmosphere." ♦



Senior Profile

Alex Chase



How many years have you been at Open School?

7 years, on and off.

If you were an animal, what would you be?

A cat . . . a big cat . . . I'd be a lion. Because they have personality and they get to play and sleep all the time.

What do you plan on doing after high school?

Travel to Japan, and go to St. Paul Technical College.

Where do you picture yourself in 30 years?

Having my own restaurant somewhere.

What will you miss most about school?

Socializing, and the good humor here.

New Drama Dept. Rolls in With a Bang

Emily Schultz

Staff Writer

School's back in, and that means new students and new teachers. Teachers like Bridget Martin, the new English/Drama teacher.

Bridget previously worked at Face to Face Academy for four and a half years, but when she found out they were becoming a charter school, she left and was hired by our principal, Ruth Pechmann.

So far, Bridget seems to enjoy Open. "It's got a much more community/family feel to it. It seems to be much easier to get to know students and staff." She also added, "I think the students are extraordinary. They're so friendly and talkative."

As the replacement for Dara Sanders-Dokas, Bridget will be directing the school play. She is not yet sure what the play will be this year. "I have a few ideas," she said. The theater block class will be offered during second trimester, and the performances will take place either at the end of second trimester, or at the beginning of third trimester.

Bridget has also lived in England and South Africa. She was born in England, which is evident from her accent, and stayed there for many years. After school, she moved to Africa, where she met her husband in the Peace Corps. They've been married for 31 years.

They adopted a daughter in Malawi, then adopted a little boy when they moved to Spain. Their children are both adults now, and currently living in Minnesota.

Bridget looks forward to the rest of the school year. "I'm really looking forward to the play," she said. ◇



I'm Gone . . . Just Kidding

Marlene Otterness

Staff Writer

To our surprise, we arrived at Open School this fall to see a face we never thought we would see again.

Ev Myers. When Ev left last spring, the students knew they were losing someone very important in their growth and education, part of themselves.

All of the seniors are excited to have Ev back for part of their senior year. "I went to Open when I was younger and I was excited to see Ev when I returned three years ago. I was just as excited to see Ev again this year. Ev has always been the most unconditionally friendly person I've ever met," said senior Allison Dagen.

Susanne Hollingsworth agrees. "It's great to have Ev back. It seems like he belongs here."

Ev was retired for about ten weeks. While painting the exterior of his house, Ev received a phone call. Ruth explained that

Jennifer (Greer) Johnson had had her baby early. Ev canceled his trip to Washington to visit his son to fill Jennifer's position. If the baby had been delayed for even a week, Ev would have missed the call and been on vacation. He had promised Jennifer he would substitute for her while she was on maternity leave.

"My feelings about the kids hasn't changed. I like the kids. It's not a disappointment," Ev said. Ev also commented said the position he returned to doesn't seem to have as many responsibilities as it did when it was his job.

Ev plans to re-retire by winter break when Jennifer returns. Ev is leaving again but he's convinced Open will be okay. "Jennifer will do a good job and it will take adjustments," Ev states. "I trust you are all in good hands when Jennifer returns. I definitely wouldn't want to take her job." ◇

Opinions 'n' Stuff

The Java Blues

"Can I get a coffee please?" you say.

"Large or small," replies the lady behind the counter.

"Large, please."

"What kind?"

"Kind?"

"Yeah, we have Mocha, French Vanilla, Irish Cream, Thai, Almond, Amaretto, Bavarian Strudel, Caramel Cream, Coffee Cake, Cognac, French Vanilla Almond, Hazelnut, Pecan, Pecan Fudge, Raspberry, Tiramisu, Vanilla, Vanilla Nut, Chocolate Almond, Chocolate Cinnamon Swirl, Chocolate Coffee Cake, Chocolate Pecan, Chocolate Raspberry, Chocolate Macadamia Nut, Chocolate Cherry, Chocolate Mint, Southern Pecan, Banana Foster, Cinnamon Spice, Apricot Cream, Banana Nut Toffee, Blueberry, Butternut Rum, Butterscotch, Cherries Jubilee, Coffee Caramel Truffle, Coconut Cream Pie, Cranberry Cream, White Russian, and Egg Nog."

"Did you say that in one breath? Umm, just a plain coffee?"

"A what?"

It seems that people have forgotten what coffee is, was, or should be. Oh, where, oh where has my lovely non-flavored-cafeinated-hot-brown-liquid gone? Maybe it's a conspiracy. I doubt it, it's probably stupidity on top of idiot-tendencies rolled up in a big fajita wrap. It doesn't make a whole lot of sense. Flavor is good here and there, but not everywhere.

