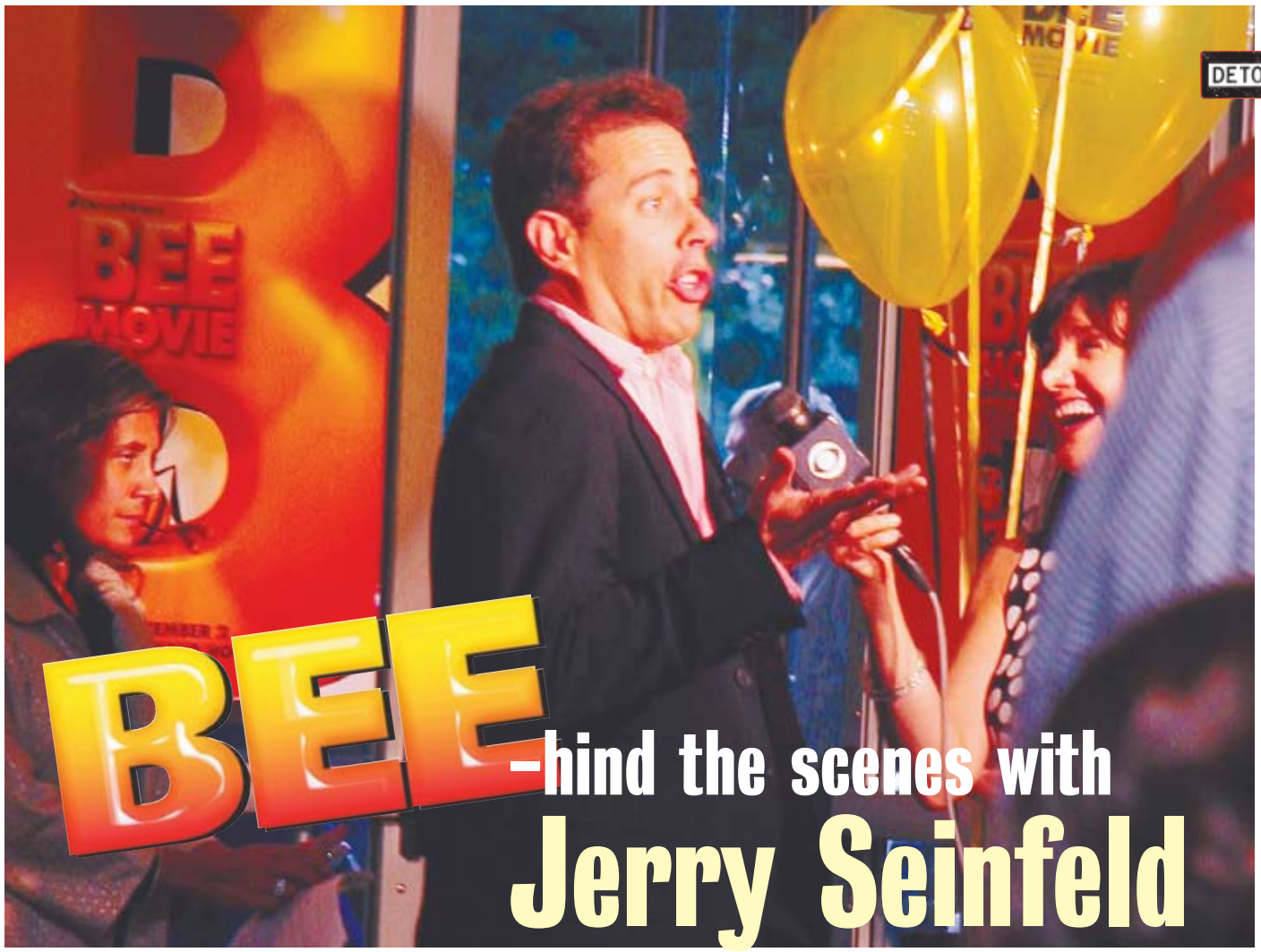
TEENS in PRINT BOSTON

BOSTON TEENS IN PRINT DECEMBER 2007



BEE-hind the scenes with Jerry Seinfeld

▲ Photos by: Jane Caper

BY CARLA GUALDRON // T.I.P. SENIOR EDITOR

I walked into the Loew's downtown movie theater ready for an unforgettable interview. I arrived early. The staff was setting up the 'red carpet.' The lobby was covered in "Bee Movie" promotional posters. There was a sense of excitement with staff running around fastidiously making sure everything was prepared for the man of the hour. Members of the press and fans patiently filled the lobby waiting for the special guest, who was two hours late. Finally, he arrived. Cameras flashed and fans had their pens ready for autographs. Ladies and gentlemen, the legendary Jerry Seinfeld was in the building.

My initial assignment was to interview Seinfeld about his new animated film "Bee Movie." But in the world of journalism, things don't always work out exactly how they are planned. Since I was the only teenager on the press side, I had to compete with the big time papers and news stations in order to get my questions in. Considering he arrived two hours late, I only had a couple of minutes to chat with the star. With my recorder in hand and my questions ready, I anxiously waited for him to make his way down the carpet. There I was shaking hands with Jerry Seinfeld, former TV star and now, film creator, and for a 17-year-old reporter this was an opportunity of a lifetime. I had just enough time for a few questions. Here's my conversatioon with the man who created "The Bee Movie."

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T.i.P.'s Carla Gualdron with Seinfeld

DETOUR

New school chief brings passion for music, sports, education

By Neelabh Bharti
T.i.P. Associate Editor

NEW BOSTON school superintendent Carol Johnson has returned to the cold, coming to Boston after a 30-year career in education, first in Minneapolis and then as superintendent in Memphis, close to her hometown. In her new job, she is superintendent of a school system with around 57,000 students, compared to the Memphis population of 119,000. In an exclusive interview with Teens in Print, the new education chief said: "If you've been in a large system like that, some of the issues, regardless of size, are similar."

Still, Boston's smaller school district has some large, system-wide

[NEW SCHOOL CHIEF, PAGE 6]

▲ Photo by: Shawn McLaughlin

Carol Johnson

SCHOOL LOCKDOWNS PAGE 7 ■ STRESS BUSTERS THAT WORK PAGE 11 ■ HOLIDAY CALENDAR PAGE 12 ■ HOROSCOPES PAGE 18

From The Editor:

We have a jam-packed issue in this latest "Teens in Print." First, you can read about Monster Jam 2007 as experienced by our staffers who had box seats at the TD Banknorth Garden. Find out what happened, and what didn't happen, and who performed and how, if you weren't there yourself.

Then we have an interview with actor/director Jerry Seinfeld about his latest project, "Bee Movie." T.i.P. senior editor Carla Gualdrón was the only teen reporter in the room the day Seinfeld came to Boston to promote his new animation project. That didn't stop her from joining in.

We also have an interview with filmmaker Ken Burns, about his latest project, "The War," a documentary about World War II.

Our third interview is with Superintendent of schools Carol Johnson about how she likes the city and what she plans to do with our public schools. Check out our exclusive cover story with Boston's new school chief.

In addition, you can read coverage of Archbishop Desmond Tutu's visit to Boston, including his participation in a forum at the John F. Kennedy Library, where he spoke with local teens about violence and how to stop it.

Aside from these high-profile articles, we have our usual winter reads so you will know what clothes to buy and what gifts to give.

—By Neelabh Bharti, T.i.P. Associate Editor

The Boston Globe FOUNDATION

WriteBoston

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JANELLY CHAVEZ
Year in school: Senior
Favorite holiday food: Flan with fruit on top
Fun fact: My dream place to go is Africa.
Favorite holiday tradition: Opening gifts at midnight on Christmas Eve

NICK COSTA
Year in school: Senior
Favorite winter activity: Snowboarding
Fun fact: I don't really like summer.
New Year's resolution: To not die

CARLA GUALDRÓN
Year in school: Senior
Best present ever received: A trip to Colombia
Favorite winter activity: Snowball fights
Favorite holiday food: Pastelón

MIKE SMITH
Year in school: Senior
Favorite holiday food: Stuffing
Favorite winter activity: Staying warm
New Year's resolution: Buy a car that goes from 0 to 60 in under 5.5 seconds

NEELABH BHARTI
Year in school: Senior
Fun fact: I'm a vegetarian.
Best present ever received: A guitar and amp
Favorite holiday tradition: Not going to school

IDALIN ORTIZ
Year in school: Senior
New Year's resolution: Build a more positive attitude
Favorite winter activity: Ice skating, although I always get hurt
Favorite holiday food: My grandmother's yellow rice and seafood salad

JENNIFER SÁNCHEZ
Year in school: Junior
Favorite winter activity: Ice skating
Fun fact: I love candy apples.
Favorite holiday food: Sweet potato pie

SARAH BLANCHETTE
Year in school: Junior
Best present ever received: A computer from my dad
New Year's resolution: To stop drinking so much coffee
Favorite holiday food: Turkey and stuffing

STUART SPINA
Year in school: Junior
Favorite holiday tradition: Listening to Christmas carols in other languages
Favorite winter activity: Sledding
Fun fact: I write short stories in Latin

RYAN WARD
Year in school: Junior
Favorite winter activity:
Making snow angels
Plans for winter vacation:
Chill with Nick Costa
Best present ever received:
Underwear

KATRYNA MAHONEY
Year in school: Sophomore
Fun fact:
I brush my teeth in the shower.
Best present ever received:
Tiffany's bracelet
Favorite holiday tradition: Decorating the Christmas tree

CIARA MARTINEZ
Year in school: Sophomore
Favorite holiday food: Candy cane
Favorite winter activity:
Snowball fights
New Year's resolution:
Stay on top of my game

DANIEL ALFARO
Year in school: Sophomore
New Year's resolution: Take more risks
Favorite holiday food: Turkey
Plans for winter vacation:
Going to Canada

NATALYN YU
Year in school: Freshman
Plans for winter vacation:
Friends, family, and shoveling snow
Favorite holiday tradition: Shopping for gifts and buying things for myself
Fun fact: I was born on Friday the 13th

SANDY LLANG
Year in school: Freshman
Favorite winter activity:
Drinking hot cocoa
New Year's resolution: To make someone feel good every day
Best present ever received:
A stationary set from my mom

OLIVE TANG
Year in school: Freshman
Best present ever received:
A picture from my brother
Favorite holiday food:
Anything Chinese
Favorite winter activity: Reading

PAIGE CARRUTHERS
Year in school: Freshman
Favorite holiday food:
Candied yams with marshmallows
Fun fact:
I can salsa (but don't ask me to)
Best present ever received:
A trip to NYC with my four best friends

WANT TO SEE YOUR NAME IN PRINT?

Write for T.i.P Boston Teens in Print

WANT TO BE FAMOUS?

Submission Guidelines

SEND your essays, letters, articles, commentaries, poems, stories, pen and ink drawings, cartoons, and photos.

E-MAIL submissions to:

christine.hayes.jcs@cityofboston.gov

Send them as MS Word attachments–NOT in the e-mail message.

Give your name. We don't print anything anonymously.

FORMAT your writing:

- Double spaced Times New Roman, 12 point font.

- In the upper left corner, print your name, T.i.P. Writer, and a title or headline.

Whatever you submit has to be YOUR OWN CREATION. We only print original work. Please write "this is my own creation" next to your name.

You will not get your work back;

KEEP A COPY for yourself.

T.i.P. reserves the right to EDIT your work for length, content, or appropriateness.

T.i.P Mission Statement

Boston Teens in Print (T.i.P.) unites Boston teens to create an outlet to inform, communicate, and provide positive change through written expression.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Write for T.i.P! That's "Teens in Print." We need 100 percent, certified organic, teen-produced content. Send us your words for people to peep. We want your opinions, news stories, shout-outs, announcements, reviews, poems, drawings, photos, and cartoons.

Next issue: March 2008
Send submissions by mail to:
Boston Teens in Print
PO Box 55819
Boston, MA 02205

E-mail submissions to:
christine.hayes.jcs@cityofboston.gov

Call us:
WriteBoston: 617-541-2604
T.i.P. voicemail: 617-929-8374

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BOSTON T.i.P.
DECEMBER 11, 2007, Volume IV, No. 15

Art/Photography
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T.i.P. Senior Editor
Carla Gualdron
T.i.P. Associate Editors
Neelabh Bharti
Janelly Chavez
T.i.P. Senior Writers
Sarah Blanchette
Ciara Martinez
Jennifer Sánchez
Michael Smith
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Ryan Ward
T.i.P. Staff Writers
Daniel Alfaro
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▲ Photo by: Artists for Humanity

The pros and cons of extended school hours

By Idalin Ortiz // T.i.P. Staff Writer

Everyone has their opinions about extended school hours. It's a fact we can't ignore. In my opinion, schools are extending their hours because they feel a student will gain knowledge by spending more time in the classroom. Extended hours is also an advantage because it's a way of keeping teens off the streets. Academically, some teens may feel they need more time in school so they can learn more. Knowing their child is in school gives parents a more secure feeling, as many parents have jobs which they must work at for longer hours than their child is in school.

