

TEENS

in

PRINT

BOSTON

BOSTON TEENS IN PRINT NOV/DEC 2009™

FRUSTRATION NATION

Foreign-born students feel fear and isolation at school.

By Anonymous

This article was reported and written by a Boston teenager. Due to the sensitive nature of the subject, Teens in Print is withholding the author's name, as well as other identifying details. While the story focuses on one place, students and teachers say that its theme of hostility directed at new immigrants by American-born youth is not unique to that school.

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▲ AFH painting by Maliek Tuitt

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▲ Top photo by Nenette Elie, middle photo by AFH Yinetle Fuentes, bottom Photo courtesy of AFL.

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I am an immigrant student who goes to a Boston public high school. I have seen a lot of bad, cruel, disrespectful, and selfish things that some American students have done or said to immigrant students – Haitians, Hispanics, Africans, and others.

In my school, I saw a friend getting beat up by some American students really bad. I could not do anything because I did not want to put myself in a position of being targeted after that. I was watching them beating up this little friend of mine. I don't think there is a word that expresses how sad I felt. I never got jumped personally by American students. I think it's because I avoid them all the time. I only hang out with other immigrants. I walk around school trying to be invisible.

I know a 15-year-old immigrant student who got jumped by some American students because they wanted his

money. "You got a dollar?" he was asked, and he said, "No." The next thing I knew he was getting beat up. After that his face was bloody. He said to me that he could not do anything about it. He was very angry about the fact that he could not do anything about it.

Another immigrant, a 17-year-old student, said: "Sometimes they make fun of our accents, they treat us bad, and they say the immigrants stink. I can't take it anymore. I want to go back to my country. It's just too much."

A teacher at my high school, who knows the situation, said, "The violence and disrespect make me sad, angry, and frustrated. As someone whose family immigrated to the United States, I can't believe that the same ignorant things said about my family many years ago are now said about my students."

The teacher believes that some Americans have fear and anger against people who are different. "Americans

need to ask why we are willing to be rude and disrespectful and mean to people who are coming here for a new and perhaps better life," the teacher said. "I know how hard leaving home has been for my students, and how difficult coming to America must be. I hate to hear that any student has been made to suffer more. I also feel ashamed that Americans would be so cruel and so mean."

When complaints from immigrants have been raised, an administrator has said: Be careful who you choose for friends; don't wear expensive clothes, or show off your iPods or cell phones; and speak more English.

But we are the victims. Why must we change? Immigrant students can do this – but should we have to?

Some immigrant students are afraid to come to school because American students are beating them down. Somebody needs to stop it. ■

COOL IT

Boston School Department officials say they are troubled by allegations of friction between students. "We do take issues of bullying very seriously," said Melissa Duggan, a spokeswoman for the Boston Public Schools. "We work hard to ensure a healthy school climate for all students."

Duggan said the department has a number of programs in place to prevent conflict, including exposing students to positive role models and teaching youth how to reduce aggressive behavior.

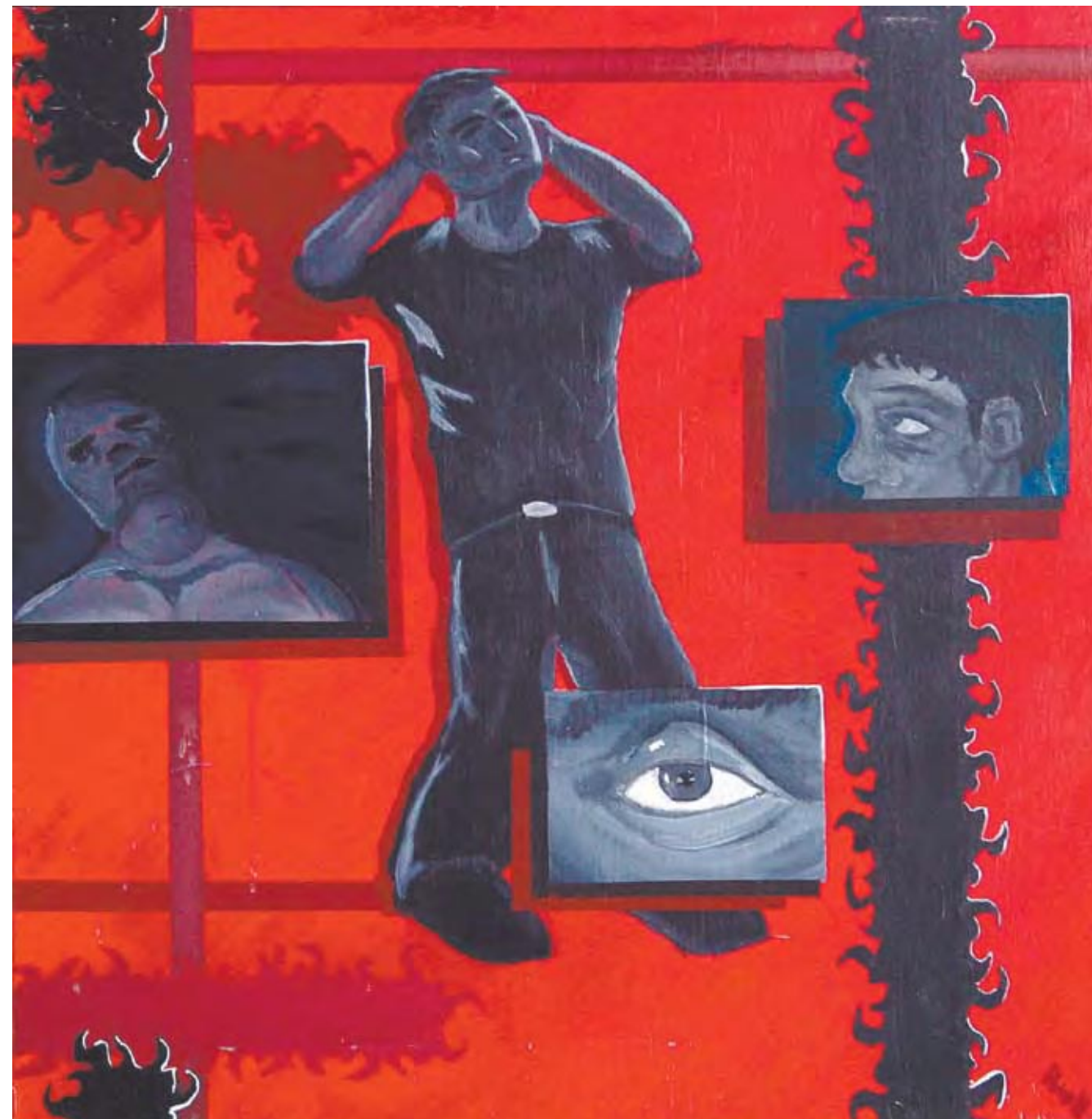
Duggan said that any student who feels pressured should seek-out a trusted adult, from teacher or guidance counselor to school safety officer or headmaster.

