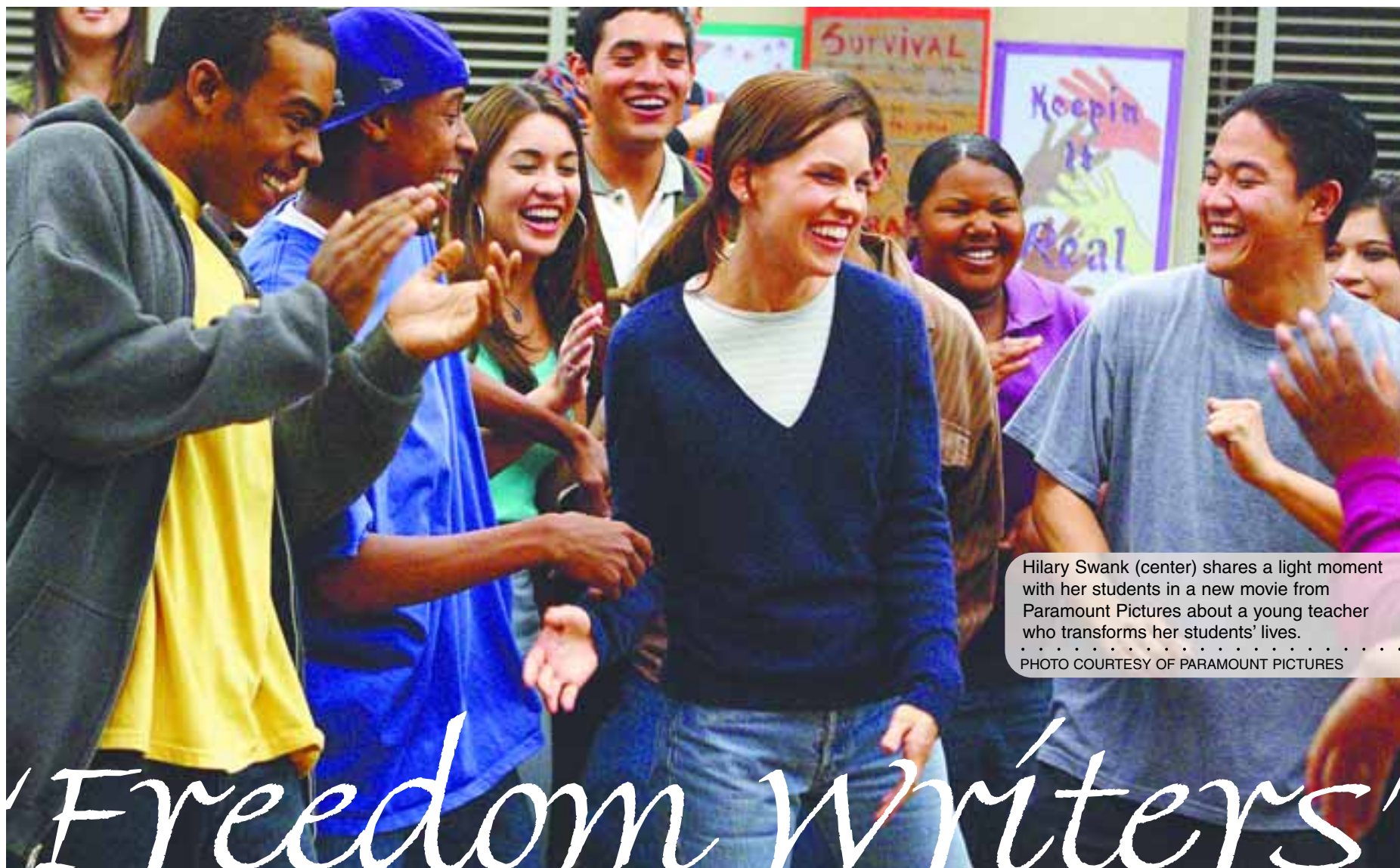




Hilary Swank (center) shares a light moment with her students in a new movie from Paramount Pictures about a young teacher who transforms her students' lives.

PHOTO COURTESY OF PARAMOUNT PICTURES

Freedom Writers

TEACHER TO TEENS: WRITE YOUR WAY OUT OF TROUBLE

BY CARLA GUALDRON // T.I.P. SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Paramount Pictures' new release, "Freedom Writers," expected out later this year on DVD, tells the true story of Erin Gruwell. A 23-year-old teacher, Gruwell inspired her troubled students—many of them gang members—to use writing to persevere through life's challenges and succeed. Inside this issue, T.i.P. goes behind the scenes with exclusive interviews with Gruwell (Page 23) and Jason Finn (Page 22), the teen who plays the role of Marcus in the film.

When Ms. Gruwell first arrived at Wilson High School in Long Beach, Calif., after the LA riots of the early '90s, she was upbeat and full of energy. Little did she know the challenges she was about to face. Her students were caught up in gangs, drugs, and hustling. School was the least of their worries. One way she got their attention was to give her students notebooks where she invited them to write about whatever they wanted. She promised to

keep them locked in a cabinet and only read them with their permission. The journals were published in a book, "The Freedom Writers Diary: How a Teacher and 150 Teens Used Writing to Change Themselves and the World Around Them." With hard work and dedication to their teacher's ideals, her students succeeded in school, something their other teachers had declared impossible.

In "Freedom Writers," Hilary Swank plays Gruwell, the real teacher who entered Wilson High School full of enthusiasm and ready to mold the minds of young teens. Faced with hatred and discrimination among her students, Gruwell approached them with an innovative style of teaching by relating their everyday gang wars to the Holocaust. With the attention and dedication of her students, Gruwell guided them to become bright successful scholars. T.i.P. got to meet Gruwell, as well as Jason Finn, the young actor who got his big break when he landed the part of Malcolm in the movie.

[FINN AND GRUWELL, PAGES 22-23]

INSIDE



From the Editor

It's an exciting time for T.i.P. because it's spring, which means our next issue will mark our third anniversary as a newspaper. Boston's T.i.P., or Teens in Print, has grown significantly over the last few years and we couldn't have done it without you, our readers.

While the T.i.P. staff is hard at work on our anniversary issue, there's still a lot to read in these pages. Check out our feature on the movie "Freedom Writers," which includes an interview with the teacher whose actions the movie was based on, as well as one of the actors. Also, three members of our staff went to the Suffolk County House of Correction and wrote about what they saw. T.i.P.'s staff continues to grow and we continue to gain more opportunities: five of us are heading to New York City in March to attend the 83d annual Columbia Scholastic Press Association conference for student journalists from around the country.

It's March, and every year around this time, T.i.P. features the artwork of local Scholastic Art Award winners. Flip to our center spread (Pages 12-13) to check out art from some of the most talented students in the city.

You may have noticed our new look, (we've splashed up the front page and added more art) but it's still us, so enjoy.

Neelabh Bharti T.i.P. Associate Editor

A project co-sponsored by
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Meet the T.i.P. staff

WESLEY JEANBAPTISTE

Meanest act against family member:

I gave my little sister the ultimate wedgie.

Favorite home remedy:

Chicken noodle soup:

"Let it rain, clear it out."

Exotic food to try: Rabbit

Favorite commercial:

Wendy's "tiny burger"

Birthday: June 23



AADHAR MAHAJAN

Stupidest injury: When I

was 8, I was chasing a fly

and I ran into a windowsill.

I got eight stitches inches

away from my right eye.

Meanest act against family member:

I threw one of my cousins down the stairs

because he was playing with my cars.

Favorite home remedy: When I get the

flu I have to drink tea with honey in it.

Exotic food to try: Frog legs



SHEILA LEE

Favorite home remedy:

Soup

Exotic food to try:

Durian fruit

Birthday: January 18



LUKE VADALA

Stupidest injury: I banged

my eye with a swing.

Favorite home remedy:

Chicken soup

Exotic food to try: Caviar

Birthday: April 25



SAMANTHA MBAWUIKE

Exotic food to try:

I am picky. Calamari,

ewwww!

Favorite commercial:

Dunkin' Donuts mak-

ing fun of Starbucks

Favorite place to shop:

H & M

Birthday: July 18



LEONA ALSTON

Stupidest injury:

When I kicked my

leg up (cheerleader

style) and fell back

on my butt. I was in

pain forever.

Exotic food to try: Caviar

and calamari

Favorite commercial: Jenny Craig; Kirstie

Allie is very humorous.

Birthday: July 17



PHIL DONAHUE

Meanest act against family

member: I broke my sister's

arm accidentally (I swear!).

Favorite home remedy: Sleep

Exotic food to try: Mashed

potatoes with chives and

sour cream

Birthday: December 28



JENNIFER SANCHEZ

Stupidest injury: Trying to do

a cartwheel, thinking I was a

professional gymnast, I hit my

head on the bed frame.

Meanest act against a family

member: I turned off all the lights

to scare my older sister when she came out

of the shower.

Favorite home remedy: Ice cream float

Favorite commercial: NFL ad where the foot-

ball player's finger is dislocated and then

popped back into place. ("You would never

survive in the NFL.")



SARAH BLANCHETTE

Stupidest injury: I broke my

arm on the playground when

I was younger.

Favorite home remedy:

Sleeping

Exotic food to try: Sushi

Birthday: July 8

Favorite commercial: The Sonic commercials



BIANCA LAO

Stupidest injury:

Too many to name

Favorite home remedy:

Sleeping in my bed.

Birthday: August 7

Little known fact about me:

I'm goofy.



CIARA MARTINEZ

Stupidest injury: I slipped on

ice outside my house.

Meanest thing I ever did to

a sibling: I hid my sister's

new cellphone in the kitchen

with the ringer on silent so she

couldn't find it.

Exotic food to try: Sushi

Birthday: July 31

Favorite commercial: Windex commercial with

the birds flying into the clean window



RYAN WARD

Stupidest injury: I

slipped into the dish-

washer and got a knife

in my knee.

Favorite home remedy:

Computer

Exotic food to try: A gold-

en taco

Birthday: December 12

Little known fact about me: I rap.



AKSHAT PANDEY

Stupidest injury: I fell out of a shopping cart.

Favorite home remedy: Water

Exotic food to try: Venison



JESSICA PINA

Favorite home remedy:

Sleep

Exotic food to try: I don't like to try new things.

Birthday: December 7



NEELABH BHARTI

Stupidest injury: I broke my nose by running the wrong way during a football game.

Exotic food to try:

Italian bruschetta

Favorite commercial: I like the Budweiser one where the guy slides across his bed and out the window.

Birthday: July 8



STUART SPINA

Stupidest injury: Burning my hand on a lawn mower engine

Favorite home remedy: Mom's homemade stew

Exotic food to try: Borscht. Mmm, mmm, good!



MARTINE ROMULUS

Stupidest injury:

I have so many...

Favorite home remedy:

Ice cream. It heals a broken heart.



ARIANA DIGGS

Meanest act against a family member: I pulled my sister up the stairs by her ponytails.

Favorite home remedy: I like lying on my comfy rug in my room.

Exotic food to try: I don't like to try new things. Spicy chicken is the only thing I eat.

Birthday: July 17. Cancer is the best sign ever!



CARLA GUALDRON

Stupidest injury: Trying to put on my shoes, I placed my foot on the edge of the bed. Unfortunately, I had on slippery shoes so my foot slid off. I fell forward and banged my forehead on the edge of the bed.

Meanest act against a family member: I burned my sister's hand with the iron.

Favorite home remedy:

Anise tea cures a fever.

Little known fact: My thumbs are double-jointed.



WANT TO BE FAMOUS?

WANT TO SEE YOUR NAME IN PRINT?

Write for **T.i.P.** Boston Teens in Print

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



T.i.P. is receiving more and more of your submissions, and we love it! (We can't be "Teens in Print" without your work.) We do our best to print as many of your submissions as possible. A couple of 'TIPS' to those of you submitting:

- E-mail it! If we don't have to re-type it, your submission is more likely to get printed.
- Send us one item at a time. We want to 'rep' as many of you as possible! If we get lots of submissions from many teens, we pick one piece from each teen. This means you don't get to control what we select. So it's in your best interest to choose carefully and send that one piece you're most proud of.
- Short stories? They're tricky for us at the moment unless they're really short (500 words or less). We hope that very soon, we can put fiction on our bostontip.com website where length won't matter as much.
- Be creative and we're more likely to publish your work. Send us a Top 10 list. Write a letter to Yo, Mo! Draw a cartoon. Send a joke, a recipe, a crossword, a piece written all in IM shorthand. Send us an article about your fund-raiser or after-school program and get free advertising for it.
- Mostly, keep the submissions coming. We love to hear from you, Boston teens, and we want T.i.P. to be your newspaper.