The negative side of extended school hours is it may not give teens much freedom. It's hard for a teen who has been used to a certain schedule to adjust to a new one. At English High School, a pilot school for extended hours, the school day now runs from 7:45 a.m.-3:25 p.m. This presents problems for students who work since most jobs for teens start at 3 p.m., or earlier. It's harder for those teens who play sports to extend their school hours. Most games are held after school and students may not be ready on time, or even worse, they may not be able to play. Extended school hours hold other teens back from their responsibilities at home and with their families. For example, some teens have siblings they have to take care of or pick up from school. The extended school day does not always fit in with a student's schedule and other responsibilities.

Are extended school hours any good for students? I feel that extended school hours aren't such a good idea. Many teens feel uncomfortable with the extra hours they may have to put into school. Don't get me wrong. School is a very important aspect of a teenager's life, but if there is a change, shouldn't students have a voice?

I had the opportunity to interview Jonah Rodriguez, a 17-year-old senior from English High School about this topic. He said: "The advantage I have of going to school for longer hours is that I have more time with my teachers and I'm able to get my grades up." As for disadvantages, he did mention "I don't have time for after-school commitments." He added: "Not every student works well academically with longer school hours. We all do think and work differently."

Xavier Caban, a 17-year old-student from Media Communications Technology High School, said: "If they change the school hours in my school I would go crazy. I mean having an extended school day doesn't give a student enough time to handle school and a job. Some students do have to help their parents, like myself. Going to school until 3:30 p.m. wouldn't be beneficial. Everyone should just get out at the same time."

The way I see it, every high school in the city should get out at the same time, not later, or earlier than the rest. We need one policy on school hours for all the schools so students can plan accordingly.

Changing attitude, leaving gang brings teen through the storm

By John McNeil//T.i.P. Writer

Allow me to introduce myself. I am John McNeil, a 17-year-old boy from Dorchester. When I was in eighth grade, my mom and I didn't get along. I didn't care about her opinion. I didn't get the chance to explain my wrong doings so I never gave her the chance to discipline me. Frustrated, my mother often kicked me out of the house. All I heard from adults in my life was that I was going nowhere and I wasn't worth their time. Eventually I believed them.

For my freshman year, my parents sent me to Trinity Catholic High School in Newton. They hoped it would shape me into a good student and for the first few months it worked. Soon, my destructive ways returned. I argued with teachers and stole from classmates. I was kicked out of school by March for behavior issues.

I then attended Excel High School in South Boston, which was full of negative and troubled students. I played football and was named the second best player in Boston. However, I soon fell into a group of rebellious team members and found trouble again. I knew my behavior was wrong but I didn't know how to change.

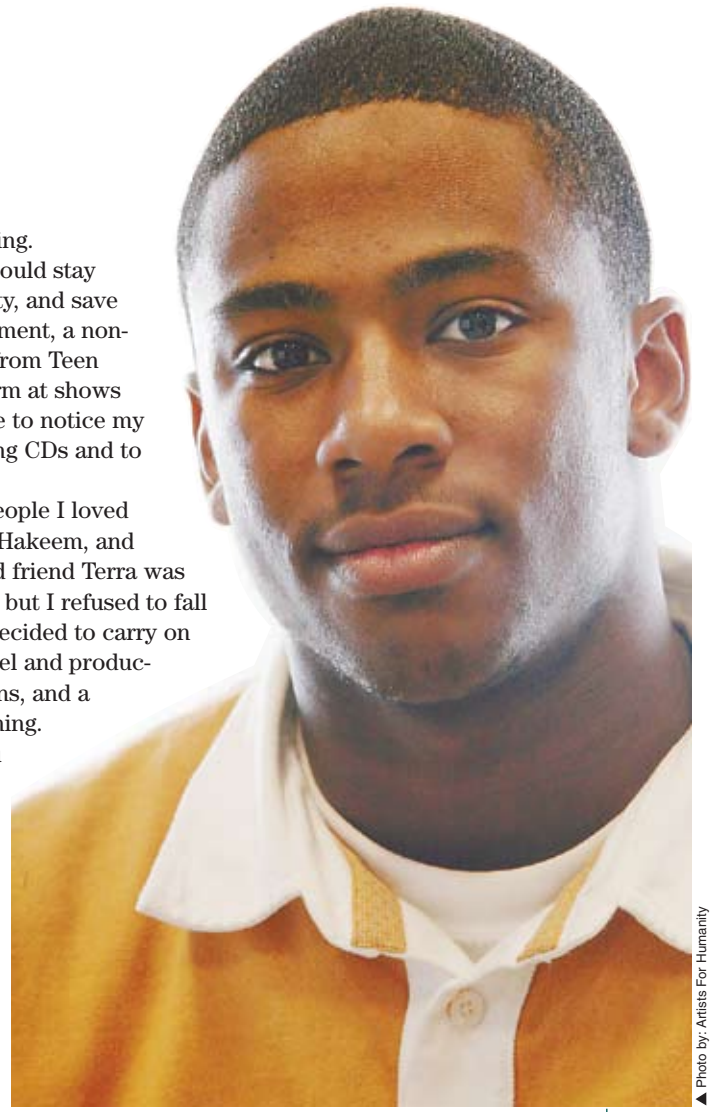
Growing up, my Uncle Marc told me to stay out of Wainwright Park. I didn't listen. During spring of sophomore year, I joined the local gang, also called Wainwright Park. I spent hours on the streets doing things like robbing people and stashing people's drugs. I knew this wasn't my style, but it seemed like those boys understood me more than my own family. I became a disgrace to my family and true friends. I was turning my life into the perfect bad example.

On May 26, 2006, while I was at Wainwright Park, my uncle was shot to death outside his home. I should have been with him instead of where he did not want me to be. After his death, I left Wainwright and never returned. I attended summer school, but I just played around and told jokes. In September, I discovered I couldn't play football because I had not passed my classes. My lack of effort cost me the only positive thing I had going.

One day I saw a flier that said I could stay out of trouble, better my community, and save lives by working at Teen Empowerment, a non-profit organization. I learned a lot from Teen Empowerment and began to perform at shows rapping and acting. As people came to notice my talent, I was inspired to start making CDs and to mix tapes.

In November 2006, I lost three people I loved to violence: my friends Calvin and Hakeem, and my aunt. Then, on May 22, my good friend Terra was brutally killed. It was a tragic time, but I refused to fall back into my old ways. Instead, I decided to carry on Terra's name. I started a record label and production company, Terra Era Productions, and a clothing line named Terra Era clothing.

I have learned: life is a game you must play, but you can't let it play you. You can't let anyone tell you you can't do something because when you do, you have been defeated. I am no longer a failure. I am successful. Allow me to reintroduce myself. My name is John McNeil. I am a writer, CEO, songwriter, recording artist, actor, speaker, advocate, and a professional young man.



▲ Photo by: Artists For Humanity

John McNeil has turned his life around.

Teen speech: poverty causes hunger, war, instability

(This speech, shortened for publication, was given by Lucky Egharevba and Jeanne Tran at the Moakley Public Speaking Institute banquet in August.)

We're here to inform you about a complex issue: poverty. In places like Malawi and India, there is a lack of health care. Many poor people in Pakistan and Venezuela receive little education. In places like Sudan, and even in the US, high crime exist.

What does poverty have to do with this? Poverty has been the cause of instability in our world which leads to problems that must be addressed. Hundreds of thousands of people are dying each day as a result of starvation. The Millennium Project's 2007 report states that more than 800 million people go to bed hungry every night. According to a 2007 United Nations report, 25,000 people worldwide die of hunger daily.

Another reason people die is because they live in poor countries where health care systems barely exist. A Malawian mother has to walk at least 10 miles to seek medical help and may return without any medication. Some facts from the Millenium Project include: approximately 300-500 million people are currently infected with malaria, a treatable disease. In 2006, 2.9 million died because of AIDS & HIV infections because they had limited resources for prevention and treatment.

Poverty also causes a gap in educational opportunities. Imagine a school where there are untrained teachers in crowded classrooms with out-of-date textbooks. There are schools in poor countries where conditions are exactly like this. Children cannot focus when they are in school because they are too weak from hunger or very sick. As Felipe Saez, the World Bank's representative from Venezuela, says: "Education is truly critical to overcome poverty and create prosperity."

Studies from the Eisenhower Foundation show there is a higher crime rate in poorer communities. The wealthiest nation on earth, the US, has the widest gap between rich and poor of any industrialized nation. Each afternoon, millions of children in poor communities are left unsupervised after school. Not only can this lead to bored children, it can result in higher dropout rates and juvenile crime. Onlinelawyersource.com verifies that crimes committed by juveniles are likely to occur during hours immediately following the end of school. With all this bad news, what can you do to help? Students, when you go to college and pursue your dream, do it with a purpose to help the world. Whenever you can, raise other students's awareness, not only about poverty, but of its solutions. Ask for help in creating more affordable after-school programs for students like you. Parents and teachers: One way to help is by engaging students in a penny drive as a way to raise money and send it to a trusted organization. Or you can support a school in a place like Venezuela or Pakistan. You can even write to your political representative or your local newspapers to discuss ways to help the less fortunate.

The bottom line: Poverty is a major cause for the lack of health care and malnutrition, unequal education, and crime. When tonight is over, remember: the UN and our government cannot be the only solution. As individuals, we too can help make the world a better place.

By Damien Leach // T.i.P. Writer

BSAC has been hard at work thinking of ways for students to excel in school. Look for our posters around school explaining things students feel are important. We will start with posters based on cellphone and punctuality policies, then add more on student/teacher relationships, homework, military opting-out, student governments, physical education, and transportation.

BSAC is trying to spread awareness and promote student engagement by encouraging extra-curricular activities and ways to develop good relationships with teachers. Student engagement enhances school climate and leads to better test scores. Once teachers recognize a student's struggle, they can address any confusion a student has on assignments, situations, or decisions. We are also working on reinstating the Superintendent Circular T&L-3, which requires schools to have an active student government or council. Two approaches to increasing student engagement are to strengthen existing student leadership teams and to form a schoolwide team to create and apply a plan to better your school.

Recently, BSAC presented to the Youth Transitions Task Force and gave them feedback on their recommendations. BSAC shared that it is important for teachers to focus more on understanding students. Teachers need to understand that students have different personal and school needs and should try to help accommodate those students. BSAC feels teachers should take into account that students learn differently. Also, schools need to focus on different learning techniques so students can pick schools shaped to their learning styles. Another way for teachers to be more engaged with students is by making lectures relevant to life and to transitions after school. They could help students create a portfolio of careers they are interested in and employment opportunities which would help them toward being a professional in their choice of career. Teachers need to explain how important it is to stay in school and how hard it is to come back when you drop out. There needs to be a harder process for dropping out than a sign out sheet.

Another issue for BSAC is homework, something students and teachers often negotiate. Did you know the Boston Public School homework policy states that "meaningful, productive, focused homework that reinforces the curriculum and strengthens students understandings will be assigned and completed on a regular basis for every class?" You are probably thinking, "Gee, every day…loads of homework from every class, how can I get it done if I have baseball practice on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, plus baby sitting, and at the same time, MCAS prep?" The policy also states that homework should be flexible, and that teachers are responsible for setting clear expectations and assignment practices. BSAC is concerned that the policy is not consistently enforced across schools, and some are assigning significantly more homework than the recommended 2.5 hours a night. A large number of BPS students have after school commitments, including jobs, which leave them little time to complete hours of school work.

In order for students to have the time and energy they need to excel, BSAC recommends homework should be the recommended time (2.5 hours) and coordinated across classes and between teachers; it should also be engaging. Students are held responsible for not completing their homework through detention and sometimes even suspension so it is necessary for teachers to be more available to talk with students and help with time management.

If you have questions, BSAC is open to discussion. We are looking for more students interested in leadership positions in their schools. If you would like to get involved, contact Maria I. Ortiz, BSAC Coordinator, at mortiz@boston.k12.ma.us or at 617-594-5721.

Boston teen returned to Colombia

By Moriah Smith // T.i.P. Writer

What would you do for a friend? Recently my school, Boston Latin Academy, was put to the test and forced to answer that question. Thinking back on how BLA answered the fears of David Arias, a former student at our school, we learned that David had 1,700 friends who would do anything to help him.

David was a cool person who had dreams just like everyone else. He and his little brother have parents who love them and would do anything. They wanted their sons to experience the opportunities of this world and go to schools that would ensure their chances of getting into college. Some time ago David found out why this was so important to them. His parents were illegal immigrants from Colombia because they wanted their family to have the best in America.

When immigration riots were on the rise in late 2006, David and his family looked for refuge with relatives in Canada. This was the first time David said goodbye to us. He left BLA to move to Canada, and that was all anyone at school knew. After Canadian and American authorities would not let the Arias family through, even after begging for help, David's dad was forced to let go of his life in America and return to Colombia where his wife and kids would join him later.

A few weeks after that, David showed up in school in Boston again. We were surprised, but out of excitement to see our friend, we failed to let our curiosities run free and never got the whole story. Another year passed, and as the first few months of junior year began, David started to say goodbye again. This time instead of Canada, he told us he was moving to Colombia. Everyone started to bet, "Give him two weeks, no one, and Spidey [David's nickname] will be back in school." Soon after, an inspiring article about David's situation, written by Maria Sacchetti, came out in The Boston Globe, and everyone knew this just might be goodbye after all. At that moment, many let go of deadlines and commitments to take a second to remind David we will never leave his side.

