

More or Less a School:

An editorial everyone should read.

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The pros and cons of a new ballpark

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E & E:

Parking in A Parallel Universe, One student's opinion on SDL.

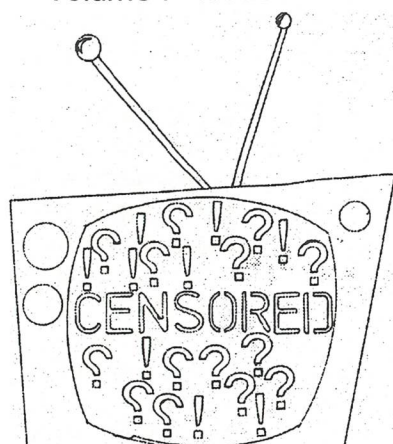
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The Purple Press

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Volume I Issue III

February 24, 1997



The New TV Ratings Program

Jessica Haug
Staff Reporter

On January 1, 1997, the new T.V. ratings took effect across the nation. The purpose: to help parents monitor their childrens' television programs without watching it themselves.

The ratings will appear for 15 seconds in the upper left hand corner at the beginning of each show.

If the show is longer than one hour, the ratings will reappear one hour into the program in the same place for another 15 seconds. This is not unlike the movie ratings that have been used for 28 years. Sports programs and the news will not be rated. Programs such as *60 minutes*, *20/20* and all soap operas will be rated TV-14 for their sophisticated themes,

Ratings continued on page 3

EBD Under Fire

Karl Petersen
Staff Reporter

The Site Council spent most of the January 9 meeting addressing Open School's biggest controversy of the year.

The placement of the "level 5" special education program for middle school students with emotional-behavioral disorders (EBD), dubbed P.A.S. (Promoting Academic Success), has generated a lot of complaint over Open School space and Open's authority. Of much greater concern, however, are the issues that arise from putting a group of what some consider unpredictable students into a school that includes a large group of elementary students.

At a Site Council meeting on January 14, the council moved, 8-1 with one abstention, to "continue to work with the district to find a better home [for the P.A.S. program] or to find a program that would be better suited to our school."

"I thought [the program] might be a good opportunity for our kids...so I didn't have a real big problem with it. I do now, now that I see the reality. This is not an equity issue. It is the inappropriateness of that kind of [violent] behavior in this building, with a K-12 program, and with the Open

School program that is open and teaches responsibility -- these kids can't handle it," said Open School parent and Site Council member Jane Schmidt.

The P.A.S. program was started up at beginning of this school year, with the staff being given to understand that the new program needed to be included as part of Open School. The school district was forced to put the P.A.S. program here. Open School principal, Ruth Pechmann, made the decision to place P.A.S. in a small room behind the office on the first floor, which had previously been used for tutoring and small groups. Although the program technically has a capacity of 8 to 10 students (with an on-paper student/teacher ratio of 6:1), the room comfortably seats about four students in desks, and realistically the student/teacher ratio needs to be much lower. Technically, the program is now "over-staffed," with six students and three staff members.

Opposition to the program rose in October, after several confrontations between P.A.S. and Open School students. A group of Open School students circulated a petition, Ev Meyers wrote a letter

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News Briefs

Nintendo 64

Chris McLean
Staff Reporter

The hottest new home video game system, the Nintendo 64, has been sold out in most stores, even after the holidays. Why? Some people say it's because of *Super Mario 64*, but what else?

For one thing, it has amazing graphics, but *Mario* is no longer the only game available. *Mario 64* and *Pilotwings 64* were the only games available for two months, and the games cost around \$80. These problems made a lot of people want to buy a Sony Playstation instead, but now more are buying a Nintendo 64.

As for the games, they are really fun, and most are only going to be available on Nintendo 64. I think *Mario 64* is over-rated, because it is too easy and it gets old fast. *Wave Race 64* is also getting too much attention. Here is a list of some good games:

Wayne Gretzky's 3D Hockey: a fast-paced game with

great graphics and lots of action.