Next issue: May 2007

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

T.i.P.

BOSTON T.i.P.

March 27, 2007, Volume III, No. 12

T.i.P. Senior Editor

Phil Donahue

T.i.P. Associate Editors

Neelabh Bharti

Samantha Mbawuike

Art/Photography

Artists for Humanity

T.i.P. Senior Writers

Carla Gualdron

Wesley JeanBaptiste

Stuart Spina

T.i.P. Staff Writers

Leona Alston

Sarah Blanchette

Ariana Diggs

Bianca Lao

Sheila Lee

Aadhar Mahajan

Ciara Martinez

Akshat Pandey

Jessica Pina

Martine Romulus

Jennifer Sánchez

Luke Vadala

Ryan Ward

T.i.P. Writers

Jewel Cash

Jennifer Climaco

Erica Cuevas

Louis Jaime

Rena Lambrianidis

Damien Leach

Luisa Rosado

Melissa Saunders

Jayde Smith

Braulio Soto

Chrismanie Valerus

Zakiya Williams

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Cathy Downs, Manager

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WRITEBOSTON

Betty Southwick, Director

T.i.P. Managers

Kelly Knopf-Goldner

Christine M. Hayes

**THE BOSTON GLOBE
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Irene Mauch

Managing Editor

Marie C. Franklin

Art Director

Rich Giedd

OPINIONS
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IN YOUR **FACE**

▲ Photo by: Artists for Humanity

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Are Middle Easterners stereotyped at American airports?

By Aadhar Mahajan // T.I.P. Staff Writer

Anyone who has been in an airport lately probably noticed the immense amount of security. You may have seen the large, beefy men walking around with their guns, or the bomb/drug sniffing dogs strolling around and making people nervous. Or maybe you waited for up to an hour to get through the metal detectors so all of your carry-on bags could be poked at and pried open. Any liquids stuffed in the bags? Throw them away, even if it's just a bottle of drinking water.

The list of security measures you face at airports has grown steadily since 9/11, and they are expected to increase as America gets a handle on how to keep our airports safe from terrorism.

The interrogation at airports gets worse. If you're like most passengers, you are now asked to take off your shoes (which can be an adventure on its own) as you go through security. But wait. As you walk through metal detectors, which are highly sensitive to the braces many teens wear, the beeping machines send you back through the detectors even though you have told security about your dental situation. After this, they will probably ask you to move to the side where you will be manually searched by a stranger, which is usually very awkward. At last you might get into the terminal and sit on uncomfortable seats for another two to three hours, hoping to finally board the plane and take your seat next to the window. Finally, you're ready for takeoff and then you wonder if the food cart will ever get to you.

For the majority of people who have walked through an airport in America screened by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), this is the usual order of events. But for some of the travelers, what happens is worse. For people who look like they may be of Middle Eastern descent, going to the airport can be a nerve-racking and sometimes embarrassing experience.

For example, two summers ago when my family was traveling to India, we were the only people the security checkers took out of the line for the supposedly "random" searches (by the way I am Indian). Later, after we had boarded the plane, a white family sitting in the seats next to us kept looking at us and they were trying too hard to make it look like they didn't care that we were on the same plane as they were. They watched us the entire plane ride like they were waiting for us to do something. This made my family feel self conscious. It wasn't until we landed at Indira Gandhi International Airport that we felt free from passengers' stares.

Most teens I talked to seemed to agree on what a terrorist looks like. "A terrorist looks either Middle Eastern or European," said Brian Sictawitch, 14, "because that's how they look on television shows." Most teens also said they would be nervous, even scared, if they saw someone who looked "Arabian" sitting next to them on an airplane.

Airport officials have used racial profiling for years in order to determine how much of a risk people boarding

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

a plane are. For example, an Arab man between the ages of 18-40, who bought his tickets with cash, would be under more scrutiny than a white man in the same position. Another outlet that has affected perceptions of a terrorist's looks is the media, where popular shows like "24" often portray the enemy as a Middle Eastern man. This hasn't been true with all seasons of "24." Last year it was the president of the US who was behind all the evil.

The truth is that not all Middle Eastern men are evil terrorists who are after America. Not all Middle Eastern people who fly on airplanes are up to a terrorist plot. In every group of people, there are going to be some who you aren't going to agree with and can't trust.

A little understanding by passengers and security officials could go a long way in stopping Middle Eastern stereotypes from interfering with people's rights to travel.

IF YOU FLY:

For more information on what you can and cannot carry on planes when you fly, visit the TSA website at: tsa.gov.



▲ Photo by: Shawn McLaughlin

Furry friends have rights too

By Leona Alston // T.i.P. Staff Writer

Most of us grew up eating meat, wearing leather, and going to circuses and zoos. Many of us bought our "pets" at pet shops, had guinea pigs, and kept birds in cages. We wore wool and silk, ate McDonald's burgers and fish, never considering the impact of these actions on the animals involved. We are now asking the question: Why should animals have rights? Many students say, "animals are just like us! Animals deserve rights."

Many of you have a "furry friend," a cat or dog, maybe even a ferret like Paris Hilton. Imagine your cat or dog being caged in a space no bigger than the animal itself, left to await its painful death. Imagine your pet being used for food, clothing, entertainment, experimentation, or in any way, other than just being a pet.

Animal rights, also known as animal liberation, is the movement to protect animals from being used or regarded as property by humans. "They feel pain, pleasure, fear, frustration, loneliness, and motherly love too," said Genta Spaho, 17, a senior at Boston Community Leadership Academy (BCLA).

"Pigs are smarter than dogs and 3-year-old children," according to a spokesperson for People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). "They are affectionate and like to play video games." One Penn State University professor found that claim to be true in an

observation he conducted.

If you wouldn't wear your dog, then you should think twice about wearing fur. If you love your animals, especially your pet, and want to find out more about animal rights activism, or get involved, check out the links below.



▲ Photo by: Shawn McLaughlin

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Go to these websites: People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) at: peta.org; or the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) at hsus.org.

Why teens should be aware of genocide in Darfur

By Jennifer Sánchez // T.i.P. Staff Writer

Outraged is one emotion used to describe how I feel about the crisis occurring in Darfur, Africa. Recently I was introduced to the shocking genocide taking place in the Republic of the Sudan. Genocide, as defined by library.thinkquest.org, is the deliberate and systematic destruction of a racial, political, or cultural group.

Darfur is located in the western region of the Sudan in northern Africa. Beginning in 2003, the Sudanese armed forces and government-backed militia, the Janjaweed, have been fighting two revolutionary groups known as the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and the Sudanese Liberation Army/Movement (SLA/SLM). The goals of the rebel groups are to force the Sudanese government to address the issues of political marginalization and underdevelopment. However, the Sudanese government and the Janjaweed have responded by attacking civilian populations and supportive ethnic groups including the Fur, Masailt, and Zaghawa.

So why hasn't the United States tried to help these people from being murdered, raped, abused, and tortured?

There are some people who believe it's because we have our own war raging in Iraq and lack the military power and money for yet another conflict. Others believe it's because Africa is not important to world trade so problems in African nations are the very least

of our problems. I don't understand how the US can justify not helping these people in a time of a crisis, especially as the Janjaweed continue to commit genocidal crimes similar to the genocide in Rwanda.

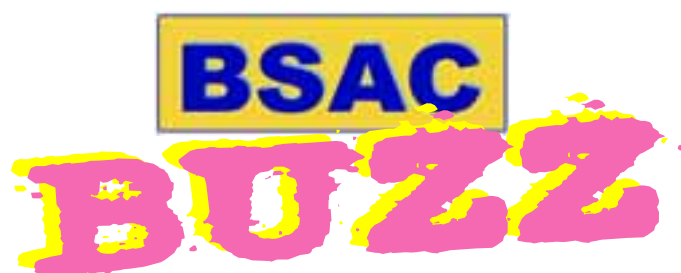
Chapter 32, section 2A, of the General Laws of Massachusetts states that no public money will be invested in businesses in connection with Darfur. In Massachusetts, some politicians have been able to pass laws to help in Darfur, but the US has not acted with greater force.

The genocide in the Sudan must come to an end and forces need to be strengthened. Attempts to diminish this genocide have been taken, but have been unsuccessful so far. After the broken Darfur Peace Agreement in May 2006, one that demanded the government of the Sudan to disarm the Janjaweed, the violence has escalated and is "going from real bad to catastrophic," according to the United Nation's top humanitarian official, Jan Egeland.

T.i.P. agrees: spreading awareness of the genocide in the Sudan is the first step of many in aiding people very much in need.

YOU CAN HELP:

Start by learning as much as you can about the crisis by going to these websites: savedarfur.org and darfurgenocide.org



By Braulio Soto // T.i.P. Writer

Thanks to our hard working members, BSAC, or Boston Student Advisory Council, has been able to improve the Boston Public Schools in creative and interesting ways. Among others, we have worked successfully on issues and policies about cellphones, metal detectors, and tardiness or lockout.

BSAC has not stopped there. We have taken steps on other school issues. We know it is not only important to get students into the building but also to help them get an education that will allow them to have a brighter future. This year, BSAC is working hard on the issue of school climate.

School climate is not about how warm or cold your school is, but about how well the school environment is working. It is about how well students are interacting with each other, teachers, and administrators, as well as how teachers and administrators are interacting with students. School climate is important as it may play a role in why students drop out. BSAC believes if students are not feeling comfortable in school, they won't want to be there. We also believe school climate is crucial to school safety. When students have good relationships in school, it creates a safer community and information travels faster in emergencies. We are finishing up the school climate survey and hope to have it in your schools soon.

Another project BSAC is taking on is the dual-enrollment program. This occurs when a student is regularly taking classes in high school and college at the same time. This presents an advantage for students because they are able to gain credits in high school and college helping to improve their grade point averages and transcripts. Students also have a sense of what college is like and the chance to decide if college is or isn't for them. In the future, BSAC members will be trained and will lobby for more money in order to continue this program in the Boston Public Schools.

Do you think school should start later? Later school start time has been shown to have a significant, positive impact on students' attendance, academic performance, and sleep patterns. BSAC recognizes that there are pros and cons to changing school start times, such as issues related to attendance, academic performance, and transportation. BSAC hasn't taken a position on the matter but has highlighted students' perspectives on school start time and recommended actions to further educate the BPS community. We will be reporting to the School Committee in the spring. To hear more from two BSAC students on this issue, visit the WGBH blog at: edreform.eyeducation.tv/blog/high_school_start. There you will hear from students Moriah Smith and Elyas Harris on the benefits and concerns of changing school start times.

There are many more projects that BSAC will be working on as time goes by. We need everyone's help to work as a community in order to solve the issues that trouble our youth. To get involved with BSAC, contact Maria I. Ortiz, BSAC coordinator, at 617-594-5721 or mortiz@boston.k12.ma.us.

Alarming trend: one in three drops out Boston does better than the nation

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

Next time you're sitting in class, look to the student to your left and the student to your right. According to the national dropout average among high school students, one of you will not graduate. As more students fall behind at school, they begin to give up, and the country faces its current situation with the dropout rate reaching a staggering high of almost 33 percent nationwide, according to a recent report in the Christian Science Monitor.

The assumption held by most people about students who drop out is that they leave school because they are incapable of doing the work. This is actually a misconception. According to a study done by Civic Enterprises, a public policy firm, 90 percent of dropouts have passing grades when they quit school, and 47 percent say their reason for dropping out was boring classes. This has led the people who have conducted these studies to believe there is a solution; that the dropout rate can be decreased if there is a change in the curriculum and the way the country's schools are run. According to the researchers, if schools catered to students more, educating them as well as making the school experience more interesting, the dropout rate might finally decrease. For instance, the diversity of high school classes today is minimal. Some students simply aren't seeking a college education, choosing to pursue blue collar careers as plumbers, contractors, or mechanics. Few high schools provide such trade education, and while vocational schools exist to serve these needs, many have closed down or reduced their course offerings. When

students find that their needs aren't being met, many of them drop out.