With the help of Emilia Pastor, the Colombian-born assistant headmaster of BLA, students and staff raised $7,000 to pay for tuition to an American-like school in Colombia for David so he may have a chance to go to college. His dream is to become a musician and study at Berklee College of Music. Nobody should have to let go of their dreams and Boston Latin Academy made sure David holds on to his.

[NEW SCHOOL CHIEF, PAGE 1]

work to do. The new school chief says she already feels at home and ready to do the job. Many believe Johnson brings a fresh, proactive perspective to the schools and their improvement. "The issue of education and the development of youth in our community is not just the work of teachers in school. I don't think the schools can do it alone," she said. "Unless you bring people together and let them see how important educating youth is and how important young people are, we can't work together to make it happen."

Throughout her career, Johnson has stressed the arts as one way to engage and educate youth. She was recipient of a VH1" Save the Music" award for her efforts to emphasize instrument education in Memphis. "Every student in the Boston Public Schools should have at least one arts-related experience," said Johnson. "Whether it's visual art, drama, music, dance, I think what has made America great is America's capacity to be creative." To prove her point, Johnson used scientific evidence of children who know how to play instruments doing better in math and other subjects.

The new school chief comes to this city faced with the daunting task of reducing its soaring dropout rate. While not the worst dropout rate in the country, at around 66 percent, it definitely puts up a fight. Johnson, however, is optimistic. "Students need different experiences and different ways to learn," Johnson said of the dilemma. "I think we have to create different schools to connect with students who don't do well in a traditional school." One strategy she suggests is "an easy way for students to make up credits when they do fall behind." Johnson is an avid believer that every student should have a college opportunity, whether it is for two or four years. She also thinks it isn't too lofty a goal to try to keep students actively interested and engaged.

With all this work to be done, Johnson still finds ways to enjoy her time in Boston. "I've had a great time already. I've had a lot of welcoming receptions, I feel very welcome."

Aside from loving her new job, she is also a fan of Boston's sports teams. "David Ortiz used to play for the Twins, Kevin Garnett used to play for the Timberwolves, and Randy Moss used to play for the Vikings. I feel like they followed me here," Johnson jokes.

Experimenting with your future: labs enhance science education

By Olive Tang // T.i.P. Staff Writer

Science is an important part of life, whether it is an exotic study in Antarctica, a walk on the beach, or a visit to the doctor. Some important goals for high school students are to receive a diploma, pass MCAS, and go to college. All three goals require taking science courses.

A helpful addition in science class is the opportunity to do hands-on experiments. How? The most obvious way is to establish science labs in all Boston high schools. When students do hands-on labs, they gain valuable skills they may need later, whether they choose to pursue a science job or not. For students like 14-year-old Beverly Nguyen, labs provide a better learning environment where science concepts are better explained. "Science is more fun and easier to do. I pay attention more…I learn the ability to understand the experiment better," she says. "Labs have helped me understand first hand how the nervous system works," says 14-year-old Michael Sahagian.

Johanna Waldman, a biology teacher at Another Course to College, says labs provide "experience that hooks some students who are not usually as interested in science. They feel and understand more what it is like to be a scientist." When students are interested in what they are doing, they tend to learn more, she says.

While a number of Boston Public Schools have science labs, some do not. The lack of labs is an obstacle for Boston science teachers. For Waldman's biology class, not having a lab results in the loss of class time. For example, Waldman says "I have to leave 5-10 minutes to send students down the hall to wash things in the bathroom." This time can make a great difference when doing a science experiment. Extra time means students can observe more and take better lab notes. And Waldman faces more challenges than time loss. "During labs involving chemicals, I sometimes have to substitute chemicals. During the pH lab, we do not use any chemicals that would be unsafe in a classroom without proper fire and safety equipment," she Waldman.

▲ Photo by: Julia Morgan

Waldman makes other accommodations without lab space. "The classroom where I teach biology has desks not tables so we have to improvise during an activity where the students needed to spread out materials. Some groups work on the floor, and others carefully work at desks put together."

While the lack of labs is a daunting obstacle, teachers without this luxury, like Waldman, manage to teach the concepts of science in a hands-on way. However, they are forced to work harder and spend longer hours preparing for classes. To give her students the opportunity to work in a real lab, Waldman takes her students to the BU CityLabs to work with medical students.

Lockdown drills in BPS

By Natalyn Yu // T.i.P. Staff Writer

"Students and faculty, our school is under lockdown until further notice." Students may have heard or will be hearing this announcement soon, because lockdown drills are being enforced at BPS. A lockdown is when all doors of a school are locked to prevent any person from entering or exiting the building. After the tragic incident that occured in April at Virginia Polytechnic Institute, parents, teachers, and students are worried about school safety. Locally, lockdowns have been around for several years, according to Jonathon Palumbo, media relations specialist for the Boston Public Schools.

On October, a 14-year-old shot four people before killing himself at SuccessTech Academy, an alternative school in Cleveland. Although Palumbo said the drills in Boston are not in response to this or any other school shootings, consider this 2006 poll taken by the Boston Health Commission which states one in every five students in Boston has witnessed a shooting. In this same poll, 40 percent of students said it would be easy to get a gun, and six percent reported carrying a gun. "I wasn't surprised when [I heard about] the lockdown drills. It seemed expected with everything happening today," said Annie Zhang, 14, of Boston.

When there is a lockdown, teachers have step-by-step instructions, provided by the principal or headmaster, to follow. By some kind of communication, such as the intercom, the school will be aware of the intruder. After locking classroom doors, students are instructed to take specific positions in the room. For security reasons, schools are reluctant to release the details of lockdown procedures.

In addition to the drills, there are 12 police officers from the Boston Police Department policing the schools full-time. They are the first to react whenever the school is in a lockdown. When the building needs to be secured, the K-9 Unit helps. "I feel safer being in the school after lockdown drills were enforced, because at least in school, I know my sisters and I are protected," says Jenny Lisset, 18, also of Boston.

Not all students feel safer. "I think that the lockdown drills are ridiculous. We were fine last year and the year before that," says Reed McConnell, 14. Regardless of the unpopularity of drills, it is likely they will remain mandatory for the foreseeable future.

Plea: take back our education

By Jennifer Sanchez // T.i.P. Senior Writer

"Take Back Our Education!" said 150 people, ranging from BPS teachers to neighborhood residents, at the Freedom House on September 29. Speakers included Mayor Thomas Menino, the Boston Public School's new Superintendent Carol R. Johnson, and Freedom House's executive director Ricardo Neal. This conference was sponsored by Project Listen to bring students and parents together to reform education. The day, which was filled with shared concerns, questions, and suggestions, proved an overall positive and progressive event. The youth organizers of Project Listen held the conference to address struggles teens face within the BPS system, such as with dropout rates, violence in and out of schools, and the lack of resources.

Jermaine Auguste, a 15-year-old member of Project Listen, offered one example of how BPS resources limit student learning. "In my science classroom, there are 30 students [but] there are only about 10 microscopes and everyone is expected to pass the course."

As a part of the Freedom House, Project Listen encourages youth to come together to express thoughts and problem solving ideas. "In the last five years, Freedom House has emerged as a strong organization that works with students to excel even in the face of minimal support," said Neal.

During the conference, participants were broken up into workshops, organized by teen leaders, to explore important subjects like the dropout crisis and healthy peer relationships. Taking part in the "Dying to Learn: Violence and its Fatal Blow to Academic Achievement" workshop, participants shared ways violence has affected their neighborhoods, such as through the death of a friend. Students expressed anger about how teachers come to inner-city schools from suburban areas and know little of teenage struggles in the city.

Many believe the conference is a good step in spreading awareness.

She lived, learned in Navajo nation

NEAR & FAR

By Janelly Chavez // T.i.P. Associate Editor

There's a nation that extends into Utah, Arizona and New Mexico, a place where the land is sacred and people have kept the traditions of their ancestors. It's a place the Dine (Navajo people) has called home for many years. It's a spiritual place where Mother Earth and its people are to be treated with respect. This land is known as Navajo Nation.

Summer Search, a non-profit organization for high school students, gave me the opportunity to travel to this nation last summer with a teen ambassador program, the Experiment in International Living. I met an amazing group of 11 teens from around the world. I was fortunate to share this month-long journey with them.

Living on the reservation helped us learn about Navajo culture. We learned traditional ceremonies, dances, and beliefs. We explored parts of the sacred land by hiking, water rafting, and camping. We lived with different Navajo families during a 10-day home stay. It was the most memorable part of my journey.

I remember the day I met my host family and how nervous I was. They came to get me at Dine College, where my group had been staying. My host father was Jerome Chee, a musician. My host mother, Floria, works as a teacher at the community school on the reservation. My host sister, Florina, is a 12-year-old, 7th grader. I also met the extended family. Nieces, nephews, cousins were all part of their 'immediate' family and I grew close to each of them.

My host family was not wealthy. Although they didn't have many of the things we are fortunate to have, such as computers and iPods, I noticed they are satisfied with what they do have, especially their families. They spend a lot of time together and do things for each other. My host family didn't have running water so their next door neighbor and uncle offered his water to them for laundry and taking showers. I sensed how close my host family is with their family by all the things they did together like grocery shopping, inviting each other over for dinner, babysitting for each other, and going to religious ceremonies. Unlike many families in Boston, my host family and their family live only houses away.

Towards the end of my trip, we did a community service project. We were supposed to build a playground for children living at Dine College. It was a week-long project that didn't turn out the way we planned. We dug a trench for the retaining wall of the playground, but after our hard work, a water pipe broke and we couldn't continue digging. Our plan to build the playground changed. Instead, our leader and group guides bought toys we could build such as sandboxes, a sea saw, and small benches for the children. We put together the pieces and built a miniature playground in back of the college. I felt proud to have done something for the children in the community.

I learned a lot about Navajo Nation and about life in general on this journey. The lessons I learned I can apply to everyday life. I've begun to look at the world differently and have a new appreciation for it. I want to thank Summer Search for this opportunity to experience living in a place I've learned to love and now call home.

▲ Photo provided by Janelly Chavez

T.i.P.'s Janelly Chavez (top center) in Navajo Nation

SUMMER SEARCH IS RECRUITING!
Interested in exploring this opportunity?
Contact: Elizabeth Marino (Outreach Director)
555 Amory St., Jamaica Plain, MA 02130
617-524-9911 emarino@summersearch.org
summersearch.org

"I AM FROM BOSTON"

By Daniel Alfaro // T.i.P. Staff Writer

People may define their neighborhoods as welcoming, comfortable, and unique, but too often outsiders observe a neighborhood and judge it based on one element or misconception. There are stereotypes people cast towards the suburbs (rich); the city (well educated); the projects (working class), and everything in between (feel free to insert your own stereotype). While it's all right for people to have opinions, it can be frustrating to the people who live there when these misconceptions destroy the perception of a neighborhood. Here is the truth of why people from Boston say they are proud of their neighborhoods.

WEST ROXBURY- Jim Roche Arena is where teenagers get together to spend an evening meeting new people in a friendly environment. On my visit, you could observe friends laughing, eating, and skating. "You make friends with the people around," says Gabe Baedaro, 16, who believes the neighborhood offers opportunities.

Another place with a lot of action is Billings Field, where the Catholic Memorial football team practices alongside pick-up softball games. " I live in one of the best [neighborhoods] in the city because the area is safe, family-oriented, and for me there is a lot of socializing and something to do always," says Kevin Dave, 16.

Best food: The Real Deal on 1882 Centre St.
Best recreation: Skating at Jim Roche Rink, 1272 VFW Parkway
Best hangout: Billings Field, corner of Spring and LaGrange streets.

ALLSTON-BRIGHTON- Across town is Allston-Brighton, a densely populated neighborhood many assume has a college atmosphere where parties take place. No parties were visible, though, during my conversation with Tony Chan, 15, a resident. He did say when you live near a college campus, "It's annoying [for a little while] and then it gets calm." But there are many things that bring the college community and the residents together, such as a Sept. 23 parade where there were Boston College marching bands and the Brian-Honan 5k Race, he says.

In the neighborhood you will also find fields such as the one on Hano Street, with a basketball court where local kids play and hold events. "It's a family environment," says Dan Joseph, 15. "There are always people coming down to hang out because it's all cool."

Best food: Burritos on Fire, 172 Brighton Ave.
Best recreation: Basketball at Hano Street playground
Best hangout: Burger King Bus Stop on Brighton Avenue

EAST BOSTON - "It's pretty much a tranquil place, [but] noisy most of the time being near to Logan Airport…we live in a nice setting in the city and there are a lot of things you can enjoy in East Boston, like food," says Jenny Cabrera, 16. "There are Italian restaurants, Latin American restaurants…there's variety in my Eastie's backyard."

Cabrera says the neighborhood has one of the largest Hispanic populations in the city, and "there are many different nationalities…we have a diverse neighborhood where various cultures interact."
Best food: Taqueria Cancun, 65 Maverick Square
Best recreation: Soccer at American Legion Playground
Best hangout: Maverick Square

In the next T.i.P. – Roxbury, Roslindale, Mattapan

teen takes!