For those of you who have forgotten, or never found out, what coffee actually is, I'll tell you. Coffee was once a great and wondrous beverage. Hot, black, and caffeinated. A steaming cup of unclear liquid that warmed the soul on the way down and made your stomach churn if you drank a lot on an empty stomach. Beautiful in its untainted nature. Like an Elvis stamp that has not been licked. Like so many other



Hollo
Staff Columnist

Tails of a Tail-End Gen-Xer

How does it feel to be the last of a graduating breed? That's a question I ask myself every day. Well, not every day, I don't have anywhere near that much thinking time, but you get the point.

Everybody born after '83 is no longer a member of Generation-X. This group hasn't really been given a name yet. I've heard Generation-Y tossed around a few times, but it's not exactly official so far as my limited spy network knows.

So anyhow, why did I bother wasting space on an article like this? The three eldest years of students here at Open are still Gen-Xers, and frankly, we feel ignored. Years ago, or so I'm told, our age group looked up to the elder Gen-Xers at Open like

big siblings . . . er . . . mentors . . . er . . . they were looked up to.

We learned from their wisdom and experience so that in the future, er, present, we would take their place as the respected elders of the Open School community.

However, instead of the supply of respected juniors and seniors replenishing itself year after year, it has trickled to almost nothing. Why? The only people who look up to the current seniority are other members of Generation-X.

I'll admit that the younger SLCers and ELCers look up to us, mostly because they're short. But seriously, it's hard not to look up to people who've been around the block a few more times, at least to a certain degree.

So who does everyone look up to? The 8th and 9th graders. Nothing against them personally, but we've gone through years of rigorous training to get where we are. They have no right to . . . whoa, that was a weird burst of hostility. Anyhoo, it really burns me. Thanks for reading. ♦

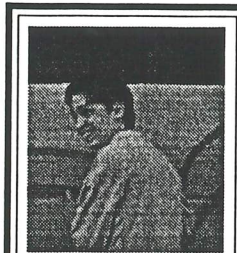


Wolfman
Staff Columnist

Customers Push Columnist Near Brink

I hate customers and they hate me. They have good reason to, and so do I.

See, over the summer I got a job at Spaghetti Village, a restaurant at the State Fair, and got hired as an extra. Extra's have the most annoying job in the whole place because they have to fill in for people when they go on break, and they have to know how to do everything. So I'd be buttering bread at 10, flipping burgers at 1, and then, at around three, I'd do the window shift. The reason I hate the window shift is that I get to deal with annoying, loud, stupid people, or the paying public.



Brian Blakely
Staff Columnist

One day, while I was filling in for the window shift, this old lady comes up and orders a piece of pepperoni pizza. It's during the lunch rush, so I've also got this girl Gail, working there with me. She starts getting the pizza, and I try to take the lady's money to make change. When I do, she scowls at me, and pulls her hand back from the counter, so I say, "Will that be all?" And she doesn't say anything, just scowls a little more, and so I check on the pizza, and by this time, it's ready, so I bring it to the counter, but when I put the pizza down on the counter, the old witch scowls at the pizza, scowls at me, scowls at the pizza again, and then she growls out, "Is there any pizza with the cheese baked all the way to the edge?" and I'm like, "I'll check," and go back and check.

There isn't any, so I say no, and she

CUSTOMERS From 5

makes a 'Humph' noise and walks away with her nose in the air.

Now, I just want to clarify something here. The cheese on our pizza is never more than 1/8 of an inch from the edge.

That same day, a lady and her daughter come up and ordered two large Mountain Dews. Since we also sold State Fair souvenir cups, I double checked by asking her, "This size?" and she's like, "That's what I ordered, isn't it?" And I'm like, "Yes, but I just wanted to check," and so I ask what they want in the cups, and she says Mountain Dew, and I fill them up, and the lady gives me a dollar a piece, when large drinks cost two. So I say, "Ma'am, large drinks cost two dollars a piece," and she says that the sign "clearly states" that they are one. So she tells me to come out and look at the sign, and I do, and it clearly says the sizes and what they cost. So I explain to her about the sizes, and she gives me this 'Well, that's a silly rule' look, and then says "Well, I didn't know about

the sizes, so could you give them to me for a dollar a piece?" And I'm like, "Sorry, but I can't do that," and she almost purrs out, "Well, it would be a shame to have to pour so much of that Mountain Dew out, wouldn't it?" And by now, I'm thoroughly suspicious as to her getting the price wrong, and her daughter has been giving me some nasty looks, so I'm like, "Yeah, it would be a shame to waste all that 'Dew.'"