One in every three students attending high school does not graduate, according to news reports, but dropout rates vary from one part of the country to another. For example, according to a study done by Education Week, the highest graduation rate in the country belongs to Virginia, with 74.9 percent of its students graduating. Massachusetts is in fifth place, with 72 percent. The lowest graduation rate in the country belongs to New Mexico, where 56.7 percent of students graduate high school, and only 33.5 percent earn a two or four-year college degree.

The dropout rate also varies based on gender and ethnicity. African-American students drop out at a rate of 49.8 percent before graduating high school, while 48.9 percent of Native Americans and 46.8 percent of Hispanic students do not graduate. By contrast, 25 percent of Caucasian students drop out, and 23 percent of Asians. In terms of gender, 12 percent of male students are high school dropouts, compared with 9 percent of females.

The alarming data raises more than one issue. First, if more students continue to drop out, who's going to take the jobs that require, at a minimum, high school diplomas? Second, if these students aren't in school, what are they doing? Granted, there are a number of people who take the GED, or graduate equivalent exam, to get their diplomas. Those who don't and who struggle to get or keep jobs are vulnerable to joining gangs or resorting to criminal activities. Groups such as Civic Enterprises studies suggest that if high schools think about their students' interests more, the dropout rate will be solvable.



▲ Artwork by: Khaleela Willington

To block or not to block?

By Phil Donahue // T.i.P. Senior Editor

Students have always been under strict restrictions when surfing the Net in school. There are necessary blocks on adult sites and most students would admit that filtering Myspace is understandable because checking 'Picture Comments' isn't vital to your education. But most BPS students are unable to comprehend why Yahoo and Hotmail e-mail accounts are blocked when such e-mail accounts are necessary

to a successful high school career.

"Also known as a content filter," says Daniel Greening, instructional technology support specialist at South Boston Educational Complex, explaining the process of blocking sites. "A Web block is a piece of network equipment that sits between our network and the Internet." Boston's school network is located at the BPS headquarters on Court Street, according to Greening. To block e-

“The reason to block anything is to protect students and give them content to educate,” says Kimberly Rice, chief information officer of Boston Public Schools.

mail sites such as Yahoo.com, he says, “They get the IP (Internet Protocol) address or the domain name for the servers that log you into Yahoo and they block it.” Safety concerns with Myspace have been in high gear, but blocks on e-mail accounts are debatable, according to school administrators.

“The reason to block anything is to protect students and give them content to educate,” says Kimberly Rice, chief information officer of Boston Public Schools. Rice recognizes that blocking e-mail sites can be problematic for students saying, “I understand it can be inconvenient, so we’re working on getting everyone a Boston account.” Boston accounts are accessible to all BPS students and can be created on the Mybps.org website. Rice also points out that Gmail, the Google based e-mail, is accessible on BPS computers. But Gmail accounts can only be created when you are invited by an existing user. Rice realizes students may still want access to personal accounts and says there are subcommittees reviewing whether to block them. “We’ve got two committees dealing with the privacy [issues and] impact to the network,” Rice explains.

To create awareness of Internet safety, BPS is making April Internet Safety Month. Students can become I-Safe certified mentors and receive a \$300 stipend to help raise awareness of appropriate Internet use to underclassmen. Rice says, “We’re hoping to partner teenagers with younger kids. The problem is we’re not doing any education, we’re just blocking.” The program was developed by the Office of Instructional and Information Technology and Tech Boston. Tech Boston is also responsible for creating an ad campaign that features cartoon superheroes targeted to BPS students, kindergarten through middle school.

You’re on candid camera

By Wesley JeanBaptiste // T.i.P. Senior Writer

How would you feel if your every move was recorded? During the beginning of the year, I realized cameras were posted in most corridors and main hallways of my school. I wondered what was going on. I later found out my school, like a handful of others, requested to have the cameras, so I sent myself on a mission to find out more about cameras and surveillance in the Boston Public Schools.

Cameras are being posted inside and outside of some schools. At South Boston Education Complex, almost every corner in the school has a camera at eye level. The cameras are said to keep students safe, but are they making a difference in behavior?

According to Jonathan Palumbo, BPS media relations specialist, “The reasons [for cameras in Boston schools] are many, but the bottom line is the safety and security of our students and teachers. Installing cameras in and around schools allows us to closely monitor the daily happenings, provides us a record of what’s going on and what happened, gives us the opportunity to manage large buildings by being where people cannot, and even acts as a visual deterrent. Another huge positive is that the cameras help make sure people who do not belong in schools are not able to access schools. In elementary schools, we use cameras and a buzzer system to allow access to the school to visitors.” Palumbo adds, “The mere presence of cameras also often serves the purpose of discouraging bad behavior.”

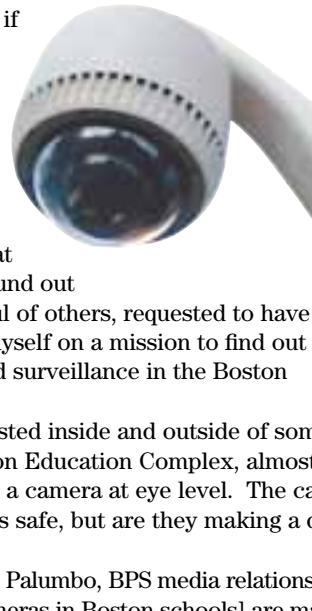
Sung-Joon Pai, headmaster of Media Communications Technology High School, stated similar reasons. “I don’t know about other schools but in my school we use the cameras to keep the building safe and secure.”

Who decides which schools need video cameras? “There is no district-wide policy regarding the use of cameras in schools,” says Palumbo, “rather, we work with the school and school community and review records and incidents to determine whether or not we believe a school needs to have cameras installed.” At Media Communications Technology High School, Pai says, “I suggested having the cameras in my school, but a number of people proposed the idea.”

Others believe cameras in schools are important assets in cracking down on outrageous acts of student defiance, although recent figures suggest otherwise. According to a Boston Globe article, school police found 407 weapons during the 2001-2002 school year and 577 weapons during the 2005-2006 school year. This supports the idea that schools need to be concerned about student safety, but there is another question: What about the privacy of students and teachers?

Palumbo says, “Nobody has challenged us on this issue, nor do we think the use of cameras in this instance is a violation of privacy. This is a matter of public safety. That is our first priority and we believe the use of cameras is of vital importance in helping keep our students and staff safe.” Pai says, “The footage from the cameras is only used when necessary, in issues of safety, security and for facts.”

*Christine Hayes, T.i.P. Manager, contributed to this article.



▲ Photo by: Haidan Hodgson

BPS: WHERE THE CAMERAS ARE

These schools use video cameras for student surveillance, according to Jonathan Palumbo, BPS media relations specialist.

Boston Day and Evening Academy (I)
 Burke High School (at King) (I/O)
 Charlestown High School and Athletic Building (I/O)
 Cleveland Middle School (O)
 Dorchester Education Complex (I/O))
 East Boston High School (I)
 Eliot Elementary School (O)
 English High School (I)
 Lilla G. Frederick Middle School (I/O)
 Holland Elementary School (I/O)
 Hyde Park Education Complex (I)
 Madison Park Technical Vocational High School (I/O)
 John D. O’Bryant High School of Mathematics and Science (I)
 Orchard Gardens K-8 School (I/O)
 South Boston Education Complex (I/O)
 West Roxbury Education Complex (I/O)

* I: Inside Cameras O: Outside Cameras

Romance:

THE GREAT DIVIDE

By Neelabh Bharti, Phil Donahue, and Carla Gualdron // T.I.P. Senior Staff Editors

You think you know the desires of the opposite sex? Think you know what the opposite sex is looking for and what they really want in a partner? Check out the real deal with these opinions from local teens.

What guys think girls want in a boyfriend

Jamie Fitzpatrick, 16

“Someone who wears red a lot.”

Nick Tomkavage, 17

“Cute abs, hairy chest, a little bit cocky.”

Mike Schwartz, 16

“Me.”

Simon Kercz, 16

“A fantastic mustache.”

Jeffrey Fernandes, 17

“Can’t stink and has to be nice.”

Mike Chin, 18

“Intelligence...girls won’t date a stupid guy. Also, girls look for bad guys because they think they can change them.”

Chris Wong, 17

“If they’re rich and their style is good, girls will want them. Girls are more attracted to guys who defend them. They don’t like stalkers.”

Steven Japo, 17

“You gotta be polite; you gotta be kind.”

Manny Hernandez, 18

“They like guys with cars. No T-passes.”

Matthew Coston, 14

“Honesty, a sense of humor, a nice face, a nice body.”

Segun Idowu, 18

“A female would want someone respectable who can support himself and at times support her. He should be easy on the eyes, be smart, and dress well.”

Demitrus Glover, 17

“A good guy who’s more than just a guy.”

What girls want in a boyfriend

Theodora Berenson, 16

“A funny personality, but not a clown. If they’re cute, that’s a plus. I tend to go for the jerks, but I try to stay away from them.”



▲ Artwork by: Danielle Jones

Gabriella Coloyan, 16

“Someone who can carry a conversation.”

Julia Ryan, 16

“They have to be musical, talkative, friendly, and smart.”

Siobhan Heneghan, 18

“Funny, but not obnoxious, and creative.”

Nadia Westcott, 17

“Funny, understanding, an OK sense of fashion, musical, kind of mean but playfully flirty, and confident.”

Janae Green, 19

“He’s like a warrior, a protector, and I’m attracted.”

Christina Andrade, 17

“I have to be physically attracted. They have to make me laugh. Some type of goals. If you’re a dropout, I’m not gonna look at you. You have to have clean shoes on ‘cuz if you can’t take care of your feet, you can’t take care of me.”

Jaleika Dyer-White, 18

“Caring, generous, romantic...On the first date I want flowers. I would want to go to a beach—sunset, candlelight dinner.”

Susan Nguyen, 18

“Sense of humor, a nice smile.”

Kayla Cabral, 17

“For them to just be themselves.”

What girls think guys want in a girlfriend

Dana Peña, 16

“Guys want girls who are independent, smart, cute, and have a good personality.”

Janice Sanchez, 17

“A girl who’s smart and has a nice personality.”

Karen Vides, 16

“Guys want a girl with good looks and personality. Some guys want girls who are tough, yet sweet.”

Amanda Gangemi, 17

“Nice body, good looks, and maybe personality.”

What guys want in a girlfriend

Jordan Hall, 17

“Nice body, cute face, nice personality.”

Christopher Guerrero, 15

“She’s got to be cool, she can’t be yelling all the time. A nice personality.”

Darwill Sanchez, 16

“A girl who can put up with me, feel what I feel, like me for who I am, and not be materialistic. A girl who is shorter than me, with long hair, and not afraid to show affection in public.”

Jerry Burgos, 18

“Funny; she can’t be boring.”

Samir Cupul, 16

“A girl who can keep me company, supports me, someone I can trust and talk to.”

Fiercely female: women rule at conference

By Samantha Mbawuike // T.i.P. Associate Editor and Kelly Knopf-Goldner // T.i.P. Manager

There were no mean girls at this event; instead diverse women from all over flocked to the Boston Convention Center to listen to inspiring words of women in a day of learning and encouragement for women in the workplace, society, and home.

More than 4,000 confident and fierce looking women attended the Massachusetts Conference for Women last December. The first speaker of the day was Iman, African supermodel and founder and CEO of Iman Cosmetics. She entered the space with a booming smile that exuded all appeals of model beauty. Born in Ethiopia 58 years ago, the towering beauty spoke with warmth and sincerity about her international upbringing, her business, her family, and the barriers she broke as a black model in the US.

Discovered by a photographer in Egypt, she told him she “wasn’t that kind of girl” when he asked to take her picture. Once he assured her it was an honest

and upright offer, Iman agreed and demanded they pay at least one year’s college tuition. Later, when she learned that white models earned more than she did, she demanded more. When makeup artists used foundation for Caucasian skin tones on her (making her look gray), she started her own cosmetic line. Beyond the famous face, Iman revealed herself to be savvy, smart, hard-working, and stubborn. Using these skills, she started a hunger relief foundation in Africa, making her name internationally known.