Eat Irish at Purple Shamrock

By Ryan Ward // T.i.P. Senior Writer

Located in the center of Boston across from City Hall on Union Street is a four-leaf clover of a restaurant; The Purple Shamrock is rare and Irish. I have no Irish in my blood, but when you're eating here, you celebrate the Irish way. When you walk into this establishment, it's like walking into a museum in Ireland, yet with the New England touch Bostonians love to see. It has a nice bar and tables by the windows, which are open on a nice Boston day. At night it's all about entertainment, whether there's a baseball game going on to please crazy Red Sox fans, or a Saturday night with a perfect mix of music, karaoke, and deejays.

No worries, there is not too long a wait for a table and there are no special seats for regulars. You'll be treated fairly while waiting for a seat, even if you're a teenager. The service is added on top of your bill and you can get a refill for a drink you haven't finished, and the appetizer comes at the perfect time before the meal, if that's the way you want it. No matter what seat you're in, there is a television at every corner, including one really big one in back.

Can a place with great entertainment and good service also have fine cuisine? When I go to an Irish restaurant, I order Irish food. I like to start with a small appetizer, and I chose the Pot O' Gold ($4), potato skins with cheese and bacon bits. They were delicious and cost effective. And I only had to wait 10 minutes for them. After an appetizer, it was time for the main dish, a good old sheppard's pie ($10.99). This dish had seasoned ground beef, peas, carrots, and garlic mashed potatoes all mixed together with beef gravy, and it came with a side of either mashed potatoes or french fries. It was a very enjoyable meal that came out of the kitchen quickly. The main criticism is they didn't have a selection of desserts, with Boston cream pie being the only option. My meal with an unlimited refill of soda, came to be about $18, not bad.

Going out on the town soon? I highly recommend this eatery. I'd give this Boston hidden jewel a B+ for its great service, entertainment, and food, although I personally think they should pay more attention to desserts, an important part of my meal. You don't have to be Irish to eat Irish. I left this place full and satisfied.

▲ Photo by: Chris Rogers

▲ Photo by: Darren Hicks

Book Review: "Anatomy of a Boyfriend"

By Janelly Chavez // T.i.P. Associate Editor

"Anatomy of a Boyfriend" (Delacorte Press Book, $16.99) takes you on a journey of hope, heartbreak, and desire. First time novelist Daria Snadowsky reveals these emotions through the voice of Dominique Baylor. Dom, a high school senior, had everything planned out. She would get good grades, go to Stanford Medical School after college graduation, and become a doctor. She never planned on having a boyfriend until the day she literally fell head over heals in a pile of mud and landed at the feet of a mystery man.

Wesley Gershwin, a track star at her best friend's high school, dreamed of going to New York University to become a writer. His sweet personality and bright blue eyes is what attracted Dom in the first place. Through daily e-mails, text and instant messages, their friendship grew stronger, but Dom wanted more. For weeks Dom was confused about Wes's feelings for her until one day they both confessed to each other that neither of them has had much experience with the opposite sex. This brought them closer and brings their relationship to a more intimate level.

Months pass and college acceptance and rejection letters come in. One of them gets into their dream school and the other one doesn't. This news has Dom and Wes wondering what will come of their love now? Should they go to the same college and continue with their relationship, or should they head their separate ways and follow the plans they had before they'd met?

"Anatomy of a Boyfriend" is a book all teen girls can relate to, whether they've had a serious relationship or not. Daria Snadowsky did such a great job on this novel I am surprised it was her first. Snadowsky, raised in Las Vegas and in Greenwich Village, New York City, attended Emory University in Atlanta. She received her bachelor's and master's degrees there. She went on to attend University of Nevada Law School and is currently a practicing attorney in Nevada. For more information on this author you can visit her website at daria-snadowsky.com.

[BEE-HIND THE SCENES, FROM PAGE 1]

T.i.P: You are usually the man in front of an audience or camera. How does it feel to be behind the scenes?

Seinfeld: It's kind of the same. Since my character is the star of the movie, I get plenty of good exposure out of it.

T.i.P: Has the fact that you are now a father played a role in creating this animation?

Seinfeld: No. I really like the idea and the look of these movies and I wanted to put my kind of take on this type of film making.

T.i.P: So I'm guessing there will be more animated films by Jerry Seinfeld?

Seinfeld: You can guess. You can guess and guess and guess. I don't know myself. I don't know what's going to happen next.

HEALTH BEAT

Job shadowing

TEEN EXPLORES MEDICAL FIELD AT LOCAL HOSPITAL

By Amanda Dias // T.i.P. Writer

I've wanted to be in the medical field since I was three feet tall. My grandmother died of heart disease, my aunt and uncle died of colon cancer, and my grandfather died of a heart attack. I felt hopeless because all of this happened before I was five years old, before I got a chance to know them. In 2004, my Dad developed cancer of the jaw which spread to his throat even after many surgeries and treatments. I was certain, due to these incidents, that I wanted to help save lives. A recent job shadowing experience at Brigham and Women's/Faulkner Hospital convinced me further of my goals.

I am interested in being a nurse because of my family history and because I have always loved science. Also, paramedic and emergency room television shows are very interesting to me. In the hospital setting, I would love to work in the emergency room, the intensive care unit, or in cardiology because those are fast-paced areas. During Job Shadow Day, I was placed in the cardiology department to see what the nurses do. Through the experience, I became more hooked than before.

▲ Photo by: Shawn McLaughlin

When I walk into a hospital it feels as though I am walking through God's pearly gates of healing. Although some people are not as lucky as others, the doctors and nurses work hard to help everyone. I imagine it is difficult to tell loved ones their baby or parent has died, even though the doctors tried everything. I would be scared to do that but I benefitted from seeing doctors and nurses in these tough life and death situations.

I want to become something to make my family proud. My mother could say "yes, my daughter Amanda is in medical school" or "yes, my daughter is a nurse," or maybe "have you met my daughter Dr. Dias?" Becoming a nurse or a doctor would make a lot of people happy. If I believe in becoming a nurse, I can achieve it.

▲ Photo by: Shawn McLaughlin

COPING WITH HYDROCEPHALUS

By Jose J. Andrades // T.i.P. Writer

A 13-year-old child is focusing on my eyes and telling me "everything is going to be fine, don't worry. I'm going to see you in a few hours." I'm choking up just looking at him on the bed. I feel overwhelmed and do not know how to stop my hands from shaking or stop myself from bursting out in tears. I'm trying to smile and pretend I believe him when he says he's going to pull through this. He is my brother, Jose M. Andrades, or as I call him, Nana. He is the most courageous person I know.

For as long as I can remember, he has been battling a condition called hydrocephalus, which, simply put, is fluid on the brain. Though it sometimes requires him to work harder than other students in school, for the most part, he's a regular kid. But this summer, I thought everything was about to change.

It was a day like any other. My brothers and I were playing video games. My girlfriend was talking with my mom in the other room. Then, Nana came down with a headache. A headache may not be cause for alarm for most of us, but for him it could mean trouble. Jose has a steel shunt in his brain and a tube that runs from his head to his stomach to dispose of any excess fluid from his brain. A headache for Jose may mean nothing, or it may mean something is really wrong.

This was nothing new for us. Jose had visited the hospital many times that month for headaches. Each time doctors said everything was fine and there was no reason for concern. On that day, I could tell something was different. Quickly, my Mom told him to get dressed and they rushed to the hospital. I stayed home praying this was another false alarm. It became later and later, and I fell asleep waiting for news.

At 12:30 a.m., I woke up to my brother's voice on the phone. "Javi, they have to operate again."

Nana explained that a screw that held his shunt together had broken and he needed immediate surgery. On the way to the hospital my mind flashed back to his first operation. I remember seeing my baby brother lying silently on a bed with stitches in his head. I remember wishing my brother and family would never have to repeat that experience.

Entering the hospital, we found the room and I saw my brother lying in a hospital bed. Our last minutes with him before the surgery were the shortest minutes of my life. He told us, "Just be here when I get out." My family watched him while he was taken to the operating room, and I barely kept from crying as he entered those doors. We waited for five hours. It felt like five years. Finally morning came, and the surgeons told us everything went smoothly. The world was lifted from my shoulders.

My brother is a fighter, and the strongest person I know. He is my inspiration and support, and he will forever be my motivation in life.

The Basics:

Hydrocephalus What is it?

• From the Greek words for water (hydro) and head (cephalus), it is a condition where there is excess cerebrospinal fluid, which normally surrounds the brain and spinal cord, around the brain. This fluid builds up too fast, or does not get reabsorbed, increasing pressure on the brain.

Who does this affect?

• It is estimated that one in 500 children in America is affected.

How is this treated?

• Usually, a series of plastic tubing is surgically put in place. A shunt is put in the brain to allow excess liquid from the brain to flow through a valve and into a long tube, or catheter. This catheter then leads often to the abdomen of the patient, where the liquid can be absorbed into the body.

How does this affect the patient?

• Without treatment, the fluid build up in the brain is debilitating and often fatal. The good news is that with a shunt system, many patients live long, successful lives. Some patients battle physical or learning disabilities, but often are successful in overcoming these through therapy.

-Information compiled by Lia Brunelle, WriteBoston Intern

▲ Photo by: Darius Cephas

STRESS CALLING, YOU GOT A SEC?

BY SANDY LIANG // T.I.P. STAFF WRITER

Whenever you face a challenge, adrenaline is pumping away and your entire body is getting you ready, for everything and anything. But sometimes, you're not ready for operation stress overload.

Stress overload can be triggered by something as simple as having a busy schedule, to going to sleep late at night, to waking up again at 5-6:30 a.m., seven busy days a week. Everyone has been faced with a time when you wanted to tear up that annoying piece of paper in front of you and just sit on the ground and bawl out your eyes. Well, don't tear up your school work yet. Instead, have a good cry and hit the hay before you go back to it because stress overload isn't healthy, or fun.

When asked what "academic stress" makes him think of, 14-year-old Clinton Nguyen says, "Being unable to do assignments, not understanding concepts [in school] and lack of time management." Alex Cheung, also 14, says: "Tests, non-stop homework, projects, essays, and reports."

What a nightmare. Remember, if it gets to be too much, it can affect your health, ranging from the effects of a lack of sleep, to painful migraines.

Raul Mendez, a guidance counselor at Boston Latin School, thinks the first step to handling stress is to relax. "Relaxing is a process of taking out anxiety: refocusing the mind. [The best way] to do that is to concentrate on stupidity! That way they will have to laugh," he says.

Minica Long, 14, on the other hand, laughed when she said she handles stress by "…tell[ing] people about it sometimes… sometimes if it gets too much, I cry…then that leads to sleep."

A favorite of many teens is to listen to music. Sometimes it's best to cool down with your favorite song: make it loud and crazy, or soft and calm. Do whatever you want, as long as you can relax. A word from the wise, Mendez suggests some funny exercises might help. Apparently, focusing on moving your fingers and toes works as well.

More good advice: Go talk to your bff Jill (or John), mommy, gram, dad, or even to yourself in your diary. Over the holiday season, spend quality time with family and the work load will be easier to clean up after you're relaxed. Find something to munch on as you slam those papers. Listen to "Get'cha Head in the Game" to get focused and once you're powered up…don't stop.

Stress Busters That Work

- Sleep. If you want to be energized for everything and not cranky and irritable, get at least 8–9 hours of sleep a night. Sleeping at your desk doesn't count!
- Don't wait for last minute. Generally, teachers and students do not like reading and writing papers, and it's better if you take off the stress and hand in work early.
- Avoid cramming. It does not work. Studying little by little over the course of the week is much more helpful than studying in just one sitting! Midnight studying will get you nowhere when you are focusing more on z's.
- Take breaks but don't overdo it by taking more time than you need.
- Remember, support is all around you: parents, guidance counselors, and friends.

–By Sandy Liang

Holiday Cheer!

Have a jolly good season

By Katryna Mahoney // T.i.P. Staff Writer

Here is your calendar to holiday fun throughout the city.

NOVEMBER 30 – DECEMBER 16
"Black Nativity"
"Black Nativity" tells the story of Christmas as Langston Hughes interpreted it with gospel music, dance, verse, and a cast that includes teens and adults (often related to each other; it's a family affair).

Location: Tremont Temple
88 Tremont St.
Matinees are 3:30 p.m.; evening performances at 8 p.m.
blacknativity.org
Tickets: $17.50- $41
To order by phone: 1-800-514-3849

DECEMBER 7-16
Anthony William's **"Urban Nutcracker"**
Don't confuse this with the traditional "Nutcracker." This version of the same story is funky, modern, and packed with hip-hop, swing, tap, and 40 talented young Boston performers.

Location: John Hancock Hall,
180 Berkely St.
For show times: ticketfusion.com
Ticket prices: $20 - $55
617-524-3066
balletrox.org

DECEMBER 14
Dance lessons and performance
Put on your dancing shoes and prepare to move your body for this party and live performance. Come early for a free dance lesson. This event promises the best of Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic combined!

Location: Center for Latino Arts, 85 West Newton St.; 9 p.m. Complimentary dance lesson
10 p.m. – 1:30 a.m. dance party and live performance; tickets $15;
617- 927-1707
clainfo@iba-etc.org

DECEMBER 31
First Night
Boston's famous New Year's Eve all-night party actually starts at 1 p.m. on December 31 and offers music, food, art, performances, a parade, and fireworks. Party 'til the sun comes up, or just come for part of the festivities.