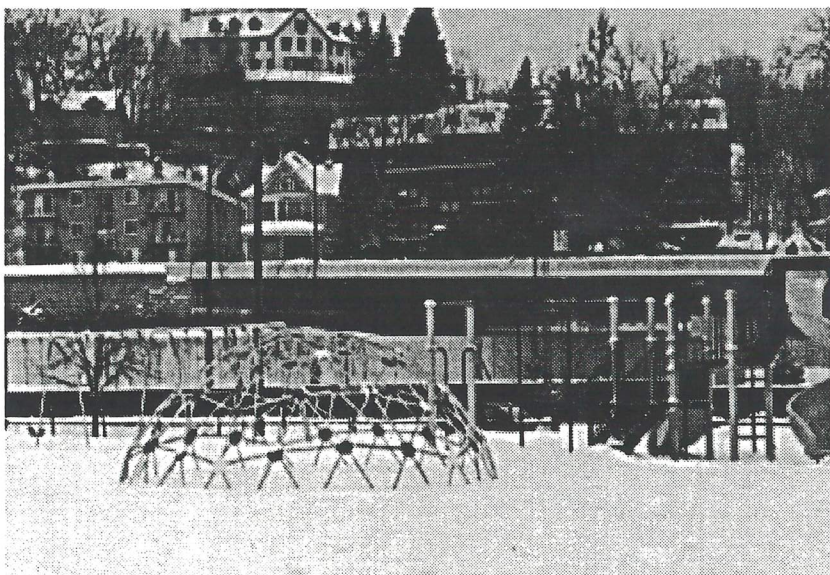
Star Wars: Shadows of the Empire: a game that is a lot like *Doom*, but with characters from the Star Wars trilogy, plus some cool space ship levels.

Crusin' USA: a cool racing game with lots of cars, and, best of all, you get to drive a school bus!

Pilotwings 64: a flight simulator with rocket belts, helicopters and hang gliders with six different pilots to choose from.

My friends say that *Killer Instinct Gold* was the best game on this system, but I thought *Gretzky's 3D hockey* was the best.

With the Sega Saturn, the Sony Playstation, and the Nintendo 64, you might not know which one you want to buy. While I liked Nintendo 64 the best, I recommend you try all three systems before you buy, so you know which one is the best for you.



*Snow and ice cover Open School's
Playground*

The Twins Stadium

Ehren Stemme
Staff Reporter

A pressing matter in Minnesota right now is the possibility of a new outdoor baseball stadium in downtown Minneapolis. The Minnesota Legislature and the owner of the Twins, Carl Pohlad, have made progress in discussing how to fund the project, but it appears that the majority of Minnesotans are against building a new ballpark if the public has to finance it.

On January 9, Pohlad agreed to give the state of Minnesota 49 percent of stockholders' interest in the Twins, worth about \$100 million, and \$82.5 million to go to the new stadium, leaving the Legislature with approximately \$120 million to come up with. On January 14, Gov. Carlson proposed a cigarette tax increase of 10¢ a pack to raise revenues for the new stadium.

The Twins, unlike past years, are jam-packing this year's touring Twins Caravan with past and present Twins stars. The Caravan, which has four buses of Twins players branching out from the Twin Cities to various points in outstate Minnesota, was designed in 1962 by then-owner Calvin Griffith to get fans psyched for the upcoming season. However, the Twins are rumored to have a sinister, political motive for this year. Kirby Puckett, Jack Morris, Bert Blyleven and other Twins stars have met protests and anti-stadium rallies when they have visited outstate schools and small towns.

Executives from the Twins front office stated that the appearance of such players was not a ploy to promote the stadium. General manager, Terry Ryan, stated in a *Star Tribune* article that they simply wanted to let the fans know what kind of history the team had in Minnesota.

Gov. Arne Carlson also wanted people to know about the team's history, namely future Twins fans. "I don't want kids tuning in their TVs and radios and hearing about the Memphis Twins. The Twins are our team," he said during his recent State of the State address. He also emphasized the importance of Major League Baseball in Minnesota and that the Twins would not be the only private business to receive funding.

The controversy has also reached Open School. Jennifer Schultz, a teacher's aide and parent, has written a formal letter of protest to the State Legislature opposing the stadium. "Let the players who make six million dollars a year pay for the stadium," she said. Tara Wilken, a 10th grade student at Open, agreed. "The Twins already have a stadium to play in. Why can't they stay there?"

The players argue that the Metrodome is no place to play. The field dimensions are irregular and the seating is all wrong for baseball. Also, a lot of players end their careers by tearing up their knees on the Metrodome's Astroturf.

So why play there? The main pressure for the Metrodome came from the Vikings, who brought most of the money in during the 60s and 70s. They said that Metropolitan Stadium, an outdoor park built for baseball, was too cold to play in during December and January. So, the Twins, who hadn't appeared in a league championship game since 1968, followed the Vikings to the Metrodome when it opened in 1982.

Now the Twins, who are two-time World Series Champions, are putting the pressure on Minnesota to build them a retract-

able-roof stadium, a project that will cost approximately \$390 million, and many Minnesotans don't want to back it.

Will this issue ever be resolved?

Ratings continued from page 1

language and sexual content.

The ratings will be printed in the newspaper, some magazines, and T.V. Guides several times a week, along with several million brochures.

Sixth grader Arielle Weiler said she doesn't pay enough attention to the T.V., but she thinks it will help parents decide what their children watch.