A DIVERSE CROWD

For more than 40 percent of Boston Public Schools students, English is not their home language. Here are the five most common native tongues of BPS English Language Learners:

- 1) Spanish
- 2) Chinese
- 3) Cape Verdean Creole
- 4) Haitian Creole
- 5) Vietnamese

Source: BPS



▲ AFH painting by Jonathan Vergara

Jamaica Journal

Teen Taylor for Prime Minister in 2013!

By Roxanne Taylor // Senior Editor

So I keep dialing and dialing and no one is picking up. It's 8 o'clock at night and I am sitting here in Jamaica, in the 80 degree August weather with mosquitoes flying around me, and I am saying to myself, "I doubt that I am going to get through to him." And then, suddenly, the male voice of the distinguished Jamaican leader answers the phone. In shock, I respond with the words, "Good evening."

Ever since my junior year, I knew I wanted to be the next Jamaican Prime Minister, to help the beautiful island that I love so much, the one place on earth that keeps me calm on bad days and where everyone is alive 24/7. Yes, a politician, but the harsh criticism – like "don't bother to waste your time" or "that might be extremely difficult for you to achieve" – will not discourage me. I want to jumpstart the Jamaican economy, increase tourism, and put a stop to the gun violence and police corruption. What I wanted to do before that, of course, was to meet the Prime Minister to get a glimpse into the political life of a national leader.

Remembering that on the last Wednesday of every month he has a show on the radio where he speaks with the nation, I realize that is my best bet. After the phone rings forever, someone finally answers. It is a man who works at a law firm. Clearly, I had been given the wrong



digits. I move on to the other numbers the radio station had given out. After what seems like an hour, a voice says, "Hello, you're on with Bruce Golding."

I am in such great disbelief, I can barely remember my name. In fact, I never tell him my name. Or that I live in America or that I am in Jamaica on vacation. Fortunately, I am able to tell him my thoughts on the economy, the police force, and the overpopulation of mosquitoes.

When I tell the Hon. Bruce Golding, Prime Minister of Jamaica, that I want to succeed him, he informs me that

someone had gotten to him first. A 13-year-old girl, to be exact. I firmly stand my ground and tell him that I will be the next Prime Minister. He says, "Yuh too bad," referring to me in Jamaican patois as "too cool."

That one phone call confirmed it for me: it made me want the job even more, it made me feel inspired, and at the end of the night I was proud that maybe the entire island of Jamaica had heard me announce my future run for office.

Taylor in 2013! ■

An earful for Afghanistan

One teen's plea: protect your children now!

By Tianee Geronimo // Contributing Writer

Afghanistan is a war-torn country with a population of some 30 million people. According to the United Nations, children as young as seven years old are put to work there. Afghanistan should enforce its child labor laws to prevent future kidnappings, trafficking, and recruitment of children. For Afghanistan not to enforce this is like giving people the OK to go and do it.

Years of strife have left many families in Afghanistan with little to no money, and so they have to send their children off to find work. According to international critics, children in Afghanistan shine shoes, sell scrap metal, work as servants, aid the drug trade, roam around in gangs of beggars, and join the military. Other kids are kidnapped

and forced to work in factories for little to no pay. Many kids are being mistreated and robbed of their childhoods, and denied their educations.

A big issue in countries like Afghanistan is when young girls are kidnapped, taken away from their families, and forced to sexually exploit themselves for money; this is called trafficking. If the law was enforced, the criminals who did these things would probably be properly punished; since the law is not enforced, if caught they are most likely let off with a slap on the wrist. If no one does anything to stop these things, then these people who are to blame will think that they can continue to get away with their filthy ways.

The majority of child soldiers around the world are

between the ages of 14 and 18. Many suffer from a lack of food and medical care. The bulk of these children see military service as the last chance of survival. According to the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, "While many enlist 'voluntarily' research shows that such adolescents see few alternatives to involvement in armed conflict."

Either they go on their own or they are taken violently from their families. In Afghanistan, children have been ordered to serve as fighters and suicide bombers.

Afghanistan officials should enforce child labor laws to help protect the kids of their country. The continuation of these ways – too much malicious work and too little education – will lead to a country with no real future. ■

Postcard from China

A student ambassador's journey from Boston to Beijing

By Paige Carruthers // Peer Editor

Right now, you may be in school, on the MBTA, or at home, curled up on the couch. But, for a moment, use your imagination to transport yourself out of Boston, across the Pacific Ocean, to China. Look around. You're in a completely different environment. New smells, faces, and scenery greet you. There are billboards with smiling Asian women, mountainous skyscrapers, and a surprising number of KFCs. A woman walks up to you apprehensively, tightly holding both the hand of a small boy and a digital camera. Shyly, the little boy comes up to you and asks, in perfect English, "Can I take your picture?"