So I start pouring out the drinks and getting smaller cups. And as the lady walks off, I'm like, "Enjoy your meal!"

So I guess what I'm trying to get at is that, well, I hate customers. I may be okay with them as people, but as customers, it's like their collective intelligence drops 100 points. And, right now I'll say, while some customers aren't that bad, most of them tend to live up to the name I gave them. I hate them and, by God, they hate me. ♦

From Cheezing to Pleasing: Summer Movies

Brigette McKern

Staff Critic

Like most people, I spent the beautiful summer days inside of a movie theater. I was pulled in by the big blockbuster movie trailers. Thirty seconds of people running, screaming, things exploding and car crashes; usually set to a piece of classical music.

Even though they were bad, I still went to see the movies. Summer movies, much like a junior high dance, have a theme. This year's theme was asteroids. I heard most junior high dances had an underwater theme. There was also the return of *Godzilla* and a sinking ship, sorry to give away the ending, that was still sailing at the box office.

The summer started off as it usually does with the over-budget and bad-acting movies, but by the end of the summer things got better. Some of the late ones featured good actors playing good roles. The following are my reviews of the summer hits: The good, the bad and the just plain stupid.

I got a head start on the summer movie bandwagon when I went to see *Godzilla* in its first week of release. I was excited about seeing it, but was disappointed by *Godzilla*'s new look. It was too complex and realistic. The best part about the original was his simple look. He had arms, legs, big teeth and a tail that could take out a skyscraper; what more does he need?

One thing that stayed true to the original was the cheesy acting. After seeing *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, can anyone look at Matthew Broderick as a serious actor? Hank Azaria was the comic relief, well the relief. But if *Godzilla*'s new look, New York City being crushed and Ferris - I mean Matthew Broderick - can hold your attention, it can be enjoyable. The ending left room for a sequel. Perhaps it will star Corey Feldman or Anthony Michael Hall; we can only dream.

I did see one of the asteroid movies: *Deep Impact*. Once again, the movie makers were hoping the special effects would be the main focus at the expense of acting. But I don't blame the actors as much as I blame the writers. They had a great actor like Morgan Freeman and they wrote him one line that he kept repeating over and over: "Our attempts to destroy the asteroid have failed." Was a t.v. address necessary? There couldn't have been more than two people inside of their houses and I'm sure they knew they were in trouble when they still saw a huge rock falling from the sky. This is the kind of movie that you don't need to see to talk about. If you've seen the previews, you've seen the movie and you can save yourself five bucks.

Okay, so you know the bad movies I saw, now let's look at the good ones.

I didn't know what to expect when I went to see *The Truman Show*, but I was pleasantly surprised. Jim Carrey stars as Truman, a man whose whole life has been broadcasted on national television without him knowing. Everyone he knows is an actor and everything they do and say is carefully staged. There are cameras hidden in everything to watch Truman's every move. Truman

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Manson Review

Salvador Rosas

Staff Critic

If you buy *Mechanical Animals* and you are familiar with Marilyn Manson's work, you will notice that his music has changed a great deal. His distorted, industrial-style guitars, and his screaming-until-his-throat-bleeds style have been turned down a notch, maybe half a notch. This is mainly due to his change in producers. Manson switched Nine Inch Nails' Trent Reznor for Michael Beinhorn, who produced Soundgarden's *Superunknown*. His recent friendship with Smashing Pumpkins' front man, Billy Corgan, has also changed his music. "Billy was a big influence." Marilyn said. Billy also helped out in the studio.

On *Mechanical Animals* you can hear influences by David Bowie, and even former Red Hot Chili Pepper Dave Navarro stopped in the studio to help out on a song. All in all, the influences and collaboration work really well with Manson's own style.

The songs in *Mechanical Animals* have wider music variety than Manson's previous sound. Songs such as "Great Big White World," "Mechanical Animals," "Disassociative," "The Last Day on Earth," and "Coma White" have a hard alternative sound to them, similar to Soundgarden and Stone Temple Pilots. The songs usually start out with a quiet electronic beat and grow into a slow distorted frenzy.