But some parents don't agree with Arielle. Jennifer Schultz, a parent and Open School teacher's aid, has a different solution to help parents monitor what their children watch: lock boxes. "I don't believe in censorship," she stated.

"T.V. as a whole is brainwashing," said junior Teol Knight. She said the ratings will affect what she watches, although she doesn't watch a lot of T.V.

The only TV-M show/movie they plan to show is "Schindlers List," which will be shown uncensored in February on NBC, Channel 11.

For more about the T.V. ratings system on the internet, look up :
<http://www.tvguidelines.org>.
For more on TV ratings, see page 10.

EBD continued from page 1

on behalf of the staff, and a group of parents and students made an appearance at a school board meeting in November to ask to have the program removed. After a parents' meeting at Open School, Linda Freeman organized a meeting with Pat Fernandez, district director of special education, and members of the Open School community to help Open "support and understand the program." Also in attendance were Janet Becker, teacher on special assignment who helps to facilitate special ed programs in the district, and Willie Johnson, director of Teaching and Learning.

The two hour meeting, on January 9 began with insistent, often frustrated, and sometimes angry questioning of and about the placement decision, and of the types and amount of support that Open is getting from the district in this area.

The first question: why the P.A.S. program was placed at Open, was quickly answered. Every school in the district has a Level 5 program attached to it. And there is a precedent for 6-8th grade special education students

placed at a school with elementary students -- Monroe. The students at Monroe, however, are not labeled as EBD students.

Johnson stressed the district's space concerns, the fact that the district is expected to not segregate special education students, and the fact that the district already does not have the money to pay for state special education mandates, much less to construct new buildings. Johnson also stressed that "this is a public institution, and if we benefit the least of us, we benefit all of us."

Arguments ran in near-complete circles for one-and-a-half hours, until Mary Greenly, an Open School parent, tried to change to a more constructive discussion: "The first question [should be] not 'who is at fault?,' but 'what can be done to correct the decision?'"

This suggestion was a welcome relief for almost everyone there, especially the representatives from the district, who had been forced to find many ways to explain that there had been no alternative to the placement of the P.A.S. program at Open this year. Items for Greenly's list included: a new EA for the program (just

hired -- there are now three staff, all well qualified, and five students in the program); an adult bus monitor for one of the routes (3 students now ride separate routes, and 2 do not ride -- a previous monitor worked for only two weeks); education of students and parents about the nature of EBD (Janet Becker is available to help); a peer mediation program to resolve disputes (the money for training is in Open's budget); having the students read to kindergartners, to get them to be more involved in Open; possible mentoring of EBD students by older SLC students; and a puppet show dealing with Emotional-Behavioral Disorders for the ELC students.

Although everyone at the meeting agreed that these were things that could and should be done, many were unsatisfied with the district's inability to relocate the program, and unwilling to simply work with the situation as it exists now. Judging from the district's reaction, the P.A.S. program is not going anywhere soon.

SLC meetings take effect

Associated Press

On Wednesday, February 4, this year's first all-SLC meeting was held in room 305. The room was overflowing with students, most of them eager to see change happen in Open School. The meeting covered four topics: Interim, bathrooms, detention and pop machines.

The opening discussion on Interim seemed to carry the bulk of peoples' emotions. The general conclusion from that part of the meeting was that Interim was not going to happen this year, but that work would happen to

make sure it could occur next year. Two of the major questions in this plan are what will be done during Interim, and how long will it last?

Second on the agenda was the unsanitary conditions of the **bathrooms**. This topic naturally led to laughter among those present, but many good points were raised. Such topics as cleanliness and misuse of bathrooms were covered, and a proposed "adopt a stall" program will be brought into effect.

Next students talked about **detention**, and what its place is in our school. Most students agreed that talking with your advisor about a more effective means of discipline was a

good first step.

Finally, the discussion moved to whether or not there should be a candy and/or pop machine in the family room. The proposal recommended placing one of the two pop machines from downstairs into the family room, so students would be more awake during morning classes. This conversation was easier than the previous, due to its definite lack of controversy. David "Da Vinci" Bryan volunteered to take care of the problem.

Overall, the meeting was a success. Task forces were set up to deal with the aforementioned problems, and a second all-SLC meeting was scheduled for February 19.

Weeding Out The Stupid:

Road salt not for human ingestion
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TV Ratings:

Are they really needed?

(see page 8)

SDL:

Is it for working or screwing off?