Now backtrack nine months when this journey first began and imagine this: your mom hands you a thick manila white envelope, sealed with a red, official looking stamp that says "People to People: Student Ambassador Program." You open it and it says: "Congratulations! You have been nominated to be a student ambassador." You later find out that People to People is a prestigious national organization, founded by Dwight D. Eisenhower with the mission of creating peace by sending student ambassadors around the world. You feel like Harry Potter being recruited to Hogwarts.

Now you're in Beijing, China, whisked away from your mundane life and accompanied by other "student ambas-

sadors," the smartest, most talented, fun and diverse group of kids you've ever met in your life. This is how you found yourself being approached by the small Chinese boy asking to take your picture. Flattered and flustered, you tell him, "of course," and awkwardly put your arm over his shoulder and smile, still confused about your unexpected popularity. He beams at the camera, and his mom eagerly takes shots of you two, like a professional paparazzo. She puts up the peace sign, which is what many Chinese think is the symbol of American pop culture.

Okay, this fantasy was my reality this summer. Every day had been jam-packed with the extensive schedule People to People had organized that had us covering six different cities in 17 days!

The first day here, I have a Chinese breakfast from a buffet of noodles, sticky rice, sautéed mushrooms, bacon, and fresh OJ. While the Chinese are naturally reserved people, they show their abounding love in their generous helpings of food. Powered up for my packed agenda, we visit the Shaolin Temple Kung Fu School and learn a routine by a real martial arts master. Kung Fu takes an incredible amount of memorization, concentration, and strength. After that experience, I have a whole new respect for Jackie Chan and Bruce Lee.

The second day in Beijing, we see one of the seven

wonders of the world, The Great Wall. It stretches for miles, and the view of towers and mountains is amazing. The last day in Beijing we go to the Beijing Zoo, where I see pandas for the first time. We also visit a factory and are shown the process a pearl goes through, from oyster to necklace.

The next city we visit is Xi'an, where we are welcomed by a festival of dancing, drums, and theatrical performances. We see what some call "The Eighth Wonder of the World," the Terra Cotta Warriors, an army of 100s of men made from a form of clay. The next several days I stay with a Chinese family in their village.

We head to Shanghai next, a beautiful city that is a combination of Las Vegas and Times Square. Here, we see a Chinese acrobatic show, go to Pizza Hut (which is like the Cheesecake Factory in China) and visit a school, where they specialize in China's national sport, Ping Pong.

People to People saved the best for last: Hong Kong, a city where many say the East meets West. Here, we go on a boat cruise, admiring the skyline of both mountains and skyscrapers.

It all started with that letter; it ended with the most eye-opening experience of my life. If ever you are given the chance to travel, take advantage of it, whether your destination be Hong Kong or Hogwarts. ■



China whirl: where east meets west and old meets new.



AFH photos by Chieh-Szu Yun

Teen anger: lose the fuse

By Gregoria Ruiz // Contributing Writer

Is it getting warm in here? Wait! Now my head is pounding, my hand is clutched in a fist, and I seriously want to hurt someone, or something. Right now.

We all have had these days where we get angry, right? Some might think it's a normal emotion, but teens are starting fights on buses, trains, and in schools.

Teens today have to deal with things like peer pressure, school, friendships, enemies, the economy. Teens have a lot on their minds. However, teens are dealing with it in the wrong ways; they are showing it in negative activities like fighting, using drugs, cutting themselves, and dropping out of school.

Iguitha Francois, a 15-year-old student at Boston Community Leadership Academy, describes a crazy confrontation that went down something like this: "A friend of mine came back from my old school. He started making fun of another kid there. They started pushing each other and then the other kid tackled my friend. Then, someone else tackled the kid that tackled my friend. The fight broke out. After that, it was over but they

No news is good news

Rewriting the book on a neighborhood's rep By Deandra Coleman // Contributing Writer

Living in what everyone calls the "worst" part of Boston is very hard for children growing up in Dorchester and Roxbury. You may ask how I know; well, I live there. There are constantly things that can bring you down and make you feel you aren't good enough for anything other than selling drugs or your body. The media is constantly showing negative images of my community. We are constantly told we will never amount to anything – so we start to believe it, too.

After reading the story, "Streets of Hope," about the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, I found out there were a lot of good things that I didn't know about my community. DSNi does more than just fix up neighborhoods and vacant lots. It gives families a chance to live without the fear of walking on the street and never coming back.

The story, "A Man With a Past Gives Back," about Will Morales, a local activist featured in the book, "Stone Soup for the World: Life-Changing Stories of Everyday Heroes," by Marianne Larned, really gives young people in my community hope that they can become something better. Morales is an inspiration to all who have fallen off the track and gotten back on and then made something of themselves. Most



▲ AFH photo by Yvette Fuentes

still wanted to go at it."

Some kids can actually go to their parents to talk to them. For others, it's a best friend, sister or brother, or cousin.

Anger can be resolved in other ways like playing sports, writing in a journal, or kicking something.

"It's a normal emotion, but if people don't learn to deal with it, it can lead to further abuse, depression," says Judith Siegel, director of Mental Health Services at Children's Hospital's Division of Adolescent/Young Adult Medicine.

So, just get rid of all that anger for your sake. ■



▲ AFH painting by Allen Fung

people who lose a brother or anyone close to them to violence become angry and distant. They seek revenge. Will did something that most of us would not be able to do – he made a bad situation better. He became a youth leader. He is our own, true role model.