Manson really gets the whole 70's/80's glam rock going on in songs like "Speed of Pain," "The Dope Show," "Posthuman," "New Model No.15," and "I Don't Like The Drugs, But The Drugs Like Me." With electronic drum beats, and even occasional back-up singers

MANSON Continued on 10



Bruce Willis in
Armageddon



The Conspiracy Pages

The views expressed on these pages do not necessarily represent the views of *The Purple Press*, or its staff. This section is continued on pages 8 and 9.



Cleaning or Screening?

Ben Peterson
Staff Schizo

Why is it that the custodial engineers hide? All last year, *The Purple Press* tried to get the janitors to talk with us about any number of school cleanliness issues. So, why won't they talk? Is it because they aren't confident in their skill to talk about it? Do they slack off and cover it up, and don't want anyone to know? Or... is it something far more sinister?

What dark secrets could they be hiding? Are they the lackeys that perform all of Ruth's dirty work? What evil creations are hidden in the depths of the Janitorial offices (the basement)?

I think they're being used as spies for Ruth. Think about it. They have a key to every room in the building. They can go into any room at any time without objection. The "rules" mandate they have to be in the building whenever anyone else is. And they have walkie-talkies to communicate with Ruth from anywhere.

Jeff is constantly wheeling around that huge trash barrel. Why? You don't really think it's because he collects trash all day, do you? Ninety percent of the time I see that barrel, it's empty. Do spy cameras ring a bell? Think of all the room he has in

that barrel for power supplies, lenses, tape recorders, spaces for notes, and infrared devices. I would doubt whether or not that trash bag is normal. When I do see him collecting trash, the bag never appears to fill. What type of disintegrating rays does he possess?

Also, if all these things are in the trash bags alone, what things are in the vacuums and floor buffers? Maybe the fact they're so loud just covers up the noises from the lasers and mind-numbing devices held inside. They probably use acidic wax on the floors to make our feet hurt faster and longer, just so the school day drags on. The vacuums could be secreting all sorts of nanoprobes into the follicles of the carpeting. If you don't agree, look at Bridget's carpet. It hasn't been cleaned all year. In fact, it keeps on accumulating an unnatural amount of "dirt." This "dirt" is probably laid down to cover the unusual color of the probes.

Maybe they're afraid to give *The Purple Press* an interview because they know our hard hitting investigative reporters will uncover their sinister plot. Or maybe they just don't want the questions raised.

Spending so much time planting controlling devices and spying for Ruth, you know that doesn't leave much time for things like cleaning. So remember. The janitors do work on things when we're not around. So next time you arrive at school to find a dirty floor, or dusty cabinets, be careful where you walk. Their time was most likely spent in other, more subversive ways.

Trust no one. Especially the cleaning guys. ♦



"Evil Twin Project" Slowly Becoming Success

The Open Eye
Staff Writer

Recently I have learned of the heinous government experiments going on underneath our noses. Cruel experiments taking place without heed to right and wrong, performed by devilishly clever scientists obviously teetering on the very brink of insanity. It causes even a hardened soul like mine to lie awake at night.

While thumbing through the St. Paul Public School District's main files looking for more evidence on the pod people conspiracy, I stumbled across a file marked "The Evil Twin Project". I was intrigued. It said only that there was a cloning lab somewhere in the Twin City Metro Area, and that this lab was somehow connected to the St. Paul Public Schools.

The copy I found was clearly not the full file, but it did give me a place to start. Over the summer, my network of spies and informants has slowly provided me with more and more information.

It appears that a small sub division of the US government has set up not one, but three cloning labs in the Twin City area; one under Central High School, one under Highland High School and

the last one under St. Paul Open School. Each one of these lies about 150 feet underneath the school itself and, as you may have guessed by their location, they are experimenting on the students of these schools.

More information is hard to obtain due to their incredible security system backed up by hundreds of clones for guards. I do know this however; the current lab head is in fact a clone herself who answers to the name Ee Lane.

Apparently these labs will take a student out of class, and replace them with a preconstructed clone. The real student disappears in this process so as to make the transfer complete. What these clones are being used for I cannot fathom, but the prospects are not good; not good at all.

So if one of your friends starts misspelling their name, or can't remember what you and he did last week, just remember where you heard it first. This is the Open Eye reporting. ♦

Question of the month

Which came first? The universe
or Greg?

See Answer on page 42.