(see page 8)

E & E

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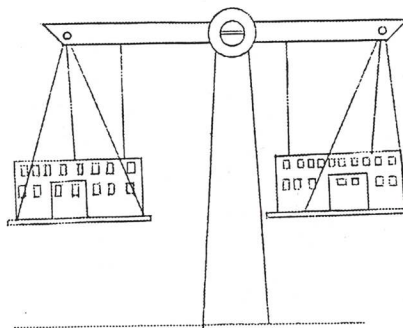
More or Less a School

Lauren Beitler
Staff Writer

So, of course, Open School has changed over the years, that's not the point. The point is that some of the changes that have taken place recently are not for the better. Detention, losing Interim, the list of things goes on and on. But it's difficult to work out a solution when there's such a lack of communication and trust between the teachers and the students.

Awhile ago, a group of students and I went to talk to the staff about Thematic Journeys, because we didn't think it should be mandatory and we thought it should be open to students of all

ages. We did surveys, argued, planned and presented our case to the staff, but the results were kind



of sad. Thematic Journeys is still required for seventh and eighth graders and still closed to every-

one else. I think sometimes the teachers are so sure they know what's best for the students that they forget to ask us. It seemed like they were hardly even willing to work with us. This school is supposed to let the students make decisions. It's supposed to give us an education that is individualized, not based on what is easiest for the teachers. That just isn't happening. Sure, it's better than at Central, but how much is that saying?

So, yes, we had trouble getting our opinion heard, and it
SCHOOL continued on page 11

Open Story 3

Wolfman
Staff Communist



Last Vote - D

As you look up at the oddly-shaped object, (at least, it looks odd to you) you proclaim, "I haven't seen one of those since the Sixties!"

You then live up to your title of ruthless cult leader and pull out a shotgun. You fire off several rounds at the flying object before it lands.

From the center of the craft a bright light appears. You avert your eyes, as do your faithful followers.

Soon, you adjust to the light and find you're being watched by little furry things with big eyes and no neck. One of them approaches you. You're washed over by a wave of emotions. Part of you is overjoyed by the fact that you've made contact with an alien life-form. Part of you wants to blow 'em away for squishing your azalias.

The one approaching you reaches his/her arms out. (You've never seen one before, how can you tell if they even have two

genders) In the creature's furry paws you find a gem that sparkles in the morning light. (That's obvious) You accept the gift politely, but are washed over by a pang of guilt. What can you give in return?

You look all around, but all you can find is:

- A - A six-pack of beer.
- B - A rusty old pickup.
- C - A slinky.
- D - A couple Frank Sinatra records.

Staff Columns

Weeding out the Stupid

I have many plans to solve the myriad problems with America. This is one.

My plan is simple. Weed out the stupid. Seriously. I mean, we have problems with unemployment, over-population, hunger, and lack of common sense.

Now, let me make a distinction. Stupidity is a lack of judgment, ignorance is a lack of knowledge. Ignorance can be cured. Stupidity is contagious and incurable.

Years and years ago, wars eliminated the stupid and smart alike. However, the ones that survived were generally the best of the lot, seeing as many of the stupid were eliminated during the course of the war. Now, this method of natural selection is very hazardous, so I propose to do this on a lesser scale.

Ban all warning labels and company liability. Twenty or thirty years ago, if you hurt yourself on a product they laughed at you. Now they reward your stupidity by giving you cash in a lawsuit and forever immortalize you by putting a blindingly obvious warning label on it. In fact, the only reason warning labels are on a package is because someone went out and did the thing it says not to do.

I mean, come on people, if

you have a bottle of bleach, do you really want to drink it? This stuff turns naturally dark cloth white. Do these people think it will taste good? Hair dryer boxes say not to use in shower. Ooo... please, let me do that. I want to have an electrical death. If you do something that stupid, what can you possibly provide the world? In the owners manual of the Ford Escort, a wonderful kiddy car, it shows, complete with a picture, how to open the window. Oh, that makes sense, of course, a whole page huh? Well okay.....Wait. Isn't it a crank operated window? Maybe, just maybe, if it had a whole panel of buttons and the window page showed which one it was that opened the window I could see why we need a whole page devoted to the safe operation of the personal two-way viewing



Andrew Netteberg
Staff Cynic

adjustable atmospheric modulator unit.

What we need to do is stop rewarding people for stupid acts, like when that fool person burned themselves on hot coffee at McDonald's, and sued because it was hot. What makes me mad is the fact was that she was shocked when she was burned. Listen, fool, unless you ordered an iced coffee, you should expect coffee to be hot.

Why do they show you how to operate a seat belt on an airplane? Is there anybody on this planet who can't figure this out? Hmm... let's see now, a slot, and a flat object just the right size to fit in the slot. Look people, the only ones out there who can not use a seat belt are the very old, very young, or the very stupid. The first two groups will have a flight attendant or parent/guardian, and the last group are the ones we are trying to get rid of. If you can't operate a seat belt, then we don't need you.