I am shocked when I read these stories, because in school we learn nothing about the good things in my community. Most, if not all, of the kids who go to my school live in a neighborhood that is inflicted with drugs and crime. All we see is all we know – and all we see is violence. When we go to school we learn about good and bad people in the world from about 50 years ago. Yes, it is said that learning about your past helps make your future better, but I wasn't born 50 years ago, when they didn't have color TVs or computers with the Internet.

Reading these stories gave me hope that maybe one day my home will not be called the "worst" part of Boston. I believe that if we learned about what these good people are trying to accomplish in our neighborhoods then we would be much more educated – and inspired to see what we, too, can do to help. ■

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men – and women, yo! – are created equal...”

By Angelica Lopez // Contributing Writer

After learning about the Declaration of Independence in class, some BPS high school students were asked to pen their own tales of freedom. One wrote about wanting to be liberated from sharing a room with a younger, messy sister. Others asked to be let loose from the clutches of parents and teachers. Here is one teen's original take on that historic document.

When, in the course of life it becomes necessary for a woman to have high self esteem, she will break away from society's expectations of the perfect female.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all women are created equal and that we have the right to feel good about ourselves, our weight, and our appearance, and to be able to see in magazines overweight or chubby girls, as well as skinny ones.

Women are expected to be skinny, white-skinned, and have a nice body and eyes, and a perfect smile with no flaws. But beauty comes in all shapes and sizes.

Women are left to believe that if they aren't this "magazine figure," then they aren't beautiful.

Self esteem goes down if you don't have everything the "ideal girl" has. Some girls find suicide is the only answer when they feel as if they are either not pretty or when they

think family or friends are better looking than them.

Some women believe that if they get operations such as nose jobs, gastro bypasses, and face lifts they will wipe away all their problems.

Our society makes women feel as if they need to meet certain requirements to be "the perfect female."

Previous attempts to address this complaint have involved speaking to people who I knew were making certain girls feel bad about themselves.

Therefore, I shall publish and declare that all women be treated fairly and with respect; for all the women in the world who aren't skinny, light-skinned, blonde-haired females, you shouldn't have to feel that if you don't have those qualities you aren't a beautiful person. ■



▲ AFH art by Mattaya Fitts, & Carolyn Rochalski

Westie students demand: no more beepin' metal detectors!

By Daja Taylor // Staff Writer

I get off the bus and drag myself into the main lobby of the school. And there they are...four ominous, beeping, blinking, brand new metal detectors. Yes, you think it would be a necessary and precautionary step, but it's turned out to be a tedious and ineffective inconvenience for many West Roxbury Education Complex attendees.

I wait in the so-called "line" (more of a crowd really) until it is my time to step through those useless metallic arches. I take off my belt and bag and set them both on the table, holding on to my pants. I watch a female

staffer grope my bag and give me a suspicious look. I walk through the detector: "BEEPI!" The school police officer asks me why I beeped, and I pull out my tin lip-gloss container. "Allright, see ya later," he says, and just like that I am on my way.

Um...what?! Excuse me, but I don't believe feeling up my bag and asking me why I beeped is keeping our kids safe. I could have had anything on me, a knife or maybe even a gun, and all I would have to do to get by is to blame it on a lip-gloss container.

"They are not effective because kids could still get in

with dangerous objects if they wanted to," says Westie student Carin Reynolds, 16, of Media Communications Technology High School. "Most kids fight after school anyways; no one really fights in school."

We've never really had major problems with weapons. This whole thing is a scare tactic. These metal detectors were put in place to put fear in the kids who carry weapons, and to keep the ones who don't in check. But soon enough, the kids who are scared of these detectors will realize that they are not cracking down on security and that this is just a joke. ■

PDA: TMI?

By LaDonya Buchanan // Staff Writer

Next time you take a trip Downtown, take a mental survey. How many teens do you see holding hands, sitting in a partner's lap, or even French-kissing as if the world is about to end and it's their last wish?

Although you may not like what you see and you want teens to take it easy when engaging in Public Displays of Affection, some don't mind. Chris He, a Boston teen, says he really doesn't care if others are watching him when he expresses himself through PDA – like holding his girl. He has no limits, other than that people shouldn't have sex in public.

Jack Levin, professor of sociology and criminology at Northeastern University, says that the practice of more PDA these days is the result of a more permissive society. PDA was traditionally frowned upon and was less of a masculine thing, Levin says. Women were more known to be emotional in public. But over the last several decades, he says, PDA has gotten more support, especially from men.

"Men are more willing to cry in public than they would 20 years ago," said Levin.

Nowadays, male athletes are more likely to embrace each other after a winning game. It is more normal to see athletes pat each other on the butts after a good play.

Some teens even think it's essential to flash PDA. Alisha Stewart, 17, from Mattapan, said in an online interview: "I feel it's necessary because I want to show how I feel about my boyfriend to him every minute I can and feel I need to."

She doesn't see why people should care about what she is doing. "It's not a crime," she said. "People that are watching shouldn't be watching because that's considered being a perv."

While Stewart doesn't care if anyone is watching, others are more modest.

Rebecca White, 18, from Dorchester, said, "Sometimes it's awkward, sometimes you're in the moment; it doesn't matter. It depends on how subconscious you are."

All three teens have some sense of what is excessive.

"Well, I don't get [fondled] in public," Stewart said. "I think sex and all that stuff is for the bedroom. Just a hug, holding hands or a quick kiss can be displayed in public."

White said: "No sex in public; and don't eat each others' faces, nothing too disgusting."

Chris He was more laid back. "People shouldn't have sex in public, but I don't really have any boundaries," he said.

Despite their confidence, some teens go shy when it comes to their parents knowing about their PDA.

"My father would want to grab me up, but he would try to act calm and just sit there and look at me silently and I'll know to get in the car or something," Stewart said.