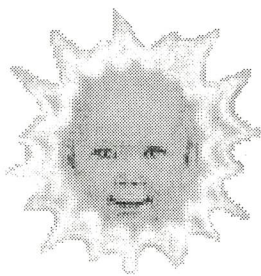
Flaming Baby Head Controls America's Youth

Emily Schultz
Staff Writer

One day during the summer, I had nothing to do, so I decided to watch some TV (go figure). I had two choices. The Home Shopping Channel, or Teletubbies. I chose Teletubbies. I knew some of my friends like the show, so I wanted to see what all the excitement was about. Surprisingly, after watching Teletubbies for about five minutes, I found I was quite amused by the multi-colored chubby creatures. Despite the fact that the Teletubbies talk like babies, they seemed to be rather interesting in a cute/annoying kind of way.

After about a week, I had already watched the show a number of times. I memorized part of their song, and had learned their names: TinkyWinky, Dipsy, Laalaa, and Po, all in order of their age.

Then I began to wonder . . . why was I becoming such a fan of baby-talking tubbies? Is it a conspiracy, or am I just weird? Okay, maybe I'm weird, but that's not the point. Perhaps the Teletubbies have some sort of hypnotizing machine that forces you to watch their show. Perhaps it's that scary sun with the baby head on it, always



smiling, and watching over the Teletubbies. Maybe it's him! Maybe his "cute, little, adorable baby voice" has some sort of sonar that's sending brain waves all over, to make us enjoy the Teletubbies. That's gotta be it! But seriously, what makes Teletubbies so special? How are they so different from other children's shows? It's a conspiracy I tell you! We're all under a spell! Can we ever escape this unknown trance? I just don't know . . .

Oh, and in case you were wondering, Teletubbies is on 8:30 AM Monday through Friday. I can't help myself. ♡

Top Ten People Who Won't be Dressing Up for Halloween

- 1) The crazy lady at the end of the block with the 13 cats
- 2) Homicidal Maniacs (they look like everyone else)
- 3) The thing that lives under your bed
- 4) Elvis
- 5) Satan
- 6) Santa
- 7) The creepy guy at the back of the bus
- 8) GWAH
- 9) Leo's Hair
- 10) The spooky yellow/white van at the end of the playground
- 11) The Chiquita Banana lady

British Invasion Nothing in Comparison

Daniele Finley
Staff Writer

Have you ever noticed those strange little bathrooms in the ends of hallways and in the teacher's lounge they like to call the "handicapped" bathrooms? Well, after much investigating, I have found evidence showing that there really is something sinister afoot.

A few teachers in the building (who shall remain nameless) have been experimenting with various school substances to create what I like to call a Pseudopeep. A Pseudopeep is an artificially created student. The teachers are planning to take over the future population. That saying, "Today's children are our future" finally got them worried enough that they took it into their own hands . . .

These Pseudopeeps are composed mainly of the slime you find under those large trays in the cafetorium, the strange mixture of skin particles and cleaning materials found in corners of the girl's bath-

room, ground nubs of lead broken off pencils, the 25 year old pieces of gum on the undersides of the tables, the sludge off the back of the refrigerators in the kitchen, and 3 drops of rosemary water. I've seen a couple projects where they didn't add the rosemary . . . I'm sure you have too.

However, I should warn you that when I say Pseudopeep, that is exactly what I mean. You see, these Pseudopeeps have been created to replace us. They shall slowly build up a population of Pseudopeeps, and then mentally kill us all off.

As soon as we see that we can never live up to the Pseudopeeps, we will gradually become mind-dead, ending in a bunch of mindless slaves to "The Cause"; just a bunch of drones doing nothing but errands for teachers until the end of time.

Luckily, it is usually quite easy to identify these Pseudopeeps once you know what to look for. They can be identified by

their perfect posture, their unnatural ability to get to class on time, their immaculate lockers, and their emotionless smiles. They are unfailingly polite. Also, I have heard muffled names being called through the bathroom door, and I believe their leader is called Ee Lane.

Another thing I have taken into consideration is that the "handicapped" bathrooms are hardly big enough to be the entire lair for this plot. I have reason to believe that the bathrooms are just a front door to a much bigger thing, and I have heard suspicious drilling and dinging noises going on within. So this may be even bigger than I had originally thought.

I have reason to believe that this project has been going on for some time now, so be on the lookout for any student at Open that has the aforementioned features. And most of all, be careful whom you trust . . . one of them may well be one of . . . them. ♡

Stealth Bombers and Football

Moxy Man
Staff Writer

Ever wondered why professional sports always come to the rescue of political figures by starting these things called "sports seasons" and dominating the media soon after those same political people have gotten themselves into trouble?