In speeches, workshops, and exhibitions, the Women’s Conference celebrated women’s achievements and acknowledged local and national women leaders like Geraldine of Oxygen Media and Martha Coakley, Massachusetts’ first female attorney general.

The highlight of the day, however, had to be Maya Angelou’s lunchtime speech. With poetry and song effortlessly rolling off her tongue, she told engaging

stories of the obstacles she overcame growing up, and with an offbeat sense of humor, kept an audience of thousands attentive for more than an hour. Without preaching, she urged every woman to “let your light shine,” especially on young girls and teens in need of mentoring. In countless ways, she shared how little acts of kindness ripple out, and come back in wonderful, unexpected ways. Time and again, people have come to her and explained how they have been touched by her, or by her uncle or brother. Part of it is the benefit of living a long time, she explained, but much more comes from “being a light to others.”

These were just some of the uplifting words and moments from a day dedicated to women and celebrating their strengths, abilities, talents, ambition, and energy. Fierce and inspiring indeed.



▲ Artwork by: Cassandra Lattimore

For women, nothing is impossible

By Rena Lambrianidis // T.i.P. Writer

I had an amazing time at the 2006 Women’s Conference. It was one of the most memorable times in my life.

The workshops were amazing. I learned a lot of new things about myself. The workshop I liked the most was the one about your inner conscious, and how most of the time, what you feel inside is right.

I also enjoyed the inspirational speakers. It was amazing to listen to their stories and the struggles they

have been through to get to where they are today. It made me really proud to know there are successful females throughout the world. It made me proud to be who I am. There was one famous quote that the model Iman repeated that stayed with me: “Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.” Words are the way to my heart and that captured me in all the right ways. Being a writer, it inspired me to keep going on with my

dreams, and never let go of the things that I value the most in life.

Going to the Women’s Conference opened up my eyes. At first (I am not going to lie), I didn’t really want to go. But in the end I am glad I did. I learned new things, met new people, and connected with my peers. At the end of the day, this conference made me see the certain little things in life that I had overlooked or forgot about. This conference made me strive for success, and it made me believe nothing is impossible.

Teens weigh in on school lunches

By Akshat Pandey // T.I.P. Staff Writer

Plop! The lunch lady tilts her spoon, unleashing an avalanche of unidentifiable slop onto the boy's tray. The smell is so strong it's almost visible, and as the student walks past the line of kids waiting for lunch, he has to hold his nose to keep from fainting. He lets out a groan as he comes closer to his table. One bite proves the lunch tastes as bad as it looks and smells. According to some BPS students, this commonly televised horror is a reality. With real kitchens becoming less popular in schools, and the price of lunch constantly rising, students and parents are forced to ask: Is the food worth it?

The food in BPS schools is made in a central kitchen in Dorchester. From there, food is sent to the schools and either reheated or handed out to students. Originally an automobile repair shop, the central kitchen is responsible for providing such cafeteria favorites as Smucker's Uncrustable peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. The menus also contain pizza, cheeseburgers, and macaroni. On first glance, the variety of cafeteria food seems reasonable, but to BPS teens, it's not the variety that bothers them, it's the quality.

"It could be worse," says Alex Nguyen, 14, a freshman at Boston Latin School. "But the pizza has too much grease, and sometimes, it falls apart." Luke Vadala, also 14, says, "The macaroni and cheese is disgusting. Half the time the cheese is burnt brown, and sometimes it's even crunchy."

Should parents be concerned? Rising costs and health issues say yes. Lunch prices increase every year, and for parents, this can be a problem. From \$2, to \$2.10, to \$2.25, lunch increases add up. Parents who make just enough money to pay full price for lunch can have a hard time squeezing the extra money out of tight budgets. It's not only the actual money that's annoying. For all they're paying, par-

ents should be able to expect quality food. If the extra 10 or 15 cents added to lunch prices isn't going into the improvement of the lunches, why buy lunches? People may say, "If you don't like the lunches, don't buy them," but for working parents, making a lunch every day is not an option.

Another concern is health. Considering some food offered for lunch, healthy diets can be hard to maintain. According to the Massachusetts A La Carte Food and Beverage Standards, students should only be getting 7 grams of fat per serving, but who's telling anybody to follow these rules? One glance at the vending machine proves there are students who will not follow a healthy diet. A big deal is made about soda machines being removed from schools, but does that make a difference? The harm caused by soda can easily be reproduced in Rice Krispies treats and fudge brownies from vending machines.

While BPS is responsible for a lot of these problems, they aren't the only ones to blame. Health issues are students' responsibility as well, and that's a problem that can only be solved with cooperation from both students and BPS.



▲ Photo by: Sean Selter

State law offers protection for unwanted babies

By Carla Gualdron // T.I.P. Senior Staff Writer

You are 16-years-old and eight months into your pregnancy. Your family has no clue because you have been hiding your stomach by wearing big clothes. If your parents find out, you will be kicked out of your house. The baby's father is denying the baby is his. With no one on your side, and your baby's life to consider, what are you to do?

In 2006, three appalling incidents occurred in the Boston area where young mothers abandoned their newborn babies. Last spring, police and firefighters rescued a baby boy who was wrapped up and tied inside a plastic garbage bag and buried in an alley dumpster. A few months later, a custodian discovered a fetus in a bathroom at Brighton High School. Last fall, another baby boy, just a few hours old, was left wrapped in a plastic bag behind an empty apartment in Roslindale. It was 13 hours later before the baby was discovered by neighbors. These incidents raise the question of "what is a mother to do when she does not, or can not, keep her baby?" As the public service announcement for Baby Safe Haven says, "If you can't keep your baby, you can keep your baby safe."

The Baby Safe Haven state-law, passed by former governor Mitt Romney, became effective in October 2004 making Massachusetts the 47th state to enact the law. The law was proposed as a solution to the tragedies involving abandoned infants. Also known as Baby Moses, or Safe Place for Newborns, the law allows parents to legally



▲ Artwork by: Moniqua Williams

leave unwanted newborns in a designated safe place such as a hospital, police station, or manned fire station. According to the Baby Safe Haven website (babysafehaven.com), the newborn has to be 7 days old or younger, has to be voluntarily left at a designated safe facility, and must be left with an appropriate person.

Parents are encouraged to provide information on the baby but are not required. The Safe Haven Act is only applicable when there are no signs of infant abuse or neglect. Immediately after the baby is left, the Department of Social Services takes custody and places the baby into foster care. With a "no questions asked" policy, parents avoid prosecution they could have faced if they had abandoned their baby elsewhere. Before Baby Safe Haven, parents who abandoned their babies faced up to five years in prison.

Melissa Sian, 18, believes it is "a good law." She adds, "It's very helpful to those who don't want their babies. It's better to leave the baby at a hospital than abandon it. All the stories of abandoned babies on the news are horrible." On the contrary, Omara Quintana, 17, says "They are making it easy for people to leave their kids."

Although some people are opposed to the law, many believe it is beneficial to society and that more awareness of the law is needed. Getting the word out is critical; the biggest risk to an unwanted newborn could be their parents' lack of information.

For more information on the newborn lifeline, call 1-866-694-2229.

Campaign for beauty questions what is attractive

By Sheila Lee // T.i.P. Staff Writer

An average woman is transformed into a glamorous billboard model, as if by magic. Layers of makeup cover her freckles and make her skin flawless. Her hair color and styles are changed several times to add to the alluring look. After her picture is snapped, her appearance is further enhanced by Photoshop. Her neck is stretched and her eyes and lips are made bigger. It is this edited picture that appears on the billboard visible to all. In the end, you would not be able to tell that this glamorous billboard model was that average woman.

Through its newest campaign, the Campaign For Real Beauty, Dove tries to tell us that “our perception of beau-



▲ Artwork by: Jaleela Browder

ty is distorted.” The Campaign For Real Beauty, as a part of the Self Esteem Fund, features a movie clip called “Evolution.” This clip shows us what goes on behind the scenes when models are transformed, a surprise to many. Often, readers flip through magazines and think the models in it are beautiful, without thinking about what happened to the picture before it was published. Maybe if more people thought about the changes made in the pictures, they would feel less pressure to be beautiful.

Elisa Cheng, 15, said “I think Dove is trying to show that the ‘picture perfect’ models aren’t truly what they are and they’re only digitally molded. Beauty is something girls rely too much on in order to blend in with the world. They shouldn’t be subjected to change their appearance just for the sake of being noticed.”

Dove’s campaign helps teenage girls to see that the media’s portrayal of beauty is a simulation of what real beauty is. Keeping this in mind, young girls should be conscious of their own inner beauty and not feel pressured to look like an air brushed model.

Sobering facts about underage drinking

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

As teens, it seems as if we are often faced with pressures: to do well in school, to have nice clothes, to take risks. One of these pressures is to try alcohol. Some of us are strong enough to simply walk away from peer pressure, while others are sucked into the world of binge drinking and possible alcoholism. As a teen, it can be hard to help a friend or yourself when you have a serious problem, but with the right facts you could change a life.

Remember: alcohol is a drug. When you consume alcohol it is absorbed into your bloodstream. This can cause problems now and in the future. Alcohol impairs your judgment, so when teens drink, they are more likely to drive when they should not, get into fights, and have unprotected sex. Even if you have watched your friends drink before, you should know everyone reacts differently to alcohol, depending on their body weight, the time of day, and their emotional make-up. Alcohol can also cause problems such as weight gain, liver conditions, and cancer.

Many teens believe drinking is expected of them. This is not true. According to Melissa Doyle, a social worker at Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital emergency room, consuming alcohol over a long period can result in losing brain cells, as well as the ability to think clearly. Also, research shows that people who begin drinking by age 15 are five times more likely to abuse alcohol than those who begin drinking after age 20. If you have wondered why the drinking age is 21 there is a legitimate reason. Your brain does not develop fully until age 20 and the brain of a teenager is more vulnerable to alcohol damage, according to MADD.com.

Even if you are not worried about the long-term effects of alcohol, be aware it could kill you in one night. If you consume a large amount of alcohol too quickly, you could get alcohol poisoning, which can lead to coma or death. According to Doyle, some of the most common cases requiring hospitalization are due to vomiting, passing out, or having dangerous falls. Another deadly mistake many teens make is driving while under the influence. According to Young Drivers and Alcohol, people aged 16-24 make up 28 percent of all alcohol related accidents, despite the fact they only make up 14 percent of the population.

If you suspect one of your friends has a problem,

there are signs to look for. These include: getting drunk regularly, lying about how much they drink, believing alcohol is necessary to have a good time, feeling depressed or suicidal, having frequent blackouts where they don’t remember what they were doing while they were drinking, or drinking alone.

The good news is there is more help than ever for teens who have a problem. Recovery High School is a school for teens who are newly sober and are trying to change their lives. This school, now

open in Beverly, South Boston, and soon to be open in Springfield, accepts 30-50 students who have to complete treatment and pledge to stay sober in order to attend classes. A slightly more old-school approach for

people seeking help is Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). There are many types of AA meetings, including those for women, men, gays/lesbians, and teens.