White just went speechless at the thought of it.

However, some teens refuse to stop showing PDA even if they are being criticized.

"Well, they ain't God so they shouldn't be judging me. That's a sin," said Stewart. "So, in other words, again, 'I DON'T CARE!'" ■



▲ AFH painting by Eleanor Wong



▲ AFH painting by Casey Hudson

R U addicted 2 FB?

By Cheila Martinez // Staff Writer

Hey you Facebookers! Do you know what you're getting yourselves into? A whole lot of something. In every kid's mind, you want to have a lot of friends and be popular. Yet too many teens are more interested in their web lives than their social lives. Maybe it's easier to connect with people online because the computer disguises who you really are. You could be anyone once you're behind a computer.

So, could that be the reason why people become addicted? The oozing sense of saying whatever and doing whatever you want once you're online?

How does Facebook enter the minds of all these users? Do they all have a sudden urge to log on and stay on for no apparent reason? According to the Facebook pressroom, more than eight billion minutes are spent on the site each day. Even people out of the United States are active users of Facebook: about 70 percent of the total.

What is so interesting about computer sites? Facebook allows people to communicate with others who may be far away. According to the Facebook pressroom, 50% of the more than 300 million active users log onto the site on any given day.

Mina Tsay, visiting assistant professor of communication at Boston University, stated that: "The site is somewhere the user feels safe and connected to the group of people. That is how they may become addicted."

Raisa Manaj, 16, of O'Bryant High School, describes how she feels when she gets friend requests: "I smile a lot and I feel real happy.... Sometimes I don't even know who they are."

Taylor Martin, 15, of O'Bryant, expresses how she feels while on Facebook: "It's like another way to be with friends and another way to talk. It's great!"

Tsay said that the amount of time spent online doesn't necessarily determine whether you are totally hooked on Facebook.

"There are moderate and severe levels of addiction," she said. ■

So if the amount of time spent online can't prove whether or not you are addicted, then what can?

Symptoms of being a Facebook fiend

Here are six ways of telling whether you are addicted to the site:

Losing sleep:	You may be on the web instead of earning your eight hours of ZZZZZs.
You're truly not working:	If you're not doing your job and you're on Facebook instead, you may have a problem.
Withdrawal:	Don't go on Facebook for one whole day. If you find it stressful, you may be in too deep.
Lying about Internet use:	You fib to your family and friends about your online time.
Your grades:	Your marks tend to slip due to hanging online.
You think your life sucks without it:	You feel your life is boring with no Internet.

Sources: www.newser.com and www.netaddiction.com

A new form of musical high

Hey dude: Don't OD on that CD! By Carina Lopez // Contributing Writer

According to the dictionary, the definition of music is "an artistic form of auditory communication incorporating instrumental or vocal tones in a structured and continuous manner."

But to us teens, it is way more than that.

"Music makes the body move and it's a way where people can express themselves" said Ronny De Leon, 16, a music lover from Roslindale.

But a new trend is being introduced to the young public: It takes advantage of how we feel about music and tries to convince us that we can experience "drug like" symptoms by listening to certain tracks.

Marijuana is no longer only smoked and cocaine is no longer simply sniffed; some say now young people can stimulate their moods with sounds downloaded online.

"Each audio track contains our advanced binaural beats that will synchronize your brainwaves to the same state as the recreational dose," says one of the



▲ AFH art by Mary Nguyen

most popular virtual-drug websites, I-Doser.com.

Critics say that not only is this method a money-maker, but they point out that the website contains a major disclaimer: "I-Doser makes no medical, psychological, physical, or otherwise, claims to the effectiveness of the I-Doser Application, Simulation CDs and MP3s, or its included or purchased doses. The use of the I-Doser Application, Simulation CDs and MP3, and included or purchased doses, should be used for entertainment purposes only."

Elsewhere, music is being used to improve people's health.

"When people hear a piece of music, it often brings up associations, memories, pictures, places where they have been, and it may change their mood immediately," said Suzanne Hanser, chair of Berklee's music therapy department.

As for I-Doser.com, Hanser said she's never heard of it. ■

BPS flirts with single-sex schools

By Melissa Rodriguez // Staff Writer

“It’s like a brotherhood. You learn more about who you are,” said Nick Joseph, 17, a senior at Boston College High, an all-boy’s school in Dorchester. Joseph said that at BC High, the teachers not only teach you what’s in the books, they impart to you good habits and life lessons. “They’re strict to teach you reality,” said Joseph.

Lately, officials from the Boston Public Schools have been dealing with the gender gap between males and females. According to a 2008 study from the Center for Collaborative Education, BPS girls did better than BPS boys in everything from passing MCAS to staying in school.

“[The dropout rate] is a serious problem here in Boston Public Schools, it’s been a growing problem over the past six to seven years,” said Irvin Scott, academic superintendent of the Boston Public Schools.

For example, the 2007-2008 school year’s overall dropout rate was 7.2%. Individually, the male dropout rate was 7.7% and the female one was 6.7%.

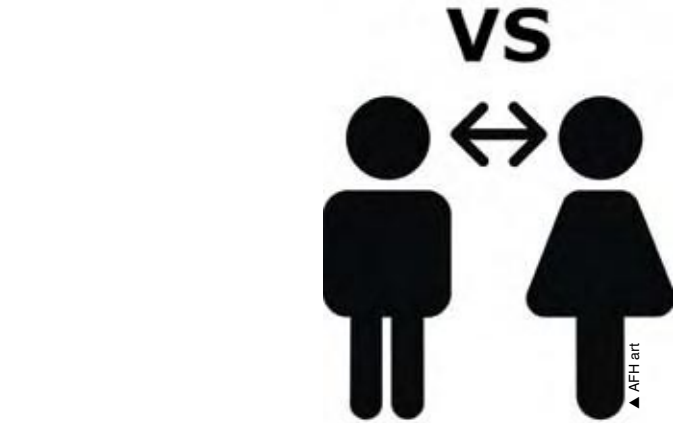
According to Scott, the biggest problem for teen males is that they disengage too quickly in the classroom. They move on to something that’s more interesting to them and their minds turn off.