You see, the White House originally created professional sports in 1902 to distract people from the Government's nefarious doings. Remember the Gulf War? The United States of America didn't kick Saddam's goats just by brute force. No, we had stealth bombers. These were the planes that really won the war by sneaking in and bombing Iraq without those darn third-world-country-ites being able to do anything about it. And the reason that the Air Force was able to hide them from public view for so long was because the public mind was too interested in the Vickers vs. the Packings game to care what kind of planes we had.

And it goes farther than that. Do you think our present Fearless Leader is the only one to live in the Oval Office that has done something bad? No, of course not. The too-often mentioned Lewinsky scandal is not the first of these adultery crimes, but merely the only one of them in which professional sports has not come to the rescue fast enough. Why, you ask, have all these other sex scandals gone unnoticed by the American public?

Because Ms. Lewinsky's lawyers and Ken Starr have discovered the conspiracy and they waited until there were no big-

name sports events clouding the public mind. They waited until the summer, when there were no huge sports things to occupy the public's interest, and then pounced by releasing the Starr Report.

The White House tried to counter this by inventing two people named Sammy McGwire and Mark Sosa breaking some bas-

ketball record, and when that didn't work they released *Titanic* on video (something they had been holding in reserve), but to no avail. Starr jumped out of a dark room and surprised the people of America with his graphic details and flying accusations. The president was caught with his pants down (no pun intended) and, low and behold, now there is talk of impeachment.

Although the recent failures of the Government's strategy have cast doubt on its ability to distract the public mind, they show no sign of slowing. The NFL and Pro Golf still exist, *Titanic* is still a big item in the news, and Beanie Babies and virtual pets (some more of the things invented by the

government as a distraction) still draw avid collectors from around the country. And although the White House may be scared off from using its distracting powers in a big way, they will still have no fear using it to do minor things, such as bomb random countries for no reason. And as long as they do that, I will continue to be a diligent schizophrenic and inform you of any new violations that our government has committed while you, the American that you are, are too busy watching men run around in silly clothes grunting a lot. ♦

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Starr Covers Up Star

Brian Blakely
Staff Writer

Everyone knows about the Clinton scandal, right? I thought so. Well, what you didn't know was that while the entire world watched videotaped testimony, and read through our immoral friend Ken Starr's report, things were happening elsewhere.

What I'm trying to get at is that the whole thing was a hoax. The whole Lewinsky/Clinton thing was staged to draw attention away from really important matters, like, for instance: have you counted all the stars in the night sky lately? Well, there's one more than there was before. I believe this 'Star' to be in fact, a spaceship made by Ken and Bill, to aid their escape when they blow up the world. See, everyone's in on it. Your teachers, the workers at Hardees. Everyone. And with the complete and total fascination of the public with Clinton's personal life, the headlines of most of the world's newspapers aren't getting the really BIG issues, they're getting the small ones. And if they continue to succeed to divert the media this way, then there will be no stopping them!!!

So please, before you go to read some bunk-ass paper like "U.S.A. Today" with its soft 'news' filler, remember that there are real papers that care, like *The Purple Press*, which address the really important issues, like 4-Square and school lunch. So just remember; we're the better alternative. ♦



How many surveillance cameras can you find in this picture?

BIOLOGY From 1
ers.

A group of ninth graders who take Algebra 2 protested this decision. Ninth graders in Algebra 2, they argued, are the most likely to leave the building by 11th grade in order to continue progressing in math which means that they have a very slim chance of ever taking Biology from

Julie. Julie and Ruth Pechmann decided to make an exception for all 9th graders taking Algebra 2.

This, however, did not sit well with not only 9th graders not in Algebra II, but 10th-12th graders who didn't make it into the class.

Fortunately, a new solution is in the works. Sharon Haldeman, Chris Wintheiser's replacement, is planning on teaching a Biology class next year. It will be Tuesday/Thursday 3/4th hour, all year long. ♦

MOVIES From 6

finally becomes suspicious of everyone's behavior and tries to get away. But the big shot director does everything to prevent his escape because his show is one of the highest rated. I highly recommend seeing this movie. It is a good example of the American tendency to follow celebrities' every move. The shots from the hidden cameras along with the unique story makes this a great movie.

I also saw *Titanic* this summer. Now don't freak out, this wasn't the first time I saw it. Actually, it was my third. What is it about this movie that makes everyone want to see it again and again? Is it the special effects or 'Leo' DiCaprio? I didn't see it for any of those

reasons. I liked the story and the supporting performances by Billy Zane, Francis Fischer and Kathy Bates. Well, that and the fear that if I didn't see it more than once, 'Leo' DiCaprio fans would beat me with their *Bop* magazines.