Besides, more to the point, if you really need these warnings, what are the odds that you could read them? So, rid America of the stupid and these people will never bother us again. Imagine, a world where you don't read the paper and see those stories about a boy who drank a bottle of Windex and is now battling for his life.

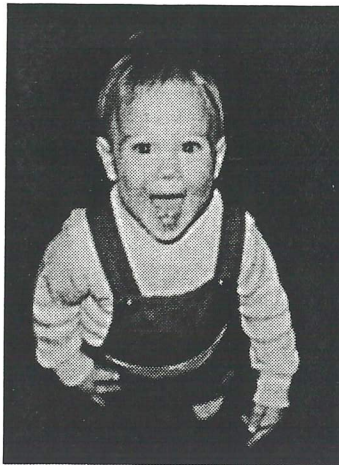
**If you would like to contribute something to
The Purple Press, talk to Leo in room 311.**

Parking in a Parallel Universe

I wish I could begin this column the way I had planned and say that all people who work for the Minnesota Department of Transportation are stupid, idiotic morons. Now I can only say that most of them are. I spent the last week, and a good portion of this week, trying to convince those same stupid, idiotic morons that I can safely operate a motor vehicle. I suppose an attitude adjustment may have helped, but #&% it I wasn't in the mood.

The first time around the course I drove with a man who never actually spoke, he just made little checks on little pieces of paper and grunted the directions. I grant you I probably wouldn't be saying any of this if I had passed the test, in fact I know I wouldn't be saying any of this. I wouldn't say, for example, that he was a chinless, humorless, spineless, brainless, slow-witted, bloated, tiresome man, with the personality of a moth ball. That doesn't mean it isn't true, I just wouldn't say it. Somewhere in the back of my mind I can hear my second grade teacher saying, "Shannon it's not nice to make fun of people's personal defects." No, Mrs. Schmidt, it's not nice, but it's fun and it makes me feel good. Besides, everyone's got to have a gift.

The second time around I had a better idea of what they wanted to see. For instance, when turning out of a parking lot look



Shannon Scott
Staff Writer

both ways, look both ways again, then climb over the steering wheel, smash your forehead against the windshield, stare at the empty course for a full five minutes, sit back and say, "I don't see anyone coming, do you?"

I drove with a woman who looked and sounded like she just stepped out of the movie *Fargo*. I hate it when people fit a stereotype perfectly, it takes all the challenge out of making fun of them. I'm still not sure what I did wrong on this particular test, but I think cones were involved. As far as I'm concerned, those little orange cones were designed to be run over. They don't do any damage to your car, it's not like hitting a pedestrian.

After she told me I had failed, again, she asked me to drive her back to the station. Somehow this seemed foolish. However, being the optimist that I

am, I chose to look at it as an opportunity. After driving very fast, and turning even faster, I ran a red light to make sure she got the point. I figure she's lucky I didn't shove her "Minnesota nice" butt out of my car.

By my third test, I was beginning to lose all hope. These people were worse than, dare I say it, oral hygienists. I imagined them driving on a city street and having seizures every time someone didn't use a turn signal. I can only hope they aren't members of the National Rifle Association. I suppose driving around all day with teenagers, the elderly and people who don't speak English can make one resentful, but I would think that wearing one of those nifty government jackets would make up for some of it.

For my third test, a very sweet older man entered my car. He was funny, nice, and understood that I drive better carrying on a conversation and having the music on. I drove the course smoothly, with a final score of 96. I also learned that not everyone in the Minnesota Department of Transportation fits my stereotype, but I'm not admitting that I'm wrong or less right in any way. I want everyone to know that. So now I have my drivers license, which means I never have to make a full and complete stop ever again or drive the speed limit or slow down when I see a yellow light. See you on the roads!

Thanks for reading The Purple Press!

TV rating system not all it's cracked up to be

Jonathan Lubke
Staff Writer

With the current reality of the V-chip, and television rating system, we can't help but wonder how it will affect students like us.

It is now well known that TV has instituted a system similar to movies. (TV-G, TV-PG, TV-14, TV-M.) The problem with this is that producers will feel pressured to give their show an easier rating, to keep from restricting their audience. Therefore, parents have to block out all the shows of an entire rating, just to stop their kids from watching one or two racy shows by money-grubbing producers.

In most cases, the program parents asked for was content-based, not generic. Therefore, if parents are pacifists that don't mind their kids seeing people in the nude, or want to be in charge of the sex-ed in the house, but like a little cussing and violence, they could censor selectively.

"It doesn't do anything for people. Daytime talk shows are rated TV-G, just like the Disney afternoon," says angry citizen Ehren Stemme.