▲ Photo by: Daniel Iliaire

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SILVER KEY

Jaleela Browder	Boston Arts Academy
Daniel Fairclough	Boston Latin Academy
Kelly Chau	Boston Latin School
Brendan Powers	Boston Latin School
Susan Shian	Boston Latin School
Olivia Myers	Boston Trinity School
Benjamin Hirsch	Commonwealth School
Zachary Moscicki	Commonwealth School
Khari Slaughter	The Roxbury Latin School
Elizabeth Kuenstner	The Winsor School
Alice Lu	The Winsor School
Meredith Traquina	The Winsor School

HONORABLE MENTION

Yamira Serret	Boston Arts Academy
Mira Stella	Boston Arts Academy
Szu Chieh Yun	Boston Arts Academy
Szu Chieh Yun	Boston Arts Academy
Gia Marie Angelini Adams	Boston Latin Academy
Jessica Andrade	Boston Latin Academy
Lisa Antoniazzi	Boston Latin Academy
Emily Curran	Boston Latin Academy
Jaleesa Hines	Boston Latin Academy
Julie Lam	Boston Latin Academy
Rose Nguyen	Boston Latin Academy
Norris Duncan	Boston Latin School
Stacey Leonard	Boston Latin School
Andrea Maistros	Boston Latin School
Steven Sy	Boston Latin School
Annie Zhang	Boston Latin School
Robert DeVeer Jr.	Catholic Memorial High School
Erik Guilfoyle	Catholic Memorial High School
Jenna Karlsberg	Commonwealth School
Harrison Pao	The Roxbury Latin School
Katie Donham	The Winsor School
Evangelia Murray	The Winsor School
Keranie Theodosiou	The Winsor School

PORTFOLIO NOMINEE

Jaleela Browder	Boston Arts Academy
Szu Chieh Yun	Boston Arts Academy
Siobhan Heneghan	Boston Latin School
Brendan Powers	Boston Latin School



Conor Detwiler / Gold Key
Commonwealth School



Michael Hechavarria / Gold Key
Catholic Memorial High School

Mag
The '



Benjamin Deissler / Gold Key
 Boston Latin School



Hannah Campolo / Gold Key
 Boston Arts Academy



Jacqueline Ngo / Gold Key
 Boston Latin Academy



gie Yellen / Gold Key
 Winsor School



Roger Creel / Gold Key
 The Roxbury Latin School

A LOOK INSIDE Suffolk County Jail

BY ARIANA DIGGS AND JESSICA PINA // T.I.P. STAFF WRITERS



▲ Photo by: Ping Zeng

Boom! As the gates to the Suffolk County House of Correction closed behind us, we felt trapped. We didn't know what to expect. Our hearts pounded and our throats were dry. The suspense and tension in the air hit us hard. We weren't criminals, but today, on a field trip to a local jail, we felt guilty.

With help from the City School, located in Uphams Corner in Dorchester, the visiting prison became a reality. Our field trip began with a visit to the school, where we took part in several workshops that dealt with youth, violence, and prison empowerment. After the workshops, we were transported to the Suffolk County House of Correction, where nine women and 12 men spoke to us about their "adventures in crime." The experiences we heard about were shocking.

We heard real people tell us real stories, not only about how they got into jail, but also about how they survived while there. The stories we heard made jail more of a reality to us. The women touched us personally, because before our visit, we thought jail wouldn't include as many women inmates as there were. We were wrong. One woman was pregnant when she was incarcerated and her child was taken from her after the delivery. Luckily, she was fortunate to have family to take custody of her child. We were advised that jail was a place we should never think about going to.

The inmates briefly discussed the conditions in jail. It didn't sound like a fun place to be. According to the inmates, the visitors room was the nicest place in the entire prison, and we were told not to be fooled by its appearance. The question that struck us was 'why would anyone want to be in these conditions?' A lot of the inmates had been in jail before, and some had returned several times. All

of the inmates we met showed some type of realization that they had to change. They didn't want to be in prison ever again.

We also learned that when a person is incarcerated, his rights are no longer in his hands. The corrections officers and other inmates become like your mother and father. Forget the guaranteed right to freedom or the right to make one's own decisions. When you're in prison, that right is taken away from you. Suffolk County House of Correction (SCHOC) was home to 1,900 inmates (male and female) in the year 2000 alone. The ages range from people as young as 17. One jail cell is home to three inmates, with no option of who becomes your new "roommate."

We were also told that a prisoner shouldn't trust just anyone. The person who may seem like a good friend one day in prison may be your downfall the next. Some of the inmates were incarcerated because of incidents with "good friends." This advice applies to the world we live in today, because youth are dying by violence in very high numbers. Many who live end up in prison before their 20th birthdays.

We are the adults of the future. Let's not make being incarcerated the new 'cool' thing to do. No one is perfect, but if you follow your friends and take part in activities that won't benefit you, your life will be ruined.

Overall, the trip to the prison was emotional for both of us. It was hard because we both have friends who are going in the wrong direction and we don't want them to end up in this place many call 'home.' Prison is no place to brag about. All of the inmates were longing for their families and wanted their lives back. Outside of the barred windows stand the teens who are making life-changing decisions every day. We learned the importance of making the right decision.



Taking advice from the inmates

By Bianca Lao // T.i.P. Staff Writer

Going into Suffolk County House of Correction at South Bay (known as “South Bay”) last fall, I expected to see the conditions of the inside of actual jail cells. However, the visit didn’t meet these expectations. Although what I expected didn’t happen, I was not at all disappointed.

Instead of getting inside the jail cells, we got inside the inmates’ heads. When we got into the visiting room, we all sat down to wait for the prisoners. The first to arrive were the female inmates. They seemed just like any other girls, except they were incarcerated. Many spoke about what they left behind when their incarceration began: children, family, jobs, and friends. They spoke about the prison conditions, which weren’t good at all. They told us that they can’t do the small, simple things they used to do, like getting their hair and nails done, walking down the street to go to the store, or most important, being able to spend time with their children. They gave us insight, recommending we stay in school, do the right things, and stay out of jail because it’s not a place for children to be.

It was interesting to hear what the male inmates had to say. Their stories were similar and they also advised us not to end up in jail. Although we didn’t get to tour the jail, I am grateful to have interacted with these inmates, both male and female, because hearing their stories firsthand, and not by watching a TV show, was an important reality check. It is better to learn from their stories than the hard way.

If I were invited to another jail visit, I would go in a heartbeat. It was a true learning experience.



▲ Photo by: Shawn McLaughlin

PRISON ‘PRIVILEGES’

Think your parents are strict? Does your curfew cramp your style? Imagine what life would be like behind bars?

Teens take for granted getting out of bed each morning and taking a shower, eating breakfast, and getting dressed in fresh clothes that express our personal styles. We don’t think about what it would be like to be limited in what we can and can’t have, what we can and can’t wear, or whom we can and can’t see. For inmates at Suffolk County House of Correction at South Bay, this is the reality of their world.

Hangin’ with friends?

Inmates can list three people who are allowed to visit. This list cannot be changed for six months. Each person can visit one time per week. Children are allowed in addition to the adults.

Dial my digits?

It is true that phone calls are unlimited in jail, as long as the person you are calling wants to pick up the tab for the phone call. An inmate can call as often as the phone is available (keep in mind the strict schedule and the number of inmates waiting for the phone) and the family or friends are willing to accept the charges since ALL calls made must be collect calls.

Feelin’ fresh?

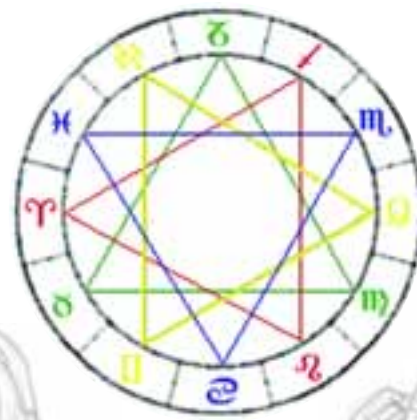
Showers are available daily, however changes of clothes are provided only three to four times per week. There are some inmates, due to their jobs (for example, kitchen workers), who would receive new uniforms daily. There are also times uniforms are in short supply due to increases in population and changing of units.

Storin’ my stuff?

Prisoners are allowed to have changes of underwear, pens (department issue only), paper, notebooks, one hardcover and a couple of paperback books, school work, legal papers, hygiene supplies (soap, shampoo, and deodorant). They can also have personal letters and pictures, within reason. They can subscribe to newspapers and magazines but they also have to pay for all of this themselves.

Prepared by: Bianca Lao from information compiled by Christine Hayes, T.i.P. Manager, with help from Dottie Dunford, Director of Education for Suffolk County House of Correction at South Bay and Banjineh Browne, Director of the Prison Empowerment Project at the City School in Dorchester.

HOROSCOPES



By Phil Donahue // T.i.P. Senior Editor and Neelabh Bharti // T.i.P. Associate Editor

Spring Forecast: Inspired by St. Patrick's Day:

How will you find the luck of the Irish?

ARIES

(March 21-April 19)

Symbol: The ram

Strengths: Active, daring, spirited

Weaknesses: Hasty, impulsive

Spring forecast: The weather is getting warmer and tempers are growing hotter. Don't sweat the small stuff.

Get lucky: Follow the old 'see a penny pick it up' and pick up any money you find; it all adds up.

TAURUS

(April 20-May 20)

Symbol: The bull

Strengths: Patient, imaginative, authentic

Weaknesses: Stubborn, defiant

Spring forecast: Your free time can be fun if you add creativity to your agenda.

Get lucky: Avoid cracks because you don't want to break your momma's back.

GEMINI

(May 21-June 20)

Symbol: The twins

Strengths: Curious, open minded, multitalented

Weaknesses: Capricious, impatient

Spring forecast: Good things come to those who wait, but don't wait too long or you may end up wasting time.

Get lucky: If your palm is itchy, scratch away; it means money is coming.

CANCER

(June 21-July 22)

Symbol: The crab

Strengths: Generous, perceptive, caring

Weaknesses: Cranky, tempered, grumpy

Spring forecast: Don't tend to too many gardens this spring. Worry about yourself and if your friends really need you, they will let you know.

Get lucky: Hurry and wish on that shooting star; they don't come around too often.

LEO

(July 23-August 22)

Symbol: The lion

Strengths: Responsible, reliable, devoted

Weaknesses: Arrogant, crabby, self-indulged

Spring forecast: Don't be selfish this spring. Help your friends with their spring cleaning and they will return the favor.

Get lucky: Search for an article of clothing you wore on the best day you can remember and deem it your lucky shirt (sweater, pair of jeans, skirt). Wear it when you most need the luck.

VIRGO

(August 23-September 21)

Symbol: The maiden

Strengths: Supportive, compassionate, conscientious

Weaknesses: Unorganized, critical, picky

Spring forecast: Spring is a time for changes and one of your friends may be going away. Be supportive so long distance won't put a thorn in your friendship.

Get lucky: Stay on the lookout for those lucky four-leaf clovers as they begin to grow again.

LIBRA

(September 22-October 22)

Symbol: The scales

Strengths: Appealing, smart, sensitive

Weaknesses: Scheming, hopeless, coy

Spring forecast: If you're bummed with the way your spring vacation is going, have hope that things will pick up. Spring is a time for new beginnings.

Get lucky: Attach a rabbit's foot to your key chain and you'll bring luck wherever you go.

SCORPIO

(October 23-November 21)

Symbol: The scorpion

Strengths: Intense, playful, lovely

Weaknesses: Jealousy, possessiveness

Sping forecast: If you're in a spring fling, don't be too domineering with your counterpart or it may be doomed to fail.

Get lucky: Twitching nose? Someone may be vying to give you a peck. Sure makes that "Kiss Me, I'm Irish" phrase sound a whole lot better.

SAGITTARIUS

(November 22-December 21)

Symbol: The archer

Strengths: Fervent, stimulating, charming

Weaknesses: Quarrelsome, irresponsible at times

Spring forecast: When the April showers arrive, the ominous clouds may put a damper on your day. Refrain from making everyone else feel the storm because of your misfortune.

Get lucky: Seven days in a week, seven dwarfs, seven years good luck if you read this seven times.

CAPRICORN

(December 22-January19)

Symbol: The goat

Strengths: Meticulous, diligent, achiever

Weaknesses: Fatalistic, egotistical, inflexible

Spring forecast: Don't let your work ethic put a damper on your social life. Spring into a more exciting social life.

Get lucky: Gallop to a horse farm and search for a horseshoe; they bring good luck.

AQUARIUS

(January 20- February 18)

Symbol: The water bearer

Strengths: Rational, coherent, consistent

Weaknesses:

Offensive, self-centered, immodest

Spring forecast: Your schedule has been a bit off track, but the rejuvenating powers of spring will make for a more organized season.

Get lucky: Beginner's luck is the strongest kind so try something new.

PISCES

(February 19-March 20)

Symbol: The fish

Strengths: Vigor, daring, boldness

Weaknesses: Impractical, dreamy

Spring forecast: The person you have been eyeing will make for a sizzling spring fling that may last into the summer.

Get lucky: Stand clear of the number 13; it brings bad luck.

“Very superstitious... writing’s on the wall”

By T.i.P. Staff

Maybe singer Stevie Wonder said it best. “Very superstitious, writing’s on the wall.” Or, in Wonder’s song, “...you believe in things that you don’t understand.”