The last movie I saw this summer was *Saving Private Ryan*. Finally,

my summer moviegoing paid off. This movie stars Matt Damon as Private Ryan, a soldier who gets orders to go home after his three brothers are killed in World War II. Tom Hanks leads a group in charge of finding Ryan.

The supporting cast was not overshadowed by the big stars; their emotionally charged performances added to the power of this film. A round of applause to: Edward Burns, Tom Sizemore, Jeremy Davies, Giovanni Ribisi and Adam Goldberg.

Be advised, however, before you run out to see this movie. Its graphic violence can be disturbing. But the violence is there for a reason - this is a war movie. I think it shows that we glorify war in movies by having the good guys go off, kill the bad guys, return home with no more than a cut on the lip and live happily ever after. But this movie shows the other side. The violence is graphic, but it's not senseless. A great story, outstanding cast and great cinematography makes this movie my favorite of the summer.

There you have it, my look at the summer movies. Three months and twenty-five dollars later, what have I learned? Many moviemakers spend a lot of time on special effects and not enough on a story, some movies get too much hype, a lot of teen girls worship Leonardo DiCaprio like he's a god and Steven Spielberg really is.

If you would like to see any of the movies I reviewed, you'll have to wait to rent *Godzilla* and *Deep Impact*, *Titanic* is available to rent and own, *The Truman Show* can still be seen in a couple of theaters and *Saving Private Ryan* is currently playing in theaters. ♦

MANSON From 6

(including former Madonna back-up singer, Nikki Harris), all you can think of is glam. "New Model No.15" almost sounds like the classic song "My Sharona," that is, until Marilyn starts singing.

There are also three other songs that sound like nothing else on the album. "User Friendly" sounds like a mock hip hop, rock song. "Fundamentally Loathsome" sounds like a really morbid, 50's slow song (almost like I only have eyes for you, minus the delicate crooning). And finally, the song "Rock is Dead" is almost like a mock of their previous hit, "The Beautiful People," by using similar drum beats, and similar guitar noise, but the title kind of speaks for itself.

This is a very well made album, there is a wide range of dynamics and creative ideas. Manson also talks a lot about how society is really messed up and how the world is going down, due to things like drugs, prostitution and other social breakdowns. And that is a drastic change since his previous album was about an antichrist destroying the world.

The last thing I would like to say is that Marilyn Manson would not be a good band if it was just him. In fact he barely writes his music, so I would actually like to give a little more credit to his band members, keyboardist Madonna Wayne Gacy, drummer Ginger Fish, former guitarist Zim-Zum, who wrote a pretty big portion of the album and especially bassist/guitarist Twiggy Ramirez, who writes most, if not all, the music. So if you buy **Mechanical Animals**, keep in mind that the best part Marilyn Manson is the band and that Marilyn would be nothing without them. ♦

In a nutshell

What: Marilyn Manson, **Mechanical Animals**

Category: Rock

Should you buy it? Yes, if you like his music, and even if you don't it's still a good album.

Rating: * * * * (out of 5)



COFFEE From 5

things that are beautiful when they are found naturally. Now you know what I'm talking about.

This whole flavored coffee revolution started with those people who say, "I can't drink this coffee without sugar and cream." Well, I have a statement just for you people, "Adultery is not legal or morally right, so quit doing it to your coffee." Did it ever occur to you coffee-adulterating people, that the coffee may not be a willing participant? Coffee has rights too ya know! Oh sure, it starts off fine and dandy, a little cream here, a little sugar here. Then ya move on to brown sugar, then the non-dairy creamer, and by that time you're already thinking about adding a little chocolate to it. You make me sick.

If you are one of these coffee-flavoring-heathens, go burn in what ever eternal torment you believe in, but, if you are not yet evil, come and join my side. We will sit in my bedroom and drink lovely straight black cups of the best Sumatran blends that the world has to offer. We'll sit in Rudies, Day By Day, Cahoots or even a drive through Coffee Hut, and drink wondrous cups of brown untainted liquid delights.

I hope you understand my opinion. Coffee is better left black. ♦

dations is that the Graduation Portfolio is designed to highlight examples of student work rather than recommendations from teachers and community members.

The Graduation Portfolio is divided into six different subject matter areas: coherent communication, social studies, service, mathematics, science/technology and personal development. Each area is also divided into sub categories, and students must demonstrate work at three different levels beginning in the 7th grade. To graduate students will request a letter of recommendation in three subject areas of choice and write a reflection paper in all six areas. While the staff wanted the new system to be more rigorous, some think it might be asking too much of students.