Highlights:
1 – 4 p.m.
Location: Cloud Place
647 Boylston St.
Teen curators open the doors to Boston teens for spoken word performance, artmaking, and film. They will showcase the outstanding work of 2007 and give visitors a preview of YouthFusion 2008.
617-262-2949
cloudfoundation.org

Location:
Multiple shows 2 – 5:30 p.m.
Hynes Convention Center:
Exhibit Hall C
"A Rhythmic Sampler"
This dance company celebrates 40 years of teaching and delivers a sampler of lyrical jazz, hip-hop, and African dance.

More info:
Various locations throughout Boston.
Get a map and program at firstnight.org
A button is your ticket to events, on sale for $15 at participating vendors, listed on the site.
617-542-1399

DECEMBER 31
Jingle Jam Concert
Featuring Disney Channel star, Keke Palmer and Drew Seeley from "High School Musical," this is a free concert on Boston Common.
More info: 5 – 7 p.m.
For Jingle Jam details, go to: radiodisney.com or call Radio Disney Boston
617-787-0146

◀ Photo by: Brenda Leong

The Boston Christmas tree is a gift from Nova Scotia

THE STORY BEHIND BOSTON'S CHRISTMAS TREE

Ever wonder where that huge Christmas tree in Downtown Crossing came from?

In December of 1917, two ships crashed in Halifax Harbor in Canada. One of the ships was full of ammunition and the explosion killed almost 2,000, injured 9,000 people, and destroyed part of Halifax, Nova Scotia. Within hours, a train from Boston was on its way with supplies and doctors. Nova Scotia has not forgotten all the help the City of Boston offered. For 36 years, Nova Scotia has donated a Christmas tree to Boston as an annual thank you gift.

The Christmas tree comes from a private landowner, and is selected by Nova Scotia's Department of Natural Resources.

Every winter, the Boston Christmas tree is decorated with thousands of lights, becoming the highlight of the city. Make your way downtown and enjoy the beautiful Christmas tree. It is located in the Boston Common near Park Street. This year it was lighted on Nov. 29. If you missed the official lighting, you still have time to take a walk through the Common and check it out!

-Lia Brunelle, WriteBoston intern, contributed to this article.

Santa better bring me

By Ryan Ward // T.i.P. Senior Writer

Almost every teenager wants big-ticket items this Christmas. For readers who still need ideas, here they are, the gifts that Santa better bring me.

1. iPod Touch (MP3 player)— Its 3.5 inch wide screen display can access the Internet with Wi-Fi connection. You can download music from iTunes from your iPod.

2. Play Station 3 (video game station)— The newest addition to Sony's Play Station can go online, play and obtain music files, and play games with wireless control.

3. Halo 3 (video game)— Halo fans pre-ordered this game for months. The third addition to the Halo games has proved to be a great buy, and a great gift.

4. iPhone (telephone)— iPod's version of a phone is one of the most expensive, yet popular, phones out right now, and a great and generous gift this Christmas.

5. "Transformers" (DVD)— Considerably the best children's cartoon to become an action packed full length film, this one is a great gift for people of all ages.

6. Lil' Wayne (CD)—The Carter 3; Even though Lil' Wayne (one of the best lyricists in 2007) had to redo almost the whole album; it's a great buy for any hip-hop fan.

7. Jacoby Ellsbury (46) Red Sox jersey (clothing)— This rookie has proved to be one of the greatest young players in baseball today. So, getting his jersey for what could be his "Rookie of the Year" season would be a great gift this Christmas.

8. Zune— The Zune is Microsoft's version of an MP3 player, with 80 GB and wireless Zune-to-Zune sharing. Its bright three-inch screen with FM radio makes it a great gift.

9. "Spider-Man 3"— The latest movie to the Spider-Man series came out with a bang in theaters, and is now coming out on DVD. Everyone needs to own the trilogy.

10. "Kanye West- Graduation"— This CD flew off the shelves and beat many other CD sales with pre-orders. This is also a great CD to listen to.

December birthday blues

By Ryan Ward // T.i.P. Senior Staff Writer

Everyone knows your birthday and Christmas are the two times a year when you can expect gifts. It's not greedy to think this way-- it's the nature of the holidays. When your birthday and Christmas come together, it could be good, or bad. I know.

My birthday is on Dec. 12, so I always receive a bunch of gifts in December. On my birthday in 2006, my aunt got me a 30 GB Video iPod which was the number one item on my gift list, and it was also the most expensive item at $250. My aunt simply told me, 'this is your birthday and Christmas gift,' and I am more than happy with that.

Not everybody is as lucky as I am, or have a great family. My dad's birthday is on Dec. 16 and in 1976 his grandmother gave all four of his brothers' gifts for their birthday throughout the year, and gave him pajamas on his birthday. So, that's fair, right? Well on Christmas she brought over gifts for all of his brothers, but told him that he got his gift on his birthday. "Having a December birthday is like having no birthday because it is overlooked," said my dad.

Birthdays in December are often overlooked because people are all tied up with the holidays. "I have to wait an entire year to get gifts because my birthday is on Christmas Eve, and I always think my parents are giving me one of my Christmas gifts early. I never really had birthday parties because everyone is so tied up with Christmas things," says Rob Josie, 16.

▲ Photo by: Chris Rogers

Do you believe in Globe Santa?

More than 50,000 underprivileged children in Greater Boston do. And with your generosity, every one of them will receive a gift from Globe Santa this holiday season.

Bring joy to a child in need. Make a tax-deductible donation to Globe Santa today. It'll have you believing, too.

Make a donation to Globe Santa.
- Visit www.globesanta.org.
- Mail a check or money order payable to Globe Santa to: Globe Santa Fund Trust, c/o Citizens Bank, PO Box 845059, Boston, MA 02284-5059.

Double your donation! Check with your employer to see if they participate in a matching gifts program.

Globe Santa *Over 50 years of giving*

Delivering on the promise.

From interns to radio hosts

By Carla Gualdrón // T.i.P. Senior Editor

"You already know, it's that time again. It's Street Cred on RadioYou Boston with your hosts deejay Milkman and DJ TJ."

This is the introduction to the "Street Credentials" radio show on WBOS' HD2 92.9 station "Radio You," a station launched in May and broadcast on high definition radio. What makes this show different from others is that the hosts are teenagers.

Through a partnership with Greater Media Boston (GMB) and Media Communication Technology High School, seniors Christopher Enriquez and Troy Traynham got their start as summer interns at GMB. "We were basically the nannies of Radio You. We edited songs, added people on our myspace page, and managed archives," says Enriquez. "At the end of the internship we approached our boss with the idea of having our own radio show. She loved the idea and diversity we were bringing to Radio You," he says.

T.i.P had the opportunity to chat with deejays behind the mic at their Greater Media Boston studio.

T.i.P: How did you guys come across this opportunity?
Troy: We first got started by bringing the idea up to our boss. She thought it was a good idea and definitely wanted to get us in the studio with our own show....
Chris: She loved what we were bringing to RadioYou, 'cause RadioYou is for you.' We are bringing in the reggaeton and the hip-hop....
T.i.P: How do you add your style the show?
Troy: We just be ourselves.
Chris: We don't copy anybody so we just be ourselves. It has a natural flow since Troy and I know each other well, so we just let it go from there.
T.i.P: How do you decide what genre of music to play?
Chris: It's simple. We let each other play our music equally. We equally go between reggaeton and hip-hop. We put our most powerful assets and combined them to play on StreetCred.

Photo by: Carla Gualdrón

Deejays Christopher Enriques and Troy Traynham

T.i.P: How do you feel knowing you're doing the same type of work a college intern does, yet you're still in high school?
Troy: I feel good personally.
Chris: It makes me feel like a big boy.
Troy: Well I'm 18 and Chris is 17. People our age don't get this opportunity so we are just taking advantage of it.
T.i.P: Has this job changed you?
Troy: Yeah, it's keeping me off the streets from all the violence so it is benefiting me personally. Before I didn't want anything to do with radio, but now I am doing it, I see I can be myself on air, and talk about whatever I want. It's basically a place where we can come, have our own show, and be ourselves.
Chris: I never liked listening to the radio so when I got the opportunity to do an internship at a radio station I told myself, 'I want to change radio and make it better.' And with our show being on HD radio we are starting that little change. We are starting up a movement. There is no reggaeton station in Boston and I want to change that.
T.i.P: If you could work at any radio station in Boston which one would it be?
Chris: I wouldn't want to work at any radio station; I would like to run my own station. Like I said before there is no station for reggaeton and I'm planning to change that, and start my own.
Troy: Personally I would like to work here. I'm used to the environment, everyone is friendly to us, and you meet a lot of interesting people....
T.i.P: Why is it important for teens to listen to your show?
Chris: It can bring you motivation to pursue what you feel like doing.
Troy: Just follow your dreams 'cause we didn't think we would end up here at a radio station.

If you don't have HD radio, check out myspace.com/streetcred07 to listen Tues. 7-9 pm

Fighting racism and creating unity

The following excerpts were written by an ESL 3 class at Media Communications Technology High School

"It would be better if there [was] no racism between people and they accept to be united with one another. If people stop using stereotypes, commiting crimes, and causing violence it would create a utopia. A place where people can have freedom, respect each others' cultures, and stop looking at others' appearances."......

Ketura Lacouture // T.i.P. Writer

"There are many ways to fight against racism but people need to be united. They need to do the right thing and not think about changing the things around them, but also the people around them."..........

Christelle Pierre-Louis // T.i.P. Writer

"[One] solution to stop racism is to talk to people and make them feel how you are feeling when they are judging you just because your skin color is different. We can fix it by not judging others by their appearance."……..

Joradana Joseph // T.i.P. Writer

"Racism is one of the [biggest] problems affecting the world, creating hate, no cooperation and segregation… The world would be better if we could solve it. There would be more communication, more justice, no discrimination, and people would respect each other."........

Jean Dorsainville // T.i.P. Writer

"Racism is like a malady almost without remedy, but if everybody understood and accepted each other no matter what they have or their differences, the world would be better, and there [would] not be much difference between us."......

Gena Farene Badin // T.i.P. Writer

"People should find a cure for this malady [called] racism…to make people see that every race [is] not different from others. Everyone should be treated equally and with much respect. Everyone should make sure that everyone else gets what they want and deserve."........

Marjorie Exavier // T.i.P. Writer

"People should try to find a way to solve racism whether it is individual or institutional. People should be in a world where everyone treats each other with respect....A world where people stop judging people by their race, but for who they are.....creating a source of hope for people."..........

Arnauld Menelas//T.i.P. Writer

Desmond Tutu meets with Boston teens

By Neelabh Bharti///T.i.P. Associate Editor

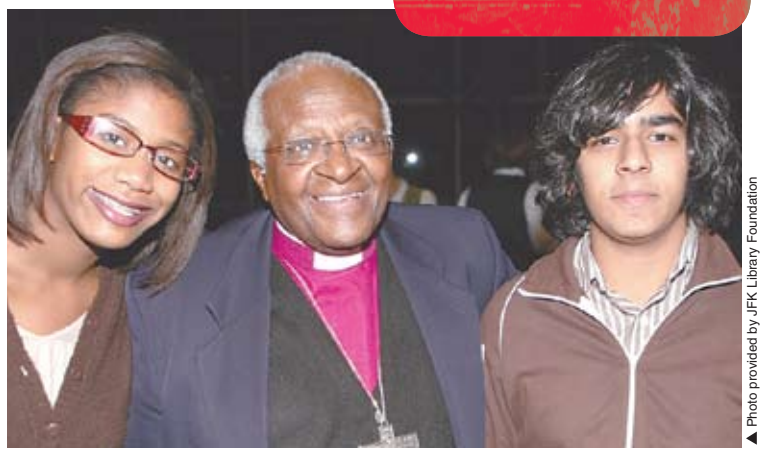
Internationally renowned Archbishop Desmond Tutu has become something of a staple in the Boston area lately. The Nobel laureate was a major force in the peaceful protest that ended apartheid in South Africa. Since then, he has won numerous awards and become a visiting professor at universities around the world.

He has been meeting with people, including teens, across Boston in hopes of discussing our problem with violence. Tutu feels that young people are the most important piece of controlling the violence that plagues not only this city, but others. "If we can help get them excited and inspired to try to work for a better situation, for an end to violence that is at the moment such an integral part of where they live then we will have done some good," he said to a group of high school students assembled at Wheelock College.

Archbishop Tutu also spoke at a conference at the Old South Church in the Back Bay. The conference identifies the situation between Palestine and Israel as apartheid, to the disagreement of many, and seeks an end to it. His justification of this title caused quite a bit of controversy, even causing the president of the University of Saint Thomas to decide against inviting him to the campus, a decision that was revoked.

Tutu also spoke at a forum on October 30 at the JFK Library and Museum. The forum, which also included Massachusetts Chief Justice Margaret Marshall, as well as Richard Goldstone, chief prosecutor of the Constitutional Church of South Africa for nine years, was a meeting of the minds of some of the most important people in the fight to end apartheid in South Africa. Marshall led the National Union of South Africa in their efforts to end apartheid, and Goldstone helped to oversee the country's transition to democracy. Together, the trio made startling parallels between South Africa and Boston. "The perception is that the country is dangerous like this because it is mostly black," Tutu said. "But you can see even here, kids are getting killed coming home from playing basketball."