Sure, we all say we don’t really believe in superstitions, but haven’t you ever knocked on wood after saying ‘Wow, I haven’t been sick at all this winter?’ Admit it. When your horoscope says, “A new love is just around

Wesley JeanBaptiste

“Walking under a ladder is bad luck.
Itchy palms means money is coming to you.”

Stephen Sampson

“I don’t believe in superstitions.
They are just another reason to fear the world.”

Sheila Lee

“Broken mirrors are bad luck.”

Samantha Mbawuiké

“Splitting poles is bad luck.”

Phil Donahue

“It’s bad luck to reveal superstitions.”

Kristina Perry

“A spider in the house means you’re getting money...
Your eye jumps because someone is talking about you.”

Roshni Touissant

“Looking at a broken mirror and walking with one shoe makes me superstitious.”

Stuart Spina

“Pick up pennies on the sidewalk because they’re lucky.”

Akshat Pandey

“Escalators make me uncomfortable.”

Carla Gualdron

“When there is a sun shower, a witch is getting married.”

Martine Romulus

“When your nose tickles, someone wants to kiss you.”

the corner,” don’t you pay a little extra attention to how you look each morning?

We think of ourselves as rational human beings, but sometimes, especially when it suits us, we can’t help but put our faith in a couple of crossed fingers.

Since March calls up St. Patty’s Day, four leaf clovers, and the lucky color green, T.i.P. writers share their superstitions.

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E-mail: Betty.southwick.jcs@cityofboston.gov

▲ Photo by: Darius Celphas

Your poetry

Dreams

By Zakiya Williams // T.i.P. Writer

As darkness fell
my heart grew dark
no hope in sight
an end to daylight.

The sights I see
still haunt my dreams
every waking hour they rise in full power.

As if they want me dead.
Why? I don't know.
My head swims in and out of consciousness.
Why do I bother to even consider getting out?

My mind, my mind
why am I losing my mind?
Can anyone help me find my mind?
Please, please, please, can someone, anyone, help me?

Well, I guess I can wake.
and please don't mistake
my dreams for insanity.
I'm here in reality.

In print

By Melissa Saunders // T.i.P. Writer

How would you like to see me in print?
My words will no doubt be
My societal imprint
Indeed
To be published
Reduced to pages
Edited. Perfect. Syntaxes. Paraphrases.
Because if my words are ink,
Then I myself personally am in ink.
Will I somehow be real?
Famous?
There's a pseudonym attached to the fake name
Indeed
My words are revised.
Sanitized. Pasteurized. Homogenized. Downsized.
Indeed
I am parading,
My resume like a whore on display.
But if I am indeed the embodiment of my words,
Then I will be real, live, substantial, and even
Existent.
In print.

Yesterday forever

By Chrismanie Valerus // T.i.P. Writer

What fun it was yesterday
when we went away
leaving our problems aside
while we are at each other's side
walking near the pond
holding my hand while we bond
happy feelings run through me
as you touch and kiss me
I just want to stay there
and hope that you will always care
The joy ended so did yesterday
It is now today.
Yesterday I was filled with happiness,
Today my heart is wrenching with sadness.
In a blink of an eye you are gone,
everything seems so wrong.
Why couldn't yesterday stay forever?
I would have been with you forever.

True feelings

By Jennifer Climaco // T.i.P. Writer

Yes, tears show weakness,
Then I guess I'm pretty weak.
Whatever happened to that pride,
To "I will never lose my dignity to a guy."
Wow, quite funny how it's almost all gone...
But I'm trying to keep the little dignity I have left.
Even though it would only take for you to ask and I would be there,
I would take you back in a heartbeat,
Even though I've cried over you,
And someone who cares about you would never cause you tears...
Anyhow...at least I know I tried, I did what I could...
'Cuz I really wanted to give it another try...
But hey, it takes two, not just one, so that wasn't enough.

It wasn't just a game

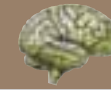
By Erica Cuevas // T.i.P. Writer

You have no idea what you mean to me
or the feelings that for you I have in me
It's not easy to explain or say
Just like it was hard to try to forget you in a day
Forgetting you is impossible because it's you
I like you, and I wanted to be with you.
But things got messed up and we had no time
As a result I was never able to make you mine
It hurt to hear you say that I didn't care
That from my part the feelings were never there
How can you say that if you know that it's not true?
I did everything I could to be with you
You know I wasn't playing with you
You knew that when I was with you
there was no one but you
You knew that I wouldn't hurt you
Why didn't you just say "I love you?"
I would have been there for you
I would have taken care of you
I would have loved you
I would have been that chick you could wife
I would have been your baby for life
I'm sorry if I ever hurt you
But please don't let me lose you.

The seed of ignorance

By Luisa Rosado // T.i.P. Writer

Racist terms, we shout,
Acting like the children of ignorance.
Who has taught us to hate so?
Racism is indeed the seed of ignorance.
And because of ignorance the people shall perish.
Racism is indeed the seed of ignorance.
Shall we too perish?
It is our generation...what shall we choose ?



Blood, whispers, dreamz kill

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

Dreams they call nightmares, never influenced,
But I'm making rebel movements, when ya'll feeling my muzik.
Precious rhymes, put to waste when they're saying the foolish.
But I could feel, what is real, when I'm dreaming the truest.

What life starts, doesn't alwayz mean what it seems.
Burned the flesh with the fire, scars developed from screams.
Understanding my one nature, when I've seen it complete.
Visualizing the same cries, once the blood hit the sheetz.

Put my life on pause, to ask God, what was wrong with me.
Others stay lost, looking for answers through astrology.
I stayed realistic, this generation doesn't think logically
Claimed to be hard, but really soft mentally.

Some call them sins; I simply call them constant memories.
Times in the past, that knock further, my destiny.
It seems they're like visions that later come to mess with me.
Too dizzy from anger, 'cuz these lyrics burn so viciously.

Later come questions, and other feeds of basic therapy.
I tried to stay strong, but my dreams truly be disturbing me.
Camouflage my thoughts and soldier up for my family.
I have no weaknesses, though these bars show da pain in me.

Living the same visions seems they are haunting my soul.
But you could feel my aggression, when you're living my flows.
Dreams of those who shot bullet holes, through ya dome.
Too late to connect the line, from ya phone to ya home.

As I lay, my heart keepz pumping cold vibrations.
Cornered in the struggle, no way out of escapement.
It's the criminal mind; their thoughts got them feeling so scared,
Which is why my expressions, always bleed from their hatred.

Alone

By Louis Jaime // T.i.P. Writer

Alone is when you have nothing but your ego to depend on.
Or just your shadow to talk to when something is wrong.
And the wanting of someone real is just a figment of your imagination.
All alone in your struggles and complications,
when in fact you need a friend to be there at all times,
or someone to know you better than you know your own palms.
Maybe you're the type who has all the friends but still are in denial;
these people you call friends won't run a marathon to save
your life, not even a mile.
And you know that, so now you begin to feel this emptiness.
If the truth sets you free,
then you should forever love thee.
Yeah, it's true; I speak from the heart in this subtle tone,
but please don't be devoured by the fiction or you will forever
remain alone.

Lies

By Jewel E. Cash // T.i.P. Writer

You strangle me with your lies,
These trials and tribulations only result in cries.
Tears, moisturizing my face with stress, anger, and pain,
Pain that seems to be coming at me every which way.
Why can't I just hide under one of the pyramids my ancestors made?
Covered in their spirit, filled with their power, and accepting their blessings.
Remembering the pain they went through and how they got through the struggle
I can be who I want to be.
I can do what I want to do.
I can do anything I put my mind to.
Despite your lies.
The lies that these statistics try to explain my life with,
The lies that some call headlines.
The lies that keep takin' my brothers to go see their creators.
The same lies that make me wonder why there are so many empty seats in this
classroom.
This room that teaches me lies.
This room that teaches me YOUR lies.
The lies that they want me to think is my history.
The history that is truly HIS story!
Cuz it sure 'nuf ain't my story!
Cuz my story they couldn't deal with...
Cuz if the real story was in the paper they'd say it was a horror story,
The horror story that in my equation equals life.
The life of my community and the life that so many won't be able to live.
(To be continued...)

Beyond the usual

By Jayde Smith // T.i.P. Writer & Teen Voices Peer Leader

I am me, a beautiful black, smart, independent, punk rocker emo chick
with a keen eye for success.
Unlike many others, I strive to be real and excel in each and everything I
do, never holding back! To do what others refuse and only do sometimes
and instead I do it full time!
My reason for this you ask, well, I do that simply because I can.
I am a leader, a sister, a niece, a co-worker, a student, and most of all a
woman, the last but not least on my list, and just another reason why I
cannot give up.
I might not be a model and Lord knows I am not perfect, but all that mat-
ters is that I'm here just adding to the list of proud, successful women
who stand before us every day and who left us long ago that we've never
forgotten.
You can find others like me if you look; I mean really take a good look
around you.
Just look for the ones who suffer in the time of misery but still seem to
make it on top.
See, you don't have to be model material, but you will always be the
greatest potential you can be.
Never forget you are you and you are beautiful inside and out.



The Jukebox

Top albums of 2006

By Luke Vadala // T.i.P. Staff Writer

2006 wasn't a bad year for music and some very good albums came out. The problem is most of them were made by established greats, artists who, for the most part, have already made their classics. The exception: The Strokes and Gnarls Barkley, who still have a bright future. Here's how it came down in music last year.

1. Bob Dylan: "Modern Times"

The best album of the year was made by an old man. Bob Dylan, almost 66, is still in a different league than everyone else, which is unheard of for a rock star. He was operating at a ridiculously high level 40 years ago, while consuming copious amounts of drugs, and most of the people who made great music like him have burned out. With this album, he is the oldest living person to top the American charts, while possibly making the best album ever by someone over 60.

RECOMMENDED: "Thunder on the Mountain," "Workin Man's Blues #2"

2. Ali Farka Toure: "Savane"

Since the 90s, Ali Farka has been one of the most internationally successful West African musicians. This album is his last; he died in March in Mali.

RECOMMENDED: "Yer Bounda Fera"

3. Ghostface Killah: "Fishscale"

After releasing two sub-par albums, Ghostface Killah returned with his best album since 2000's "Supreme Clientele." He still is a great storyteller, and with the help of some excellent production, he made an excellent, if not great, album that is enjoyable and entertaining.

RECOMMENDED: "Hit Me with a Strap," "Jellyfish," "9 Million Bros" (featuring the Wu Tang Clan)

4. Gnarls Barkley: "St. Elsewhere"

Gnarls Barkley is DJ Danger Mouse and Cee-Lo Green. Together, they ascended to the top of the British charts with their hit single "Crazy." The accompanying album is just as good as that song. The production and the vocals are great throughout, and the album holds together remarkably well, with a common theme of instability throughout.

RECOMMENDED: "Crazy," "St. Elsewhere," "Transformer," "The Last Time"

Street Artists

THERE'S ENERGY IN THAT BOOM, TAP, BOOM, TAP!

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

If you haven't heard these sounds before, listen up around Boston because that's where you'll definitely hear them. They come from street artists and you'll be able to rock the beat with dancers and upcoming artists while they perform, amazing their audiences.

One amazing dance group that's taking over Boston, performing at Radio Disney (AM 1260) shows and at Celtics home games, is Phunk (Funk) Phenomenon. Phunk Phenomenon has shocking moves that blaze from the stage. Their diverse dancers give 100 percent in every step they take. The owner of the dance complex is Reia Briggs.

Their mission is to get children off the streets and more interested in dancing and the history behind it. The studio is located at 1765 Revere Beach Parkway in Everett. Reia plans to open up other Phunk complexes everywhere. This company has existed for about 10 years and has grown dramatically. For more information log onto www.phunkphenomenon.com.

An upcoming reggaeton group that's attracting people of all races is N y L. They are willing to change the music scene with their moving lyrics and amazing voice. N y L has been together for about a year. Jesse, who is one of the band members, has known that he wanted to perform since he was 7 years old. He writes his own lyrics and makes his own beats. One thing that he loves about performing around Boston is his fans. He is a very talented artist and even though he has a lot of reggaeton material, he loves to throw some English words in here and there to catch the eye of people in all races. As life goes on he'll continue to do reggaeton music but as a back up plan he'll be able to fall back on becoming a neurosurgeon. He has started



▲ Photo by: PhunkPics

his own record label called Imperio Records. Look out for N y L's music in the near future because it's different from anything that you've ever heard. Log onto <http://www.myspace.com/imperionyl> for more information.