School officials say that one possible solution to the dropout-rate differential is to separate boys and girls in houses of learning. According to a Boston Globe article from July, research shows “that some girls and boys do better academically when split apart.” However Massachusetts law says schools cannot deny students admission based on gender. A bill to allow single-sex schools is pending at the State House.

In the meantime, Boston school officials are trying other strategies to try to spur achievement. According to Scott, BPS has come up with possible solutions that include: online tutorials for students; credit recovery for kids who fail a course and need to catch up; a reengagement center for kids who drop out of the school system and come back; the Newcomers Academy for English Language Learners; and experiments of single-sex classes that are already underway in high schools such as Madison Park and Media Communications Technology.

Deshuna Williams, 15, a sophomore at West Roxbury’s Media High, said she didn’t like single-sex classes, but that she realizes their value. “I do better...in single-sex classrooms because boys can be distracting at times; girls aren’t so distracting,” she said.

While teens interviewed said that



According to a Boston Globe article from July, **research shows “that some girls and boys do better academically when split apart.”**

the graduation gap between males and females was worrisome, some were against the idea of attending single-sex schools.

Colin Smith, 17, from Social Justice Academy, said: “I like being mixed. Males like to hang around with the opposite gender.”

Javier Soto, 15, agreed. He said: “I don’t want to know how it feels like to go to school without females.” ■

BSAC BUZZ

By Raychel Wingert // Contributing Writer

Have you ever felt as though you aren’t able to communicate with your teacher or you weren’t treated fairly? Do you know any students who dropped out at the age of 16 because they didn’t have the necessary support? Have you ever gotten your cell phone taken away in the middle of class? If that isn’t bad enough, have you ever had to witness the teacher who looked through your text messages right in front of your face? High school is stressful not just for students, but for the teachers as well. We all have

the same goal: to graduate. The Boston Student Advisory Council is the place to help improve our high school experience.

At the moment, BSAC is focused on the homework policy. This project was created to make homework more manageable and ensure that we don’t just get busy work. I am sure you’ve had the kind of teachers who think they are your only class, so they pile hours of homework on you. We have set up meetings with headmasters to discuss problems students are facing: getting homework assignments that may not be connected to the day’s work, having to study

for tests and still finding time to get some sleep before the next day of school requires some of us to wake as early as 5 a.m.

Also, student-to-teacher constructive feedback is a big project for BSAC. In our proposal, students would at least once per year give their teachers feedback on what works for them as learners and what areas the teachers should improve on.

Another problem is the number of students dropping out at 16. This is a huge decision they are making, and we personally don’t think 16-year-olds should have the responsibility of a making this choice.

They aren’t worrying about their futures yet. They don’t realize that they will not be able to survive or support a family if they do not have a college degree, let alone a high school diploma. BSAC members feel that somebody making that kind of decision should at least be 18.

We urge you to come and join us, give us your input, and help improve our schools. If you are interested in joining BSAC or getting more information about our work, please contact Maria I. Ortiz at mortiz@boston.k12.ma.us or at 617-635-8079 ext 104. ■

Michael Davis: the pupil’s choice

By Kameisha Mobray // Staff Writer

Michael Davis is not your typical teenager. Unlike many teens who spend much of their time hanging out with friends, Davis is doing more.

Since June, the senior at East Boston High School has held the position of student representative on the Boston School Committee. Though he does not vote, Davis represents the pupil’s point of view.

Born and raised in Roxbury, Davis witnessed the violence that surrounded

his neighborhood streets. He remembers when his mother would talk to him about the importance of education and how he would have to work hard to make it in life.

“If the youth applied all the skills used in a negative way, and if they were to turn that into a positive, it would make Boston a better place,” he said.

Davis was appointed to the school committee by the Boston Student Advisory Council after beating at least four other contenders for the post.

“He demonstrated the ability to think on

his toes,” said Maria Ortiz, an adult coordinator at BSAC.

Davis said that one of his goals on the school committee is to improve the dynamic between students and school police.

“If the schools made a better effort, a better relationship between the students and the school police, it would be better in the streets,” he said.

Known for his easy smile, Davis describes himself as enthusiastic, honest, and respectful. One main challenge is overworking himself: Between meetings of the

school committee, and the several other youth groups he is involved with, Davis doesn’t have much free time. Even after those get-togethers, Davis likes to make sure that he passes along to others any new information that comes his way.

That may be how it goes for a long time. Davis said he hopes to disprove lingering stereotypes through his own example of public service.

“All black youth are not involved in the streets,” he said. ■

Reaction mixed over HCa name change

By Shanasia Bennett // Senior Editor

The letter came this summer to the Health Careers Academy headmaster, Dr. Caren Walker Gregory. It was from Mayor Tom Menino, and it was asking the school to consider changing its title to one that featured the name of the recently deceased US Senator, Ted Kennedy.

“I was surprised at the sudden idea of a name change – it wasn’t like I planned the name change but I was honored,” said Walker Gregory. “This renaming is a fitting tribute to a phenomenal leader who was passionate about education, public service, and health care.”

Months later, even after the school committee approved the switch, some students were pleased with the sudden makeover to the Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers, but others were opposed.

“Automatically, I was mad all of sudden they wanted to change the name,” said De’zanae Boston-Bernier, an eleventh grader at HCa.