Tutu has served as the chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, a group of people organized to investigate the human rights abuses that occurred during apartheid, helping where they can, and even granting amnesty to some of the violators. When asked if he felt powerless against the gruesome abuses some of the people faced, the archbishop said "You have to behave as a dishwasher, and not as a vacuum cleaner."



◀ Photo provided by JFK Library Foundation

Paige Carruthers (l) visits with Archbishop Desmond Tutu (c) and Neelabh Bharti (r) in Boston.

Burns's new film puts you on the battlefield

By Mike Smith//T.i.P. Senior Writer

Many documentaries film their subject from a bird's eye view. They approach history through general points, large overviews, and clustered data fully embedded with dates and insignificant names. But in Ken Burn's new film "The War," none of these qualities are present. This documentary is told like no other.

For starters, Burns never makes you feel like you're reading a textbook. For example, during the battle of Iwo Jima, we see on-the-ground footage of the war as a soldier who was there at the time he is narrating. A man is shown shooting randomly into the forest. Most likely fed up with the inability to see where all the resistance from Japanese soldiers is coming from, he retreats back and returns with a flamethrower, all to the narration of the onlooking soldier. There is silence as we see the soldier spray flames into the forest. Next, the narrator tells us, a much unexpected event takes place. "The soldier stops what he's doing, turns around and walks to the edge of the beach. He removes his clothes, and goes swimming for 20 or 30 minutes," explains the narrator. After that, he returns to the forest and starts spraying again.

From this scene, we see where Burns was aiming—the reality of war on the ground. For a while, with the intensity of gunfire and silence, you feel like you're standing next to the soldier on the battlefield, with the added benefit that a passing bullet has no chance of hitting you. Burns does a good job of putting you on the ground with the troops, and as a plus, he has real World War II veterans telling their stories. By finding the footage to match the stories, the picture comes alive.

"'The War' is a bottom-up film," Burns said at a recent forum about his film held at the JFK Museum and Library. "For example, we didn't show you the Holocaust until the soldiers found out about it. It was shown through how the soldiers came across and saw some of these tragic things." In other words, "The War" is told through the perspective of the soldiers on the ground and anybody affected by it. I recommend this documentary to anyone who wants to feel what it's like to be in war, or to any viewer who wants to see strong footage and proof that war is not something to be taken lightly.

Coming soon to a history class near you: "The War"

By Paige Carruthers//T.i.P. Staff Writer

Unlike the usual rhythm of patrons walking through the exhibits of the JFK Museum and Library, the pace was quite different on Sept. 28 from 4:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. Everyone was buzzing about Ken Burn's anticipated World War II documentary, "The War." Glasses were clinking, heels were clacking, and programs were flipping. The event taking place was a tribute to "The War" called, "A Conversation with Ken Burns."

For many, the names "Ken Burns" or "The War" don't ring any bells. Unless you're among those who frequently watch the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) channel, you wouldn't know that "The War" launched its 14 one-half hour, seven- part premier this fall on PBS, or "an oasis in a sea of 400 channels with almost nothing on," as Burns called it. Teens like Ciara Martinez, 15, describes the documentary as "an extremely boring under-funded movie." However "The War" is one of the rare documentaries that manages to capture the short attention span of teens.

"The War" is a graphic portrayal of World War II, steering away from the widely accepted view that this war was the "good war," but instead the "necessary war." Burns chose four random geographically distributed towns in America: Sacramento, Calif.; Mobile, Ala.; Luverne, Minn.; and Waterbury, Conn. He found citizens in each who had either fought in WW II or waited at home for soldiers to return. He has captured the story of thousands of so-called "average Americans" who fought and sacrificed in the war because, as Burns said, "it wasn't the generals and politicians who did the dying." With commentary from Tom Hanks, a score by Norah Jones, and never-before-seen footage of battle scenes that Burns and his crew dug up, this documentary is far from boring or under-funded.

Despite the fact that "The War" will mainly attract audiences that are middle aged and older, in a September issue of Newsweek, Burns said, "When I heard that many high school students thought that the Americans were allies with the Germans in World War II, I was furious." This discovery reinforced the urgency he felt about this film project. Mike Barnicle, moderator of the "Conversation with Ken Burns," insisted "The War" should become required viewing in all US History classes.

Still Burns insisted the documentary was made for all ages. "I want teens to get out of (The War) what I want everyone to get out of "The War," Burns said since WW II was one of the rare times when the entire country united around a common cause.

New England Football League equals passion, not pay

By Frantzy Suffrard // T i.P. Writer

When you think about New England sports, the word "dynasty" comes to mind. Legacies such as the Boston Celtics and the New England Patriots are some of the many contributors to the dynasty of Boston sports. But those are only the known dynasties. Under the National Football League there are the semi-pros that consist of players who play their hearts out on the field.

Unlike the NFL, these players do not leave the field with a six-figure check; instead they leave their pride and passion on the field and return to their daily lives. The players range from high school graduates to men who were not good enough for the pros.

Boston has a dynamic team called the Boston Bandits; they play in the New England Football League.

The NEFL was developed in 1994 by the football league president Tom Torris and chairman Matt Brien. This league started with only four teams and rapidly expanded to 33. Each team is assigned to one of three divisions, single, double, and triple A.

In 2001, our Boston Bandits won their first of four titles, beating the Greater Lowell Nor'easter 14-10. They followed up with an unbelievable four championships in six years.

For more information, go on the NEFL website (newenglandfootballleague.com). If you are a football player thinking of going pro, think about trying out with the Bandits to get a taste of the semi-pros.

TOP FIVE PLAYS IN SPORTS HISTORY

By Ryan Ward // T.i.P. Senior Writer

▲ Photo by: Artists For Humanity

5. Bobby Orr could be known mostly as the best defenseman to ever play hockey, but on May 10, 1970 he was known for more than this. In game four of the 1970 Stanley Cup, the Boston Bruins were on the verge of sweeping the St. Louis Blues. It was overtime, and the score was tied at 3-3. The score wouldn't remain tied for long, because 40 seconds into overtime Orr made his famous diving goal to win the 1970 Stanley Cup. We could call it the biggest goal in Stanley Cup History.

4. It was a breathtaking game seven of the 1965 Eastern Conference Finals for the defending champion Boston Celtics. They were leading their division rival, the Philadelphia 76ers, 110-109 with five seconds remaining. Philadelphia guard Hal Greer tossed the ball inbounds under his own basket and John Havlicek stole the ball. I couldn't put it any better than late Celtics broadcaster Johnny Most, who said: "Greer is putting the ball into play. He gets it out deep. Havlicek steals it. Over to Sam Jones; Havlicek stole the ball! It's all over! Johnny Havlicek stole the ball!"

3. I don't know any other memorable plays in a world series by a team that didn't win. But in game six of the 1975 World Series with the Red Sox trailing in the series 2-3 to the Cincinnati Reds, it felt like the final game. It was tied at 6-6 in the twelfth inning as Red Sox catcher Carlton Fisk stepped in. He didn't hesitate as he took Pat Darcy's first pitch very deep. As it was in the air, Fisk waved his arms running down the first base line signaling the ball to stay fair; and it did. It hit off the left field foul pole over the Green monster at Fenway. The fans rushed the field as Fisk ran the bases. It stood as the biggest hit in Red Sox history for almost 30 years.

2. Who says you have to be pro to be great? Doug Flutie, the quarterback for Boston College stood among all the greats in 1984. On Nov. 23, 1984 during the Orange Bowl, the Boston College Eagles were trailing the Miami Hurricanes 45-41. With six seconds left on the game clock the Eagles were at about mid-field. "I thought we'd won it," said Miami quarterback Bernie Kosar. That's when Doug Flutie said a prayer, you know, just a little Hail Mary. Flutie scrambled, and with no time remaining he launched a 48-yard pass, slightly over the defender's fingertips into the hands of Eagles wide receiver Gerard Phelan for a game winning touchdown. I guess Mary was listening.

1. It's 2004, and the Boston Red Sox are on the brink of being swept by their hated rivals, the New York Yankees. The Red Sox were trailing in the game 4-3 going into the bottom of the ninth inning. Red Sox first baseman Kevin Millar led off the inning with a crucial walk. For speed on the bases they replaced Millar with speedy Dave Roberts. He stood at first. Yankees All-Star closer Mariano Rivera checked over to him a few times, to keep him close to the bag. But everyone knew he was on first base to steal second. Now how are you supposed to steal second base when everyone knows you're going to? On the first pitch home, Roberts stole second and was safe. A blink later and the Red Sox were World Series Champions.

SIDETRACK

BY STUART SPINA // T.I.P. SENIOR STAFF WRITER

▲ Photo by: Alana Andonian

New Year, new schedules

If you think you wait a long time for the bus now, try waiting for it when you don't have the right schedule. Effective Dec. 29, new schedules will go into effect on many bus routes and subway lines. So talk to your bus driver or check out mbta.com to make sure that you won't be left out in the cold.

Holiday headways

Now who would ride the T on Christmas? Santa maybe? Well, if you want to join ol' Saint Nicolas for a ride, remember that on Christmas Eve buses and subway trains run on a Saturday schedule, and on Christmas, everything runs on a Sunday schedule.

Calling reveling riders

Heading out for First Night 2008? Well the T has you covered, running extra subway trains before and after the festivities. Plus, the ride home will be free! That's right, after 8 p.m. on New Year's Eve the bus and subway will be free until the end of service. Make sure to double check when your bus stops running for the night, as some end service before midnight. Although the T will be holding commuter rail trains for late night revelers, the same won't hold true for buses. It would be a shame to ring in the New Year stranded in downtown Boston, wouldn't it?

Trolleys back on track

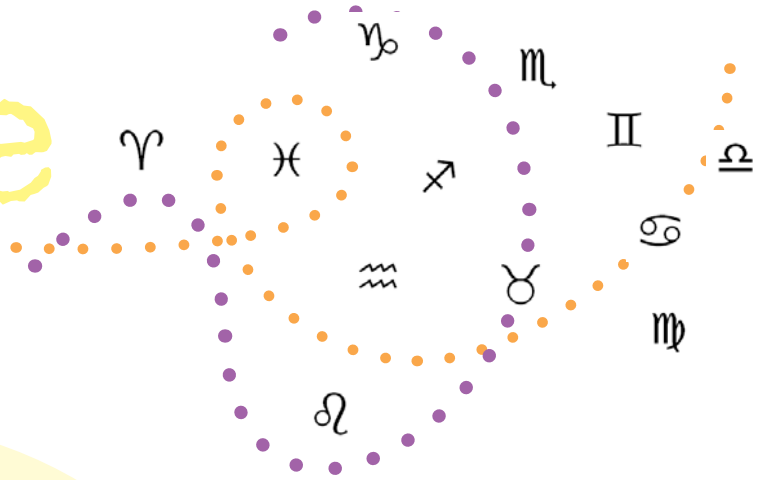
Four score and several ratings ago, the MBTA set out to create a more perfect Mattapan High Speed Line. Two new state-of-the-art stations are being built at Ashmont and Mattapan, which will feature new amenities such as elevators, updated public address systems, and lighting, as well as improved landscaping for an aesthetic touch. The PCC streetcars will have their wheels and brakes replaced (meaning no more herky-jerky stops and starts), new destination signs installed, CharlieCard equipment put in, and coming this summer, air conditioning (the first installed in 62 years of service). Originally set to reopen this past summer, service is scheduled to resume on Dec. 29. And don't forget, unlike before, fares will be charged ($1.25) for all rides.

▲ Photo by: Stuart Spina

Blue and brand new

In a few weeks the T will start running some of their new Blue Line trains, built by Siemens of Germany. Geared with the latest in technology, including automatic stop announcements and digital signs, the next generation of Blue Line cars will eventually replace the current fleet which was built in 1980. After more new cars are put into service, Blue Line trains will go from four to six cars for added capacity.

your horoscope



By Sarah Blanchette//T.i.P. Senior Writer

IT'S YOUR BIRTHDAY,

SAGITTARIUS

(November 22-December 21)

MORE ABOUT SAGITTARIUS:
You are a sun (or fire) sign with the personality to go with such brightness—curious, active, busy, energetic. You love change and welcome new experiences; you're often the class clown because of your daringness and wit. Animals and the outside are true loves; you'd make a great veterinarian.