A "reggaetist" (reggaeton/artist in one) that you can look out for is Adrian a.k.a El Lobo (the wolf). He's spicing up a mix of reggaeton and drawing skills that he uses to present his work as an artist and a reggaeton performer. He has performed at Six

Flags (2005) and he promotes his art with a business called, Latin Customs. This is a company where T-shirts are airbrushed, tattoos are drawn, and other crafts take place. His reggaeton skills grew from the moment that he experienced music from his cousins in Rhode Island. They influenced him to continue his work with music. He's involved with basketball, school, and a graphic design company. For more information you can call

617-553-4571 or send an e-mail to latin_customs@yahoo.com. Leave your name, what kind of craft you would like, and your phone number so that you will be able to have your piece of work completed.

These performers have many things in common. Phunk Phenomenon can step to the stage jumping, popping, and breaking. Jesse, along with his group N y L, comes to the stage expecting to hear the crowds roar for their amazing talent with reggaeton beats falling from the stage and into the crowd. Adrian, a.k.a El Lobo, is dedicated to Latin customs and performing as a reggaeton artist. These performers are all dedicated to what they do. That drives these artist to do what they do best each and every day.

5. Beck: "The Information"

Beck, with the help of producer Nigel Godrich, made a meticulously crafted album, as he sings about the "hyper-saturated info-world of the new millennium."

RECOMMENDED: "Elevator Music," "Cellphone's Dead," "1000 BPM"

6. Flaming Lips: "At War With the Mystics"

The Flaming Lips, on this album, comment on seizing the moment and accepting mortality with gloriously catchy melodies and weird production tricks. **RECOMMENDED:** "The Yeah Yeah Yeah Song," "Free Radicals"

7. Prince: "3121"

Prince can make great music like this almost effortlessly. He doesn't try much to make modern music, just sticks to his classic funk sounds.

RECOMMENDED: "3121"; "Black Sweat"

8. Snoop Dogg: "Tha Blue Carpet Treatment"

This album plays like a house party celebrating Snoop Dogg's whole celebrated career. Heavy on classic G-Funk productions, this is a very enjoyable album.

RECOMMENDED: "Crazy" (featuring Dr. Dre)

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

AS I WAS WAITING for my interview to begin, I saw a tall, light-skinned man, wearing a bandana and a sideways cap, walk in. His large Champion pointed hoodie and baggy jeans expressed his urban look. You could see his ambition, as he walked straight and turned and looked at me. You could tell by his style – kind of a Juelz Santana figure with the right attitude—that it was 17-year-old J-Gomz, who attends South Boston High School. He has hoped to make it in the music industry since the first time he jammed to an Eminem CD. With his distinctive deep voice on numerous demos, he has a CD called, “Strategic Writer Vol. 1: Tha Mixed Tape.” When I asked him what studio he recorded his first demo with, he said proudly, “Stoneface. I’ve only ever recorded at Stoneface’s studio, since he was located in Dorchester. Now his studio is located on Business Street in Hyde Park.”

The best thing about J-Gomz is he truly believes in himself and the effort he puts into being a recording artist. “I have faith in myself. I think that I got the skills to make it in the mainstream world,” he said. He works well with other recording artists such as SeeJee and EZ, who are featured in an incredible song called “Start With Me.” The diversity between rappers made it like an odd couple sort of track. And his fans think he gives good advice as well as rapping because he combines the thoughts of a producer and the skills of a rapper.

J-Gomz is part of a label called Subzero Records/ Million Dollar Entertainment. When asked what was

DO YOU KNOW J-Gomz?

appealing about this label, he said, “It’s just a bunch of people the same age doing the same thing.” J-Gomz and his label are putting together a mixed tape featuring various artists. Recording artists in the label consist of Ace, Lil’ Cash, Courtside, and Burnz. You can find them at myspace.com/subzerorecords2007. J-Gomz signed with this label last December. Shortly after, his second demo, “Strategic Writer Vol. 2: Poetry In Motion,” dropped.

When asked what gave him motivation to keep going in this business, J-Gomz said, “I went to school for a while with my buddy Monsta. He’s been supporting me even when I lost battles. He knew I had a gift all along, and I thank him for that.” Growing up on Ashmont’s streets in Dorchester, Gomz shows a lot of Boston pride. He loves supporting other local artists, so if he sees one at a train station just playing to make a buck, he supports them. Because he’s still young he also realizes there’s a long path ahead of him to success.

Knowing J-Gomz uses strong lyrics with numerous punch lines, I wondered what style he listens to. All music should have some meaning, yet there’s always some good songs that are good that just flow well and rhyme. I don’t like music with catchy choruses because most of that music isn’t really rap, he says.

J-Gomz still roams the streets of Boston with his demos so everyone can hear what he has to say. He also sells his CD online. He is in the process of recording his third, and maybe final demo, “Strategic Writer Vol. 3: Gunz & Roses.” His Myspace page is myspace.com/anonomysakajgomz.



▲ Photo by: Shawn McLaughlin

Q and A with Jason Finn of ‘Freedom Writers’

Actor trades streets for scripts

By Carla Gualdron // T.i.P. Senior Staff Writer

After dropping out of high school, being shot, and surviving in the streets of LA, Jason Finn never imagined himself co-starring along-side Hilary Swank. In the movie “Freedom Writers,” Finn got his big break as an actor. His character, Marcus, goes through similar obstacles. He was kicked out of his house by his mother and had to live on his own on the streets. He too managed to turn his life around. T.i.P. recently sat down for a one-on-one interview with the star.

Q. Why did you drop out of high school?

A. I had a lot of teachers who didn’t believe in me. My mom didn’t believe in me, pops didn’t believe in me, nobody believed in me, so why should I believe in myself? I made the decision that I was going to make my life in the streets but two months into it, I got shot. I saw a whole different world. So I wound up going back to high school.

Q. This was your first film. How was that experience?

A. The script was about my life. I would go there and come home and be in the same position as my character. The character was kicking it with a bad crowd and they were bringing him down. He had to leave them alone and that’s what I was going through. By the time I finished the movie, I had a whole new outlook on life and there was really nothing that I probably couldn’t accomplish if I put my mind and my heart to it.

Q. How did you find out about “Freedom Writers”? What made you audition?

A. My teacher. I was like, ‘Yo, I’m doing this independent film,’ trying to show him that I’m doing something. He was like, “You should audition for this film.” I felt like each step of my life led to “Freedom Writers.” This is a movement; this is something to make young people alive again, ’cause I feel like the youth have been forgotten about.

Q. Had you ever heard about Erin Gruwell before you auditioned?

A. Nah, it was crazy ’cause I’d never heard about her and I’m from LA I immediately was like ‘I wish she could’ve been my teacher, I wish I could’ve been down with that.’ I guess I’m down with it now.

Q. Which character can you relate to the most?

A. From Marcus I got that trying to have an exterior when deep down inside I don’t want to be the kid I am. When I dropped out of high school I felt like a failure, but I couldn’t let everyone else see that so I had to put up a front. But deep down inside I wanted somebody to save me.

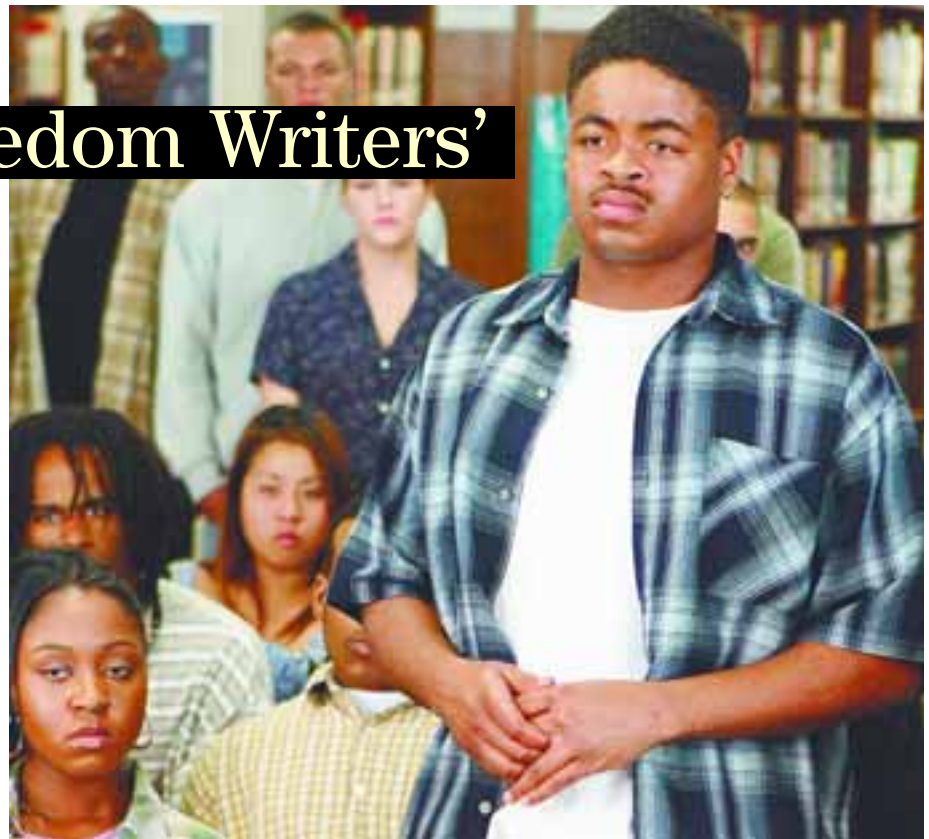


PHOTO COURTESY OF PARAMOUNT PICTURES

Q. Does your personal experience correlate to the plot of the story in any way?

A. Yeah, when an adult believes in you, somebody you didn’t expect to believe in you, it does something to us.

Q. Your biography says you want to change the school system. Why?

A. It doesn’t work anymore. You can’t teach kids in 2006 the same way you taught kids in 1906. It didn’t work for me...Got a lot of people out there who could’ve been great writers and journalists but they’re out of school because of the way people taught them.

Q. How did your experience working in the independent film differ from working in a real movie?

A. This one was more professional. In this film, if I didn’t get it right the first time, we could go back and do it....Being able to work with Hilary, a real professional actress [was different] and see how she gets down and how hungry she still is...two Academy Awards and still hungry.

Q. How has acting changed your life?

A. You always got negative things going on in your life, but when you get inside the script, you forget about all of that and become the character. It makes your mind bigger because when you play a character your mind has to open up.

MLK DAY: Not a day off, a day on...

By Samantha Mbawuike // T.i.P. Associate Editor

Project: Think Different finds a way to lift every voice, as they did last January 15 when a small, but passionate crowd of youth activists congregated at Cloud Place in Copley Square on Martin Luther King Day, to inspire ways to reform Boston’s media outlets.

As media messages impact the minds of our youth, Project: Think Different’s Media Watch Team endorses positive media to replace the constant negative and biased messages shown on television screens and in magazines.

The diverse group of participants assembled in workshops with a template of questions such as “Do you feel like today’s media reflects today’s society?” or “How does media represent certain people, especially teens?” They analyzed and discussed media messages that affect young people.

“It’s becoming routine to see naked women in videos and it does not help the self esteem of young girls who consider that as [tolerable],” said participant Tamara Wilson, 17, a student at City on a Hill Charter School. With popular channels like BET and MTV, women are often portrayed as promiscuous, which sends a negative message to youth, especially young girls, she said.

Another issue was raised about how celebrities are more popular than other newsworthy issues affecting the country. “I know more about Angelina Jolie than the war [in Iraq],” shouted Reggie Williams, 16, who attends Boston Latin Academy.

In an ideal world we would hear more positive messages on our music airwaves or on our television screens that would transform the mindset of Boston youth. “It starts with us, once we start changing our views on what is [acceptable] in media, then there will be a change in society,” said Sofia Snow, 17, of

Boston Latin Academy at the first Project: Think Different Youth Action Summit. Snow delivered a heartwarming spoken, word performance, live poetry that captivated the essence of incessant violence that has plagued the city.

Scherazade Daruvalla King, founder and executive director of Project: Think Different, feels teens should step up and voice their opinions on important issues. She says: “We want young people to feel empowered to take action.”