But in all reality, having a little symbol in the upper-left hand corner isn't too obvious. I didn't even know it was there until someone pointed it out to me. Most people, finding the habit of glancing for a rating every time a show comes on as being pointlessly obnoxious, won't even bother. So, in conclusion, the best part of this new government-proposed idiocy may be that it just helped us realize how much we really don't need it.

SDL Opinion

Kate Dyson
Contributing Writer

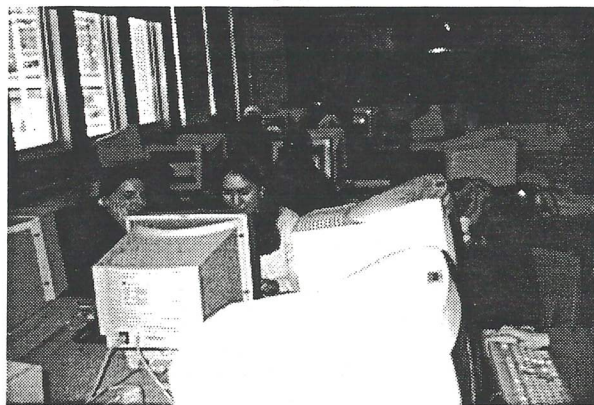
Every time I walk into the family room, I see approximately five people playing cards, one person writing on the table, two people talking about whom they want to date, one person reading the paper and one person sleeping. I often ask the people that are awake what they are doing. "We have SDL," is the response.

When did SDL become synonymous with screwing off? According to my advisor, it hasn't. Students still write up plans and goals for SDL, and apparently some still work. But, I don't see students working. And if I, a student who is looking for stu-

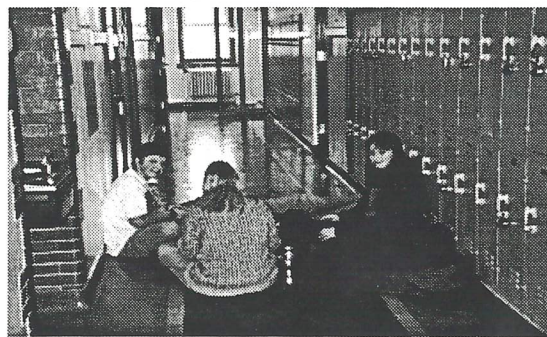
dents working during SDL, don't see it, does Ruth? Do the people that come and tour the school? Probably not.

I understand that relaxing and knocking around are in school essentials; but are they needed during your block of SDL every day? I don't think so. I think that, at most, an hour a week of your SDL time on something *other* than working is reasonable.

Would you miss SDL if it were taken away? I would. Do you think that SDL will be kept if only half the students who have it do work? Next time you sit to play cards or chat about boys, think about this.



A productive SDL



Students take time out of a busy day to relax

De Olde
Purple
Press

'Tis better
than mince
pies!

Scream

Cori Lyons
Staff Critic

Scream is a horror movie that makes fun of horror movies. I know it sounds weird, but it's true. Directed by Wes Craven, the movie stars Neve Cambell, Courtney Cox, Drew Barrymore, and other actors that are very good at what they do. These actors/actresses fit their characters well and do a terrific job of scaring you.

Drew Barrymore stars in only, say, the first half-hour of the movie. She plays a teenage girl, home alone, about to watch a few cheap horror flicks. Until she gets a phone call from a killer.

The killer uses a cellular phone to call his victims before he plans to kill them. He waits outside their houses, until they "lose the game." The killer asks the victim three questions about classic horror movies. Get one wrong, get hurt.

Sydney (Neve Cambell) is being stalked by this killer. She comes very close to being violently murdered, many times. Sydney's mother was raped and killed exactly one year ago, and Sydney is still completely crushed by her death. There's talk around town that Sydney's mother "slept around," and that it had something to do with her murder. The haunting stories are dug up and all over the news, after she is attacked for the first time. She can't get away from all of her bad memories.

I don't care what anyone else thinks, I thought this movie was well worth the \$4.50 I spent to see it in a nice theater, despite the fact that some sick person cheered every time someone was brutally murdered. It kind of made the movie a little scarier, knowing there was some strange guy that loved watching blood splatter, sitting only 3 rows away from me.

It's a little cheesy in some

*... I think this
movie was well
worth the \$4.50 I
spent to see it in a
nice theater.*

parts, and there's some pretty weird, confusing stuff going on. The ending is especially strange, when you find out who the psycho-killer is.

Scream is not a movie for easily-grossed-out people. There's blood flying every ten minutes, sometimes less. For the first half-hour, bodies are literally turned inside-out. There's also people jumping out from behind everything there is to jump out from behind, constantly.