Lucky Numbers: 1, 3, 16, 34, 31, 45
Celebs with Your Sign: Jimi Hendrix, Brad Pitt, Walt Disney
Best Llovin Matches: Aries and Leo

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

Strengths: Active, daring, spirited
Weaknesses: Hasty, impulsive
Celebs with Your Sign: Reese Witherspoon, Sarah Jessica Parker
Riches: During your holiday shopping, you may be tempted to purchase that expensive new gadget you've been eyeing, but hold off! Remember the people on your list first, and who knows, maybe Santa will leave it under your tree.
Lllovin: December is the perfect time to hibernate! Stay in with that special someone and have fun while keeping warm.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

Strengths: Patient, imaginative, authentic
Weaknesses: Stubborn, defiant
Celebs with Your Sign: George Clooney, Rene Zellweger
Riches: You may be running too low on cash to buy something for everyone on your list. Suggest something like Secret Santa with friends and you'll save money and have a great time.
Friends: Vacation is the perfect time to catch up with friends. But drama will be lurking within your group around the 15th . Stay neutral and everything will be smooth by the time you're out of school.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

Strengths: Curious, open minded, multitalented
Weaknesses: Capricious, impatient
Celebs with Your Sign: Angelina Jolie, Nicole Kidman
Family: Don't think you're too cool for family traditions this winter. Spend time baking holiday cookies or decorating the tree with them and you'll have more fun than you expected.
Lllovin: You're going to meet someone great around the 29th. Although you want to spend every second of the day with them, remember not to abandon friends, school work, and family. Having a life of your own is what keeps you mysterious.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

Strengths: Generous, perceptive, caring
Weaknesses: Cranky, tempered, grumpy
Celebs with Your Sign: Tom Cruise, 50 Cent, Lindsay Lohan
Friends: You may start to feel territorial when a new person seems as if they're stealing your friends. Give them a chance; there must be a reason everyone likes this person so much.
Riches: You may want to indulge your friends and family members with expensive gifts. However, if you stick to something sentimental and from the heart, they will be just as satisfied.

LEO (July 23-August 22)

Strengths: Responsible, reliable, devoted
Weaknesses: Arrogant, crabby, self-indulged
Celebs with Your Sign: Madonna, Ben Affleck
Family: A member of your family will be asking you for a big favor around the 10th. If you agree, don't let them down. Your responsibility will pay off greatly.
Friends: Your devotion to your friends makes you vulnerable at times. Be good to yourself and true to your values, and no one will take advantage of you.

VIRGO (August 23-September 21)

Strengths: Supportive, compassionate, conscientious
Weaknesses: Unorganized, critical, picky
Celebs with Your Sign: Cameron Diaz, Bill Murray
Lllovin: You may have been a little too patient with your love life lately, but don't let someone pass you by around the 30th. Be brave and make a move.
Riches: Whether you've been working hard, or are just lucky, you've had extra spending money lately. Although it may seem selfish, indulge yourself in a great Christmas present!

LIBRA (September 22-October 22)

Strengths: Appealing, smart, sensitive
Weaknesses: Scheming, hopeless, coy
Celebs with Your Sign: Gwyneth Paltrow, Naomi Watts
Friends: Skip the cliché holiday presents and take a couple of friends to a Bruins or Celtics game. Tickets aren't too expensive and you'll have a great time!
Lllovin: Your appealing nature will attract many possible matches this winter. Don't settle for just anyone; this streak of luck won't end any time soon.

SCORPIO (October 23-November 21)

Strengths: Intense, playful, lovely
Weaknesses: Jealous, possessing
Celebs with Your Sign: Owen Wilson, P. Diddy
Riches: Just because summer has ended doesn't mean your summer job has to. Get out and look for a part-time job; it may bring more rewards than you expected.
Friends: Spread the holiday spirit! Grab some friends and help the less fortunate. Try giving to a charity such as Toys for Tots and you will make a big difference to someone this winter.

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 19)

Strengths: Meticulous, diligent, achiever
Weaknesses: Fatalistic, egotistical, inflexible
Celebs with Your Sign: Jim Carey, Orlando Bloom
Friends: You might end up shaken when your vacation plans with your friends are changed. Go with the flow and everything will end up fine.
Riches: You've probably been counting every penny you've earned for a while. However, around the 21st you'll stumble onto a deal you just can't pass up. Don't be afraid to spend a little money, even if it is on you.

AQUARIUS (January 20-February 18)

Strengths: Rational, coherent, consistent
Weaknesses: Offensive, self-centered, immodest
Celebs with Your Sign: Oprah Winfrey, Jennifer Aniston
Lllovin: You may find yourself caught off guard when you think you've met the perfect person. Just don't expect too much, and you'll have fun, even if it's not your perfect match.
Friends: If it feels like you haven't seen your pals in months, it is probably because you haven't! It is time to get out of your house and socialize already!

PISCES (February 19-March 20)

Strengths: Vigorous, daring, bold
Weaknesses: Impractical, dreamy
Celebs with Your Sign: Drew Barrymore, Queen Latifah
Riches: You may have found yourself worrying about money more than usual. You'll feel better if you cut down the spending and get a little something saved. You could even try to set up a budget for yourself.
Lllovin: You may have found yourself day dreaming more than doing when it comes to your love life. However, this winter a real person will show interest, be careful; they aren't exactly the one of your dreams.

▲ Photo by: Chris Rogers

Teens and credit cards
Easy to get, hard to manage

BY SARAH BLANCHETTE//T.I.P. SENIOR WRITER

What is in your wallet now? If you're like me, your wallet probably contains about three dollars and a student ID. When cash is low, you may find yourself entertaining the thought of having your own credit card. It seems simple—with a swipe of plastic you can buy almost anything your heart desires. But do you really know how credit cards work?

Credit cards can be used anywhere from a gas station to the mall. At the moment, it seems just like cash, only you're delaying your payments. This privilege is made possible by interest rates (see sidebar).

At the age of 18, you are eligible to apply for a credit card. If you are planning on going to college, this process is simpler. Student credit cards work similarly to regular credit cards; however, your credit history is not a factor in the application. "We have actually had great success with the student population (and credit cards)," says Gintautas Garsys, Community Bank Manager at Sovereign Bank. Sovereignbank.com offers a "Student Credit Card" which boasts fraud protection, online account access, and the chance to build good credit. In fact, credit cards are one of the few options to build your credit history. Credit history is the record of how well you handle you finances, how often you pay your bills, what credit cards you have, and exactly how much you spend.

If you are not planning on going to college and want a credit card, the application process will be harder. When you apply, your credit history will be checked and, since this is your first card, there won't be much to look at. This may mean higher interest rates.

There are many things to consider when applying for a credit card. One thing to be aware of is the interest rate. An interest rate indicates a percentage of what you spent added to your bill. The lower the interest rate, the better. Something else you want to be low (or even non-existent) is the annual fee, the yearly amount of money you pay for having a credit card.

Luckily, many student credit cards have no annual fees. You should also be aware of whether you need a co-signer. A co-signer is a parent or guardian who can be held financially responsible for your debt on the card.

Even after you receive a credit card, you need to be careful. The first thing to do is study your card agreement. Keep in mind your grace period (the specific amount of time you have to make payments), annual fees, finance charges, and annual percentage rate (APR). Also, decide if you want to pay your balance in full or pay the minimum over a longer period of time.

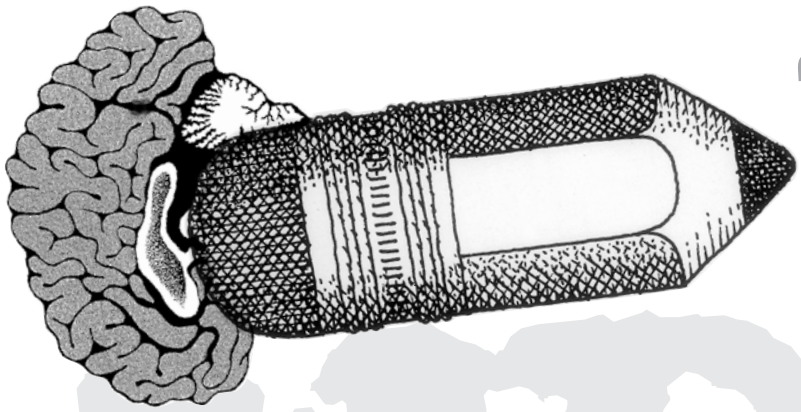
And remember, if you do not have the money to buy something, don't. Credit cards are not for extravagant or impulse purchases.

There are pros and cons to owning a credit card. You are able to start your credit history young, and if you are careful, you can get a good start. If you are not careful, you could end up with a bad credit history for the rest of your life. This is crucial because your credit history is considered for major purchases in your life such as a home or a car. "A large percentage of the population has a bad or unique credit situation," said Garsys.

HOW CREDIT WORKS

BY SARAH BLANCHETTE // T.I.P. SENIOR WRITER

Still confused about how credit works? Let's use an example: You have a credit card with an 18 percent interest rate. You pay $25 a year to own the card, and on a recent trip to the mall, you spent $150. Added onto your first monthly payment will be an interest charge of $2.25. Every month after that, an extra $1.20 is added. If you plan to make your payments on time and pay the minimum due, paying off the original $150 purchase will take seven months. These extra fees will add up to $8.40. In total, your trip to the mall cost $158.40.



your poetry WRITE

Shall I Stay Or Shall I Go?

By Shawnna Thomas // T.i.P. Writer

Shall I stay or shall I go?
My mind is saying 'I don't know'
To face another day in the exact same way
Shall I stay or shall I go?
My mind is saying 'I don't know'

Shall I stay or shall I go?
My mind is dark 'cause I dunno
Will I ever see bright, understanding light
I think I'll go,
My head says yes, my heart says no

It's weighing me down, I can't breathe
This heavy load that I'm tryin' to heave
A part of me says yes, another part, no
Shall I stay or shall I go?
My mind is dark 'cause "I DON'T KNOW !"

DESTINY

By Patrick Fumarola // T.i.P. Writer

My past has had hearts filled with hate
My present has souls that are nothing but fake
My future.... that, nobody can tell
because the only one who can see it, will be myself
Will my dreams come true? Will I get my wish?
or will they drown in the depths of the world, or fall in pits?
Will I end up happy, living in harmony???
or has that chance passed, gone, and now too far from me?
Is my destiny written, and is it soon to come?
If so, is it to be embraced with open arms, or something to run from?
Is happiness even sustainable in this life that I'm in?
or is it hopeless to keep going, like a game u can't win?
Thoughts racing back and forth all at the same time
makes it almost impossible to keep a sane mind
Just too overwhelmed, there's too much weight on my shoulders
My ankles break, my legs snap, and I start to keel over
I'm trapped and can't move, like being stuck in a ditch
I cry out, "whatever, I'm done, it's over, I QUIT!!"
Then the sun shines down, wind blowing coolly across my face
makes inspiration to pick up, keep moving towards my destiny.....
my happy place.....

MY ADDICTION

By Erica Cuevas // T.i.P. Writer

you are my number one ADDICTION
and this causes me great affliction
because without you i simply can't breathe
and that's something you can't see

this situation is somewhat tight
because against this love i can't fight
in me you left an irreversible mark
and now my world is ohso DARK

every time someone tries to show me the light
i turn it off b'cuz one day you just might...
well forget it cuz 2 much hope jus breaks my heart
because we have spent too many years apart
therez just NO way this can once AGAIN be
because YOU LOST all of your feelings for me

072805 is two and a half yearz in dah PAST
and i'm amazed b'cuz this love still LASTS
you moved on and that's for sure
i just hope that this pain i can endure

NADIE COMO YO
(Nobody Like Me)

By Willie Rogers // T.i.P. Writer

When people say there is nobody like me

Well think wrong because there is nobody like me

I'm unique in my own way

I'm a Latino and Asian

I could speak many languages

I stay "fresh" with my "Forces" and the Mexican bag and Brazilian flag

I got my best friends for life Nina, Denise a.k.a. D-Nice, and Aracelis, a.k.a. Beba

That got my back no matter what happens and I dedicate you on that

I'm that friend who will stick up for you when you're down and not judge you because

you're different and speak with accent like I do because we are the same but different

type of person even if we aren't related and don't have same skin color

maybe one day you will see me in "People Espanol" as one of the greatest Hispanics

alive and representing my Brazilians, and Dominicans

So when you say there is nobody like me think again

because there is nobody like me and nobody can change that

Ya tu Sabe (You Already know).

You Are My Left Rib

By Tina Colbert // T.i.P. Writer

You are my left rib
The strong bones that wraps our love and commitment in wrenches
Why is it that my heart holds the right amount of blood the size of my right fist?
You are my left rib that maintains
Our eyes of misery to complete our lives of mystery
We both take strong chances
In winning and saving our Black History
Without my left rib I'll be crippled physically
My feelings would be crushed, matter of fact handicapped
I would not only lose you but probably would receive
More disrespect from ignorant men
I feel to bleed

You are my left rib
I can only take this one chance to live or to give
Will you stand beside me when my eyes stand blurry?
Would you love me just for me???
Without saying, 'Just Worry'
When my legs get weary and weak?
When my body shimmers inside hit by a molested hammer?
My voice begins to rise
I hear the sound of intonation, memories of molestation, it's killing me
You are there for me to hold tight on
You're like my piece I needed that's intra-articular
But then you're not introduced into a joint of my body
You are my outer biology teaching me to adapt my mind
To follow my heart and easing my pain
That is why I love you
I call you when needed when my problems are intractable

You are my left rib, always connected to me,
Writing my lifetime stated intellectual
My life started at 0.0 when my life was under construction
To me you're like corroboration, someone who supports me through anything
When you say you love me. Am I that last piece of your left rib??
I have mo more to say is this my dream???
God forbid

Tina is currently a Teen Editor at Teen Voices

Forget the Rest

By Vu Dinh // T.i.P. Writer

It's what you think of yourself,
What you want to be,
It's what you want to have,
No one can tell you otherwise,
Advise and devise hints and tips,
Are nothing to care about,
It's what others want to make of you,
So be like me and be original,
Who you are is what you make of yourself,
Find your role in life and express yourself
Mine is poetry, yours can be anything,
Anything you want you can have and you can be,
I want to be a doctor, discouraged here and there,
but I don't care, cause' no matter what,
I will be who I want to be, Though I won't be top ranked
or the best, I'll do whatever pleases me and forget the rest.