As a teen in the community, there are ways you can take action by belonging to media organizations (Teens in Print, TeenVoices, Youth Voice Collaborative, and Project: Think Different, among others) where you can express your opinions through writing, art, spoken word, and by being an example of positive behavior. Just as youth participant Erica Moise, 17 who attends Boston Latin School said, “If the media can spread the word, we can too.”

Chatting it up with the real Ms. G.

From small classroom to big screen

By Carla Gualdron // T.i.P. Senior Staff Writer

In the new film “Freedom Writers,” Hilary Swank plays Erin Gruwell, the real teacher who entered Wilson High School full of enthusiasm and ready to mold the minds of young teens. Faced with hatred and discrimination among her students, Gruwell approached them with an innovative style of teaching by relating their everyday gang wars to the Holocaust. With the attention and dedication of her students, Gruwell guided them into bright successful scholars. T.i.P. got to meet Gruwell, the teacher behind the movie’s story.

Q. Why did you want to pursue a teaching career?

A. I wanted to make a difference and fight the good fight as many civil rights activists did. I felt the most effective way to do that was in a classroom.

Q. How did you get your job at Wilson High?

A. Actually that was my first choice. On paper, Long Beach is considered one of the most diverse cities in the United States, according to the census, and I thought it would be a great mix of all these different ethnicities. I didn’t realize, unfortunately, that there was such strong discrimination in the school, which is something you see across the country. If you are of a different race, you hope our country can be a place where we can integrate. The best place to do that is through education. But we are not in a place where we do that yet. And that’s one of the reasons why I went into education, to show that when all these individuals come together, beautiful things can happen.

Q. What was your initial reaction to the students in Room 203?

A. I was taken back by how hostile they were towards one another. We had over 100 murders in our community after the LA riots, most of which were teenage boys. Kids had gone to more funerals than birthday parties. Jason’s character [Marcus] says in the movie, ‘I just want to make it ‘til I’m 18.’ My student actually said that, and the idea of not even seeing past your 18th birthday, past your high school graduation, to me was just a failure. I thought I had to do something to change that.

Q. At what point did you realize you had to approach the students with new methods of teaching in order to get through to them?

A. The note. That caricature actually happened. [In the movie a drawing is passed around making fun of an African-American student. Gruwell takes the caricature from the student and relates it to the ones that were made about Jewish people during the Holocaust.] That was the catalyst.

Q. Was the faculty at Wilson High as unsupportive as they are shown in the movie?

A. They were actually worse. They watered stuff down in the movie just so they could make it more believable. Imagine Beacon Hill, as affluent as that area is, and kids are bused in from Roxbury. Rather than have everyone say “oh this is fantastic” people got really nervous. Teachers would look at a kid like Jason and look at his address, and they can write someone off like him. And they do that, and they continue to do that, and I’m sure they do that here. So to me it was “Every kid needs a fresh slate and a fresh chance and a second, third, fourth, fifth chance.”

Q. Who were your biggest supporters?

A. I would say my superintendent, my dad, and my students. I may be a decent teacher, but I’m a really good student. Having to learn from them every day—anything that I ever had to overcome in the teachers’ lounge or in my personal life—was nothing compared to what was going on in their personal lives every day, all the time. Every day they just gave me strength to keep fighting.

Q. How involved were you with the process of making the movie?

A. The kids and I were really involved with everything that had to do with the film from the screenplay to costumes, casting, and music. When it came to casting, my kids said, ‘We’ve got to hire real kids.’...10,000 kids around the country auditioned.

Q. How did Hilary Swank get the starring role?

A. She was my first choice. There are very few actresses that can get men to go see a film starring a woman. Certain actresses achieve this and she is one of them. At the time I wanted the movie to be more of an art house independent film but the studio was like ‘We want box office; we want Cameron Diaz, Reese Witherspoon.’ I campaigned for Hilary Swank for ages.

PHOTO BY KELLY KNOPF-GOLDNER



Carla Gualdron (center) of the T.i.P. staff meets with actor Jason Finn and Erin Gruwell to talk about “Freedom Writers.”



Are you looking for something different to do after school or on weekends? Tired of going to the same places and doing the same things? Hop on the Red Line and head to Harvard Square! You'll find a large selection of unique and interesting things to see, places to shop, and restaurants to eat in. Here are a few places to get you started on your trip to Harvard Square in Cambridge.

The first place to check out is Adidas Originals (1270 Massachusetts Avenue), one of the hippest shoe stores around. Unlike Footlocker or Expressions, Adidas Originals has a unique feel. Instead of tall racks of shoes towering over you, items are displayed on small platforms that are knee high. Shayna, the visual merchandiser (the person who designs and sets up displays) at Adidas Originals, says this makes it easier to browse their products. You can also find rare, vintage, and limited edition sneakers that most places don't

HARVARD SPEND A DAY IN SQUARE

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

sell. "There is a style for every kind of person here," Shayna says. So the next time you need a new pair of kicks, stop by Adidas Originals in Cambridge. (Hours: Mon.-Fri. 11 a.m.-8 p.m.; Sat. 11 a.m.-9 p.m.; Sun. noon-6 p.m.)

After you've bought a new pair of sneakers, walk over to On Church Street (54 Church St.), a cool little music store that has been a favorite of Harvard students and faculty for nearly three years. Browse the diverse selection of new and used DVDs and CDs, where styles range from "Rhapsody in Blue," to R. Kelly, to Ravalidi, to Radiohead, and you'll learn there is something for everyone here. Prices are way cheaper than most other music stores, plus, if you buy four CDs, you will get one free!

Share the wealth with a friend and get a gift certificate. While you're there, check out the DVDs and video games too! (Open Mon. and Tue. 11 a.m.-8 p.m., Thur.-Sat. 11 a.m.-9 p.m., and Sun., noon-8 p.m.)

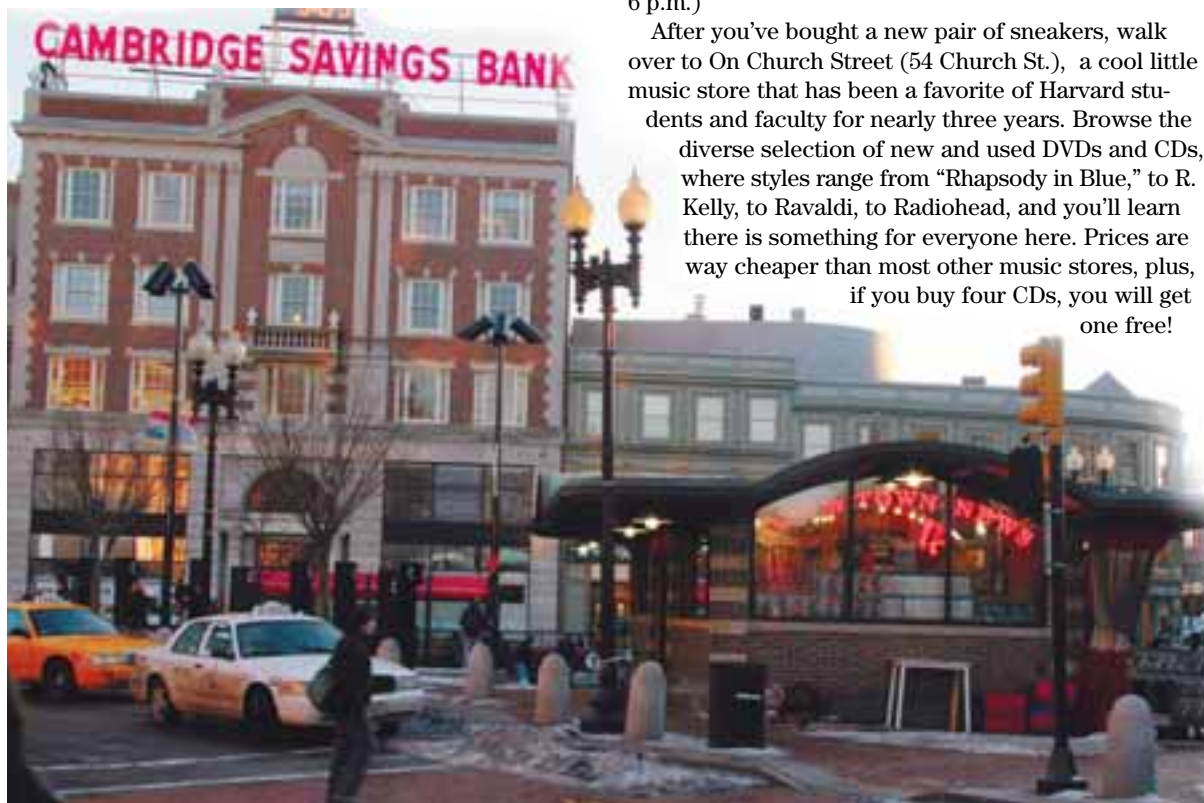
Another must see is Colonial Drug, Hard-to-Find Fragrance Specialists (49 Brattle Street). This is the store for "The People with Absolutely no Common Scents." You'll be dazzled by the variety of hard-to-find perfumes, soaps, shampoos, colognes, scented candles, and accessories. Yardley, Roger & Galley, Castle Forbes, Kenneth Turner, Rigaud, and Truefitt & Hill are just a sampling of the brands you will find here that are known worldwide. Dealing mostly in European imports, the store offers Swedish toothpaste, Spanish soap, or British aftershave. This is also a great place to buy gifts for friends and family. Also, if you have a dog, Colonial Drug sells dog towels, cookies, and fragrances. Soon, Fido and Fifi will be the most well groomed pooches on the block! (Mon.-Fri. 8 a.m.- 7 p.m. and Sat. 8 a.m. -6 p.m)

Harvard Square boasts many wonderful and diverse restaurants including: S & S Restaurant & Delicatessen at 1334 Cambridge Street, in nearby Inman Square, Uno Chicago Grill at 22 JFK Street, and Yenching Restaurant at 1326 Massachusetts Avenue. There's even an IHOP (International House of Pancakes) in Harvard Square at 16-18 Eliot Street.

Harvard Square is also a thriving cultural center. Visit the Fogg Art Museum, featuring magnificent works of art (visit artmuseums.harvard.edu/fogg/ for more information), or the Museum of Natural History and see beautiful hand blown glass flowers. There are many more museums in the area, so log onto the Cambridge Office for Tourism website, at cambridge-usa.org to find out more.

Before you go home, take the MBTA Red Line to the Davis stop and visit the Somerville Theatre. Built in 1914, the family-owned, 1,600 seat movie theater not only features first run movies, but also hosts nearly 100 concerts, plays, and stage shows a year. Tickets are wicked cheap with standard prices at \$7. It's definitely worth the 15-minute ride from Park Street! Matinees are even cheaper!

Don't stop at the places mentioned! Poke around Harvard Square yourself and see what you can find.



▲ Photo by: Shawn McLaughlin

You've got problems?



Send your "Yo, Mo" letters to:
PO Box 55819, Boston, MA 02205
Or call in your queries to: 617-929-8374

By Martine Romulus // T.I.P. Staff Writer

Yo Mo,

In a couple of months I will be receiving my high school diploma and going off to college. I will be closing an old chapter in my life and opening a new chapter. However, I'll be leaving some friends behind. I'll still be in Massachusetts but I will be hours away from home so it isn't like I can just come home every weekend to see my friends. Even with new inventions such as Myspace.com and Facebook.com, it's still going to be hard to keep in touch with my friends, while trying to make new friends.

Sincerely,
Homesick Scholar

Dear Homesick Scholar,

Congratulations on your college plans and keep up the good work! I know sweetie, it is going to be hard getting through this, and it is true that it is hard to keep up with friends and work, especially if you are not going to be in the same county or school. You're also going to be in a new school and most likely making new friends. You might think "I don't want to make new friends," but we all have to realize the transition to a new environment is an important part of life. The best thing to do is to spend as much time with your current friends now. Go out to eat more often, or to the movies, so that you guys can spend as much time together as possible before the big split up. The Myspace, Facebook, and Hi5 websites are excellent ways to keep in touch. Hello!!! Let's not forget to mention the infamous cellphone. Make a day to dedicate yourself to catching up with old friends while you're at college either using the Internet or your cellphone.

Sincerely,
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