At some parts I was worried the people behind me were laughing at me for jolting every time someone ran out from behind a door. I heard quite a few "Ewww"s and "Ick"s during some of the really gory parts.

I recommend everyone go see it as soon as possible. Bring some friends so you'll have somebody to tell you when to close your eyes, buy some popcorn, and have a good time.

In a Nutshell

What - *Scream*

Category - Horror/Comedy

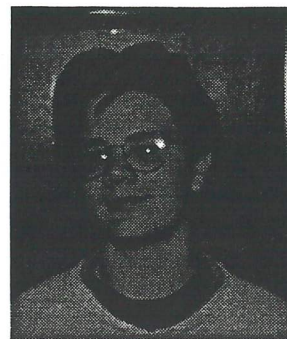
Rated - R

Director - Wes Craven

Starring - Neve Campbell,
Courtney Cox, Drew Barrymore

Rating - **** of five stars

Dam Ice



Wolfman
Staff Communist

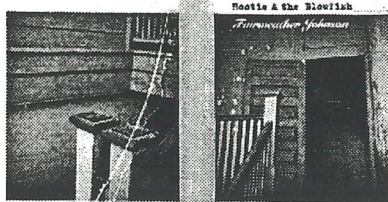
Climbing on the roof to scrape out the gutter is not the most appealing thing to be doing this winter. Neither is shoveling out 80 square feet of driveway.

Homes all over town have been suffering from this month's thaw. Monolithic icicles hang from the edges, looking like something from "Dr. Zhivago."

Of course, the capitalist system dictates that under such circumstances, the charge for businesses to scrape the ice off people's houses is to be monumental. Some places charge as much as \$2,000 to go up and chip off a little ice. But, unless you want it leaking through and forming a swimming pool in your living room, you'll reluctantly pay. For those who don't know how much \$2,000 equals out to, a family of four could go to the movies 75 times. It would cover approximately five months rent for a standard Minneapolis apartment. Or, one could buy at least three top-of-the-line lawn mowers, and your first summer's worth of gas.

Another winter tragedy that we all endure in quiet, private anguish is shoveling snow. Those of us who aren't privileged with a working snowblower know the agony that comes from scooping out the gargantuan piles of frozen gunk that the snowplows leave behind, almost as if to keep you

Wolfman continued on page 10



HOOTIE AND THE BLOWFISH

Ehren Stemme
Staff Critic

Fairweather Johnson
1996, Atlantic 82886-2

For Hootie fans, it gets a bit tedious. For anti-Hootie people, it gets *very* tedious.

The eagerly-anticipated followup to their 1994 release, **Cracked Rear View**, Fairweather Johnson turns out to be little more than a half-brained attempt to cash in on their popularity.

Darius Rucker and company do well on the first few tracks. Rucker falls apart, though, making the rest of the band seem to lose its will to make good music. Listeners are enticed by such songs as "She Crawls Away" and "Tucker's Town," but are doomed to suffer through 40 minutes of monotonous mumbling. These horrible tunes are best compared to Jackson Browne on Prozac.

Overall, I found this CD to be a major disappointment. I am embarrassed to own it. But if you absolutely must have this disc, wait a few months, because it will end up in every music store's bargain box very soon.

In A Nutshell

What: Hootie Fairweather Johnson

Category: Pop/soft rock

Should you buy it? Not if you can help it.

Rating: *1/2 of 5 stars

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Video Pic of the Month

Jonathan Lubke - Staff Critic



The first video of choice is "Spaceballs," the original Mel Brooks' spoof on "Star Wars." It hasn't been hailed as one of Brooks' best, but it deserves a place next to "Men in Tights", "Blazing Saddles", and "Silent Movie."

The dialogue is decent, but for a Brooks film it's easy to set a high standard. The best line would have to be "Your Schwartz is bigger than mine." (You have to see it to get) Most of the laughs will be missed by non-Star Wars folks, but those who practically live that stuff will either be offended by the thought of a parody, or critique Brooks' knowledge of Lucas's classic.

The plotline is a little shaky, but it's not supposed to be serious, so don't worry. The laughs are great. Characters like Pizza the Hutt and Major (Butt)hole really liven up this old film. The scenes with Spaceball One and Yogurt are really a riot as well.

In A Nutshell

What - Spaceballs

Rated - PG, For language and sexual innuendo, (Duh, it's Brooks!)

Category - Comedy/Sci-fi

Made - 1986

Director - Mel Brooks

Starring - Bill Pullman, Mel

Brooks, John Candy, Rick Moranis

Rating - **** of 5 stars

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trapped in your driveway.