On the first day of school, Walker Gregory made an announcement to the student body at an assembly about the

idea of a name change, and asked that if people disagreed they should put up their hands. No major objections were raised at that moment, students said.

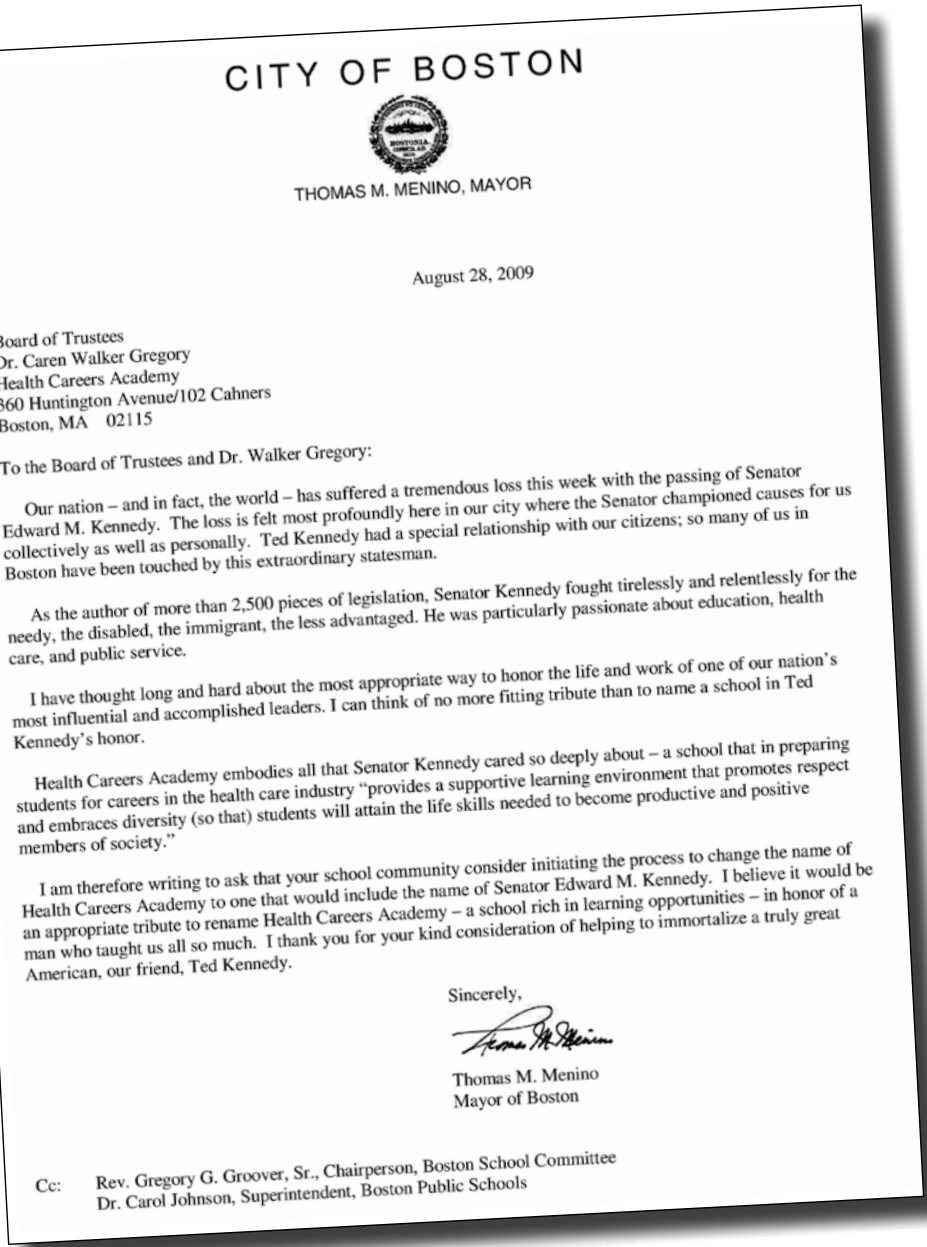
Still, some students later said they felt they would have been singled out had they objected.

“We would feel bad if we raised our hands,” said Boston-Bernier.

While name changes at other BPS schools have led youth to claim a loss of identity – such as at West Roxbury High, now the West Roxbury Education Complex – students overall at HCa seem to be more accepting. Perhaps that is because the school now bears the name of a person many respected.

“I do like the new name,” said Julianna Durkan, a junior at Health Careers Academy, where teens still call it by the old name. “It honors a person who did good for our community and country.”

Shanasia Bennett is a senior at the school formerly known as Health Careers Academy. ■





SHANASIA BENNETT
Can't leave the house without:
My lip-gloss and hand sanitizer
Take pride in: Being free
Pepsi or Coke: Coke all day, every day
Movie you've just got to see:
The new Michael Jackson movie



LADONYA BUCHANAN
Most stressed out about:
College applications
Take pride in: My ability to speak more than one language
Pepsi or Coke: Pepsi...duh
Movie you've just got to see:
"The Twilight Saga: New Moon"



PAIGE CARRUTHERS
Most stressed out about: SATs
Can't leave the house without:
Earrings
Take pride in: My height, 5'9"
Movie you've just got to see:
"The Twilight Saga: New Moon"



TYLER COHEN
Most stressed out about:
Not beating Billy in basketball
Can't leave the house without: My pants
Pepsi or Coke: Coke
Movie you've just got to see:
"The Little Rascals" -- fo sho!



JOEY DICHIAIRA
Most stressed out about:
Wondering if my toast is burning
Can't leave the house without:
Well, technically, I have to bring my hands... they're sorta attached to me
Favorite website: The Internet's existence is futile
Pepsi or Coke: Soda is the root of all evil!