WRITEBOSTON

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WriteBoston is a citywide initiative that seeks to align schools, families, and communities to dramatically improve writing competency among Boston high school students.

For more information on our organization, Teens in Print, or Writing/Journalism Workshops for Boston public high school students, please contact:

Betty Southwick, Director
Phone: 617.541.2604
E-mail: betty.southwick.jcs@cityofboston.gov

Top 10

winter fashion do's and don'ts

By Ciara Martinez // T.i.P. Senior Staff Writer

▲ Photo by: Tatiana Ware

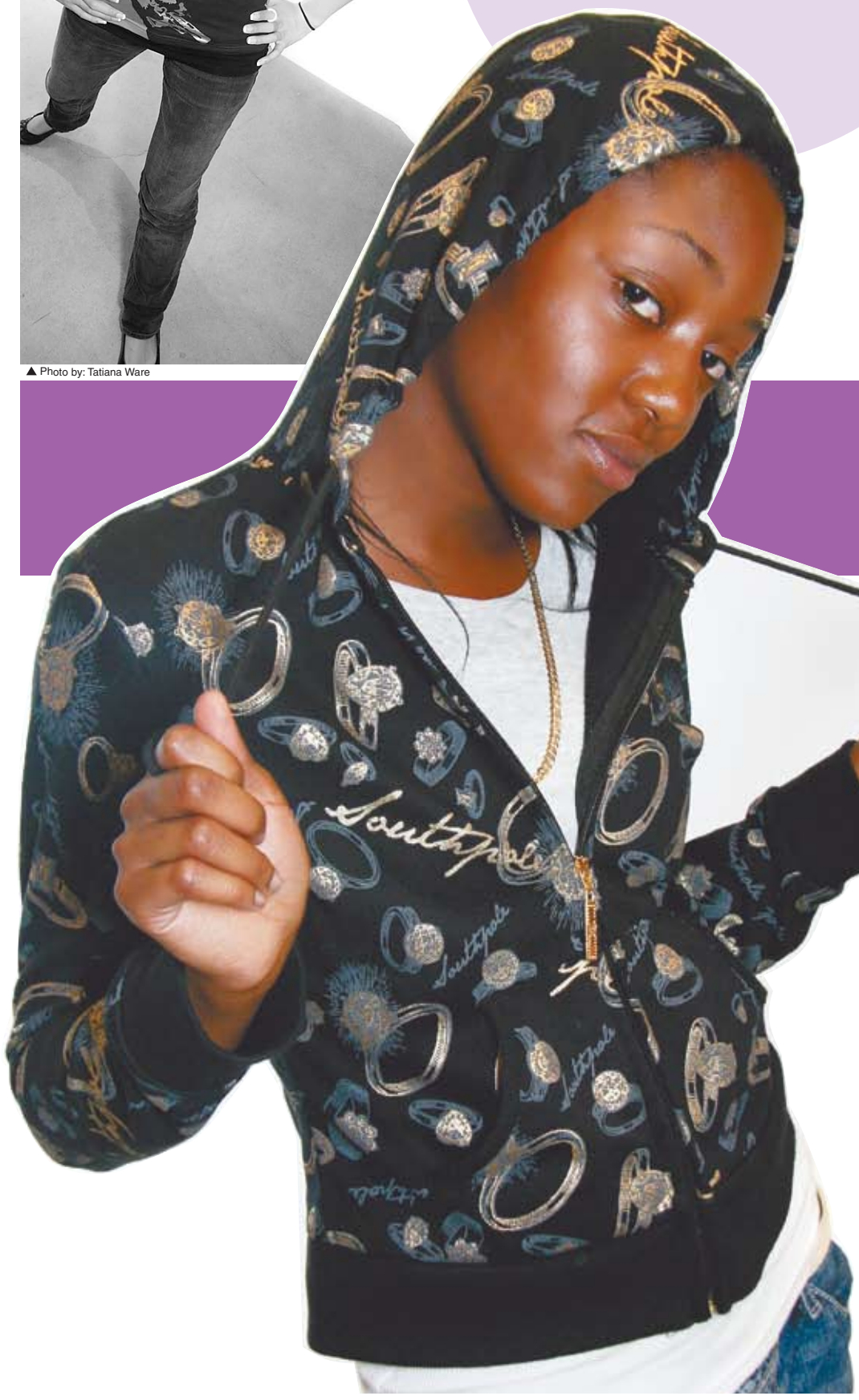
Winter is the perfect time to stay "hot." You never want to freeze during times like these in Boston. This is your guide to helpful winter fashion "do's" and "don'ts."

1 JEANS
- High waisted jeans give you an old school vibe.
- Black jeans make your legs look slim and go great with a bright top.
- Skinny jeans look great with flats.
- Choose comfort over fashion. Looking like a million bucks is no good if you don't feel like a million bucks.

2. HOODIES
- Hoodies with bold messages and creative designs (music notes, stars) will keep you "hot" in and out of school.
- Don't buy oversized hoodies; they make you look bigger than you are.

3. RUBBER BOOTS
- When you wake up to rainy, muddy days, put on your rubber boots and grab your umbrella to stay dry.
- Today's boots come in basic black, red, and blue, as well as stripes and polka dots.

4. T-SHIRTS
- Graphic and logo T-shirts with different patterns and messages make you stand out.
- Head to Newbury Comics and Hot Topic to find tops with graffiti or shirts with faces of amazing legends like Bob Marley and Marilyn Monroe.
- Layer long sleeve T's under short sleeve T's to keep cozy warm.



▲ Photo by: Jane Carper

Fashionista

5. NAIL POLISH
- Experiment with nail polish! It won't keep you warm, but it's something to do when you're inside.
- Try black, red, blue, yellow, orange. They're all colors that you wouldn't see on anyone else. Check out which one fits you best.

6. DRESSES
- Fitted dresses are always in. When it's too cold, wear them with a pair of jeans.

7. SNEAKERS
- Everyone has to have a pair of colorful and fun sneakers. Some brands, like Adidas, always keep it funky.
- Tuck a pair of skinny jeans into Converse sneakers to stand out.

8. ACCESSORIES
- Don't over do accessories. When your outfit is balanced you shouldn't have three bracelets and two necklaces on at the same time. You want people to focus on your outfit not your accessories.

9. COATS
- Do go to the store and try some on! Make sure you can move in it. You want to be able to have snowball fights.
- Do pick a coat that you know is going to keep you warm.
- Don't buy a coat you know you are not going to wear; it's a waste of time and money!

10. FINAL TOUCHES
- Do bring your winter look together with scarves, hat, and gloves that keep you toasty and stylish. Choose fabrics that keep your hands, head, and neck warm like cotton knits, cashmere, fleece, and wool.

MONSTER JAM '07

Audience on their feet at TD Banknorth party

By Carla Gualdron // T.i.P. Senior Editor, By Janelly Chavez // T.i.P. Associate Editor , and Sarah Blanchette // T.i.P. Senior Writer

On Monday Oct. 29, T-Pain announced to a jam-packed TD Banknorth Garden audience "This is not a concert…this is a party!" This statement perfectly describes Jam'n 94.5 Monster Jam concert 2007. The concert featured seven superstars including Mims, J. Holiday, Plies, T.Pain, Akon, Kanye West, and Lil Wayne.

The show opened up with Ramiro, from radio's "Morning Show," introducing Krazy Kulo. His montage performance of hit songs included "Bed," "Stronger," and "Crank That Soulja Boy." He wrapped it up with Michael Jackson's famous "Thriller" dance. The choreography was amazing and got the crowd on their feet.

The first performer was Mims. Although he was wearing a Yankees fitted cap, Mims dedicated his song "This is Why I'm Hot" to the World Champion Boston Red Sox. As the crowd started getting loose, Mims performed his single "Like This" featured on his CD "My Savior," which really got the crowd going.

With his good looks and amazing voice, J. Holiday came out as the second performer to serenade all the ladies. The crowd broke into a frenzy as everyone sang along to his smash hit "Bed." Continuing to sweep the ladies off their feet J. Holiday also performed the song "Anxious," originally sung by Ginuwine.

Plies was the third artist on stage. He apparently had no shame because the first thing he did was take off his tank top. Plies had the crowd singing his song "Shawty" which features T-pain, and most recent single "Hypnotized." His performance was one of the shortest.

T-Pain got the crowd up and out of their seats during his performance. Full of energy, T-Pain turned the concert into a party. While taking the stage by storm with his entourage, The Nappy Boy crew, he sang the hooks to numerous songs he is featured on including

Photo by: Sturar Spina

T.i.P. staff enjoyed Monster jam at TD Banknorth.

"Shawty," "Kiss Kiss," and "Out of My System. His performance was one of the most entertaining.

Everyone's favorite convict, Akon, was another performer who got a reaction from the ladies. Starting his act with the song "I'm In Love With A Stripper," Akon began to take off layers of T-shirts and throw them into the crowd. The ladies were going wild as he began to unbutton his pants, but the DJ stopped him, which left the crowd in disbelief. Along with his guitarist and drummer on stage, Akon rocked the house with "We Taking Over," and "Soul Survivor."

There was an orchestra on stage and a show of flashing lights. All you could hear were the violins and the cello playing his song "Touch the Sky." The crowd went wild as Kanye West presented himself on stage. West performed a number of hits from his first album to his most recent."

The audience sang along word by word to almost every one of his songs. During his performance of "All Falls Down" Kanye gave a blow to President Bush saying "Drug dealers buy Jordan's, crack heads buy crack, and George Bush gets paid off of all of that." Kanye then brought it way back to his first single "Through the Wire." The cherry on top of Kanye's performance was his special guest, the best rapper alive, Jay Z. The audience went into a stage of pandemonium as Jay Z came out singing his song "It's the HOV" followed by "Encore." After Jay Z left the stage the lights went down and the audience thought Kanye's performance was over. Then again, the orchestra started, this time playing along to the beat of "Stronger." With the lights still down, Kanye appeared on stage wearing a glow in the dark jacket finishing his set with a bang! By far this was the best performance of the night.

The closing act had the crowd waiting. The audience broke out into a chant of "We want Weezy." After a short delay Lil Wayne, also known was "Lil Weezy," or "Weezy F Baby," came out representing the Boston Red Sox, wearing a Sox jacket and fitted cap. Before he began rapping he said "Let's give a round of applause to God who I truly believe in" and also said "Let's give it up for all those artists who came on the stage before me and all those who will come after me." He performed some of his songs such as "The Block is Hot" and "Best Rapper Alive." Like J Holiday, he "Cranked that Soulja Boy." Unfortunately he was unable to perform his latest hit "I Feel Like Dying." The crowd was left yelling "We want Weezy," but all Weezy could do was kiss and wave his fans goodbye.

If you've never been to a Monster Jam concert before make sure you don't miss out next year! And, a quick tip: buy your tickets early because they sell out quickly.

Top three mind bending movies

By Nick Costa // T.i.P. Staff Writer

What movies have you seen in the past six months? "Spiderman 3," "Shreck 3," "Pirates of the Caribbean 3?" Do you see a pattern? They are all sequels that depend on flashy special effects and predictable story lines. Have recent movies made you think about what you just watched? Have they played with your expectations and surprised you in the end? Recent movies have failed to leave that impression on me. The movies in this list are movies that play with your expectations. They make you think about what you have just watched and leave you needing to watch it again to see if you missed something. These mind-benders are the ones I could watch over and over again and not get bored.

"The Sixth Sense"-This four-star movie is a must see, starring Bruce Willis and a young Haley Joel Osment in a tale of a troubled kid and a psychiatrist – a boy who sees ghosts and man who is there to try to help this boy, who is known as an outcast. With surprises throughout the movie and the things you learn about the characters, this story keeps you interested. The last 10 minutes will change everything you thought about the movie.

"Fight Club"- This is a movie you would have to watch twice to get what it is about. The film stars Edward Norton and Brad Pitt, playing two men who meet each other on a plane and end up becoming good friends. They start an underground organized group called Fight Club, which is used as a way for men to vent anger and stress. It turns into a bigger more harmful group destroying things around the men and trying to clean people's souls of the lies of society. This movie plays with your mind especially in the last five minutes. It makes you think and leaves you in shock.

"Pulp Fiction"- This cult favorite directed by Quentin Tarantino is another movie that can play with your mind. With multiple main characters and stories, the movie is based on four stories that overlap due to one character, Marsellus Wallace. This movie is a mind-bender once the end comes and you see the unorthodox structure in which it was filmed. Instead of following the usual beginning to end format, Tarantino switches scenes around and keeps them out of order. This makes the movie more interesting due to the scene format and will surprise you.

Movies like these catch my eye and make me think. I wish directors and screen writers would continue to write movies like these---original and interesting--- not boring sequels.