Besides the hours of monotonously inching your way toward the pavement that disappeared sometime in November, and the bitter cold numbing the tips of your fingers, the worst effect of this is what it does to your back. The constant bending, lifting motion is what will inevitably give us bad backs in the future. Of course, all the parents who have bad backs enlist the help of strong-backed youth to do their crippling work. Of course, they got their bad backs from doing all this work when they were young and did the job for their bad-backed parents. And when we have children, our backs will be no better than our parents' at that age. Thus, the endless cycle of manual labor.

And so why wouldn't we all leave to someplace where the snowbanks don't obstruct the view from a pickup truck? Because we're too Scandinavian. I'm not saying that every Minnesotan is by hereditary Norwegian, and dismissing everyone who is not. I'm saying that whatever gene defines these hearty Swedes pops up in other races and creeds. That gene draws them to places like Minnesota. This gene gives us the ability and right to make fun of all those people in New Mexico who panic at the sight of half an inch of snow. (Three inches would cause massive hysteria and likely lead to anarchy.) It also lets us laugh at those out-of-towners who walk around in in forty degree weather, Sweater weather, wearing eighty pounds of parka.

But no matter how Minnesotan we are, no one enjoys shoveling now, or scraping ice off the roof.

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will be even more work getting people to agree, but if we don't try, if we just let it go every time the problem requires some organization and work, then we are in danger of becoming just another Central, where you put in you six-and-a-half hours and leave ASAP.

Open has been a school, more or less, for over 25 years. In that time, there has always been someone willing to stand up for what they thought was best for the school. There has always been someone who cared. Students still care, but it seems like it's not enough to make them get involved. They'll complain, and, if you ask them, they'll probably agree (at least the ones I've talked to will) that this school is becoming more like a traditional school and that's bad. But when an important issue comes up, one that requires a fight, I don't see many people volunteering.

Those that do volunteer usually forget about it when the

rest of their life gets too hectic. Of course, the rest of your life is important and of course not all students are like that, but the point remains the same: students need to voice their opinion and get involved. I think about the Thematic Journeys thing and wonder, why should we get involved if it's not going to get us anywhere? But with Thematic Journeys, that was small group of students that went to talk to the staff. Maybe if everyone works, or at least voices their opinion (we got back maybe 50 of the surveys we sent out, I think we can do better than that) then we can accomplish something, if anyone even cares.

Whenever anybody has a complaint or a problem because of some new rule or change, we always end up reminiscing about the "good old days," like we're ninety years old sitting in our porch rockers. The "good old days" weren't always so great. Hardly anybody got any work done here. Things were somewhat

chaotic. But a lot of things were better. I don't have any easy solutions to the problems that face this school. Maybe a compromise can be worked out, between the way things used to be when nothing got done and the way things are now, where the wrong things are getting done, things like classes that are unnecessary for some students.

What I do know is that unless we can agree on something and work together and figure out what we all want, we're not going to get anywhere. So what we as students can do is to organize and work toward our goals for this school. Get involved. Speak out. There's been an all-SLC meeting to talk about these issues, especially the fact that we're not having interim anymore, and get everybody's opinion on what needs to be done.

This Winter...

Brian Blakely
Staff Reporter

Sunday, Jan. 5th, the plowing times changed unexpectedly, getting more than 2,200 people's cars ticketed or towed for not moving their cars in time.

"We would have been hamstrung all winter if we had not acted," said mayor Norm Coleman, "If the streets had not been plowed during the January thaw . . . the cold weather that has followed would have resulted in ice that not even our plows could remove." The mayor has already said he would pay back the price people had paid if they got ticketed last Sunday before 8 A.M., but is that enough?

What do people who have to drive say?

"I think (towing for

plows) is a necessary evil," said Leo Bickelhaupt, a teacher at Open School. Junior, Ehren Stemme, said, "They don't do anything about the ice; I ran into a snow drift because of those {things}."

The snow plow times aren't the only things that were affected by the cold-to-warm weather, Paris was completely stalled by snow and all trade coming out of there has stopped, and many cities, like Reno, Nevada are completely flooded.

And even here at Open School, winter has made its mark. What about that "blizzard" that we had? It ended up closing school and there wasn't even any snow, except the stuff being carried around by the wind.

Nearly everyone has been affected by the weather in some way. "People tend to be more depressed during winter because [winter] is darker, slower, it's harder to get places," said John Grotenhuis.

"It's not as much depressing as it is stressful," said Julie Doble. "I mean, it's harder to get places, it takes more work to drive."

On the other hand, some people like winter and all its many deep freezes. "I love snow," said Walter Jones, who had graduated minutes before he answered this question, so it may have affected his answer. "My opinion on winter is, if you can't go skiing, it stinks! Ha ha ha ha ha."

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