"When I look at the standards, and not just Open School's, but for all high schools, I don't even know that I could get through them, and I graduated, what, thirty years ago," said Paula Brust, LD teacher.

Over the summer a group of teachers, the Graduation Committee, and students worked on developing the new graduation packets. The problem is that they aren't quite done. In fact, the mathematics and science/technology areas are at this point in time blank. Besides those sections, all areas need to be edited and approved by the Site Council before students can receive copies of the packets. That leaves the students required to do them, especially 9th graders, at a stand-still. They can always do Post High Plans, or try to start work on one of the mostly finished standards, but for those who want to get a head-start and really understand the packets and what's being asked of them, this poses a problem.

The delays are surprising considering the Open School validation system could have been used by the state as a model for the grad standards. "So in a way, it's like all the rest of the schools are looking at what we used to do," said Elizabeth.

A benefit of all schools in the state being required to meet the Open School standards is Open School will seem more acceptable to colleges. Also, colleges will be able to compare Open School students to students of other high schools more readily.

Gary Vettleson, school counselor, thinks that a lot of colleges like seeing validations, but with the graduation standards it will be clearer to colleges what students have learned. "Colleges aren't interested in seeing how well teachers can write," Gary said, "The colleges are all sort of looking for someone to enrich their community."

What students have to do in order to graduate, the High Standards, has been determined by the state. How Open School applies the standards to its student body is the job of the Graduation Committee, those in charge of developing the new packets. Most schools are simply accepting the standards as they were given by the state.

"How you get there, how I teach it, how somebody in another school teaches it, it can be any way you want to do it," says Elizabeth, "You can do it your own way."

Beginning third trimester of this year, teachers will begin including which standards a student can work towards in each class in their course syllabi. This will keep students and parents informed of what they can learn in each class that will be relevant to their skill portfolio. ♦

T.V.'s New Faces Make Big Splash

Ehren Stemme
Staff Monkey

The 1998 fall television season is upon us, and as always the network prime-time schedules have been cleared to make room for the new crop of shows. And also, as always, half of these shows will disappear before the November sweeps period. This year some 20 new shows will make their debut across the six broadcast networks and countless cable networks. Here are some I have chosen to profile:

The Upright Citizens' Brigade

Starring: a bunch of nobodies

Wednesdays 9:30 p.m.,
Comedy Central (MediaOne ch. 45, DISH ch. 104)

Located in what is probably the only decent time slot on Comedy Central (after *South Park*), *Brigade* will probably survive because of viewers' penchants for below-the-belt humor, which this show has in spades. There is not much else to this show than that, and they don't try to promote it differently. *Brigade* is a lot like the short-lived sketch comedy program *The State*, which ran from 1993-1995 on MTV. It features bits and pieces of different things, some humorous, some not, and some parts better left out. In all, *The Upright Citizens' Brigade* is a passable entry into TV if you watch with an open mind. ***

That '70s Show

Starring: Topher Grace

Sundays 7:30 p.m.,
FOX29 (MediaOne ch. 10)

This show is somewhat like the movie *The Wedding Singer*, in that you probably would have lived through the times to understand the first damn thing that's going on. What it is, though, is a depiction

of everyday life in the 1970's. Mark Forman (Grace) is the central character in the series, the teenage son of all-American parents just trying to make it through his schooling. Over the course of the season you see basic everyday teenage-type things: Mark gets a car, the group sneaks off to an out-of-town concert, two of the guys get jobs, and much more, all through the eyes of the basic '70s teenager. The show drew some criticism for depicting narcotic consumption in the series premiere, but what would a show about the '70s be without it? Overall, this a humorous show, made even stronger by following *The Simpsons*, and it will be around for a while. ****

Felicity

Starring: some people...

Tuesdays 7:00 p.m.,
WB23

Felicity has been compared to *Ally McBeal*. (Sorry about all the comparisons!) Well if it is, it must have been during the first 17 minutes of this hour-long drama that I missed due to my feeble mind. This show has a good premise: a girl fresh out of high school follows her crush to New York State University in hopes of confronting him. While there, she wins the affection of her RA and makes some new friends, but when she confronts her crush, she discovers that he doesn't want to build a relationship with her. Anyway, before I give the premiere away, I will just say that *Felicity* deals with some tough times, like deciding if she should go to Princeton like her parents wanted. The situations are kind of "90210"ish, but if you put reality in a closet you will be highly entertained. ****1/2 ♦

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