KATRYNA MAHONEY
Most stressed out about:
College + scholarships = senior year
Can't leave the house without:
Vaseline, or something else for my lips
Take pride in: My family
Favorite website: Facebook



CHEILA MARTINEZ
Most stressed out about:
Getting a good grade in geometry : (
Can't leave the house without: My wallet
Take pride in: Making my own music :)
Favorite website: Facebook

TEENS
in
PRINT

MEET THE STAFF

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➤ **FORMAT** your writing

➤ Double spaced
➤ Times New Roman, 12 point font
➤ In the upper left corner—your name, Contributing Writer, and a title or headline

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CIARA MARTINEZ
Most stressed out about: College
Can't leave the house without: Cell phone
Take pride in:
Dedication to my education
Pepsi or Coke: Pepsi



KAMEISHA MOBROY
Most stressed out about: College apps
Can't leave the house without: My iPod
Take pride in: My education
Pepsi or Coke: Coke



MELISSA RODRIGUEZ
Most stressed out about: SCHOOL!
Can't leave the house without:
Phone and iPod
Pepsi or Coke: Pepsi
Movie you've just got to see:
"The Twilight Saga: New Moon"



DAJA TAYLOR
Most stressed out about: Life
Can't leave the house without:
Cell phone
Take pride in: Myself
Pepsi or Coke: Either



ROXANNE TAYLOR
Can't leave the house without:
My debit card and CharlieCard
Take pride in: My culture
Pepsi or Coke: Cherry Coke
Movie you've just got to see: "Good Hair"



GABRIEL WARD
Most stressed out about:
The "Toy Story" collection
Can't leave the house without:
My clothes...Trust me, I made the mistake
Favorite website: I don't go online...
I communicate through telepathic waves
Pepsi or Coke: Neither...Asparagus juice



TREVOR WARD
Most stressed out about: 2012
Can't leave the house without:
My hat and a tie
Favorite website: Serebi.net
Movie you've just got to see: "2012"



**More great ART
by AFH**



▲ AFH painting by Jeremy Becker



▲ AFH painting by Jenny Mui

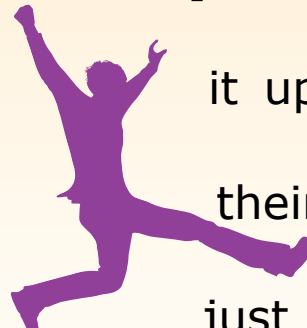


▲ AFH painting by Sarah Nguyen

**For more sweet stories,
please read on.....**

CHILLIN' TIME

PHOTOS AND TEXT BY NENETTE ELIE

Teens these days are traveling all around **BOSTON** -- or all around **The World**,  as they call it. They might meet up at **THE HILLS -- FOREST HILLS STATION** -- and then go **Downtown**. In **Downtown**, you'll find them posted in front of Bath & Body Works -- The Baggin' Corner -- **where they try to pick up *girls* or *guys***. Other times, they'll liven  it up at the Dorchester Youth Collaborative, where they'll show off their hidden talents. **DYC is the place to krump, break-dance, and just have fun. Teens need a place where they can be **THEMSELVES WITH THEIR FRIENDS**. That's why they always go somewhere other than home -- **THE SPOT -- A PLACE WHERE YOU SHOULD BE!****



DYC: krumpers, break-dancers, and other teens come together.



Performances are even held Downtown.



Downtown is the place to be. All teens chill here.



The Hills: the center of the whole operation.



Relaxin' at the Dorchester Youth Collaborative.



Video-game Hub

Powering-up Boston’s fan count

By Gabriel Ward // Staff Writer

In the past couple of years, **CreateBoston** – a program that connects companies with the resources they need to succeed – has been trying to build on the video-game industry and make the city a hot-spot for the development of digital media.

In 2007, the program hosted a **PoweringUp** conference at Northeastern University. The goal is to make PoweringUp an annual convention in which video game companies and developers can gather and recruit local talent, and eventually become just as great as E3, a video-game convention held annually in Los Angeles. According to the city, the long-range plan is to attract companies to the greater-Boston area so that the industry will grow and open up more jobs – for both adults and teens.

In a press release, Mayor Tom Menino stated that Boston has all the ingredients to be a digital-media “epicenter,” including “creativity...diverse and vibrant communities, and, most importantly, a young and talented workforce.”

Already, there may be more, widely-known games developed here than you think. Here are five:

5. “Insecticide,” for DS

Developed by Creat Studios, Canton. “Insecticide is a hard-boiled, fast-shooting detective game set in a festering future city where bugs have evolved as the planet’s dominant race,” according to creatstudio.com. Rated E 10+.

4. “Zoo Tycoon,” for PC & MAC

Developed by Blue Fang Games, Waltham. “Uncage your imagination as you build the most fun and beautiful zoo ever,” says bluefang.com. Rated E.

3. “Rock Band,” for Xbox 360, Wii, PS2 &PS3

Developed by Harmonix Music Systems, Cambridge. “Widely praised as the ultimate music game, Rock Band let a nation of air-drummers, guitar-mimers and shower-singers live out their rock ‘n’ roll fantasies,” according to harmonixmusic.com. Rated T.

2. “BioShock,” for PC, PS3 & Xbox 360

Developed by 2K Boston, Quincy. “Turn everything into a weapon, biologically mod your body with plasmids, hack devices and systems, upgrade your weapons and craft new ammo variants, and experiment with different battle techniques in an incredibly unique underwater city,” says 2kboston.com. Rated M.



▲ AFH photo

1. “Guitar Hero,” for PS2

Originally developed by Harmonix Music Systems, Cambridge. “For the first time, gamers could become rock stars in their own homes; savoring the thrill as their characters moved up from no-glory club gigs into the big leagues,” says harmonixmusic.com. Rated T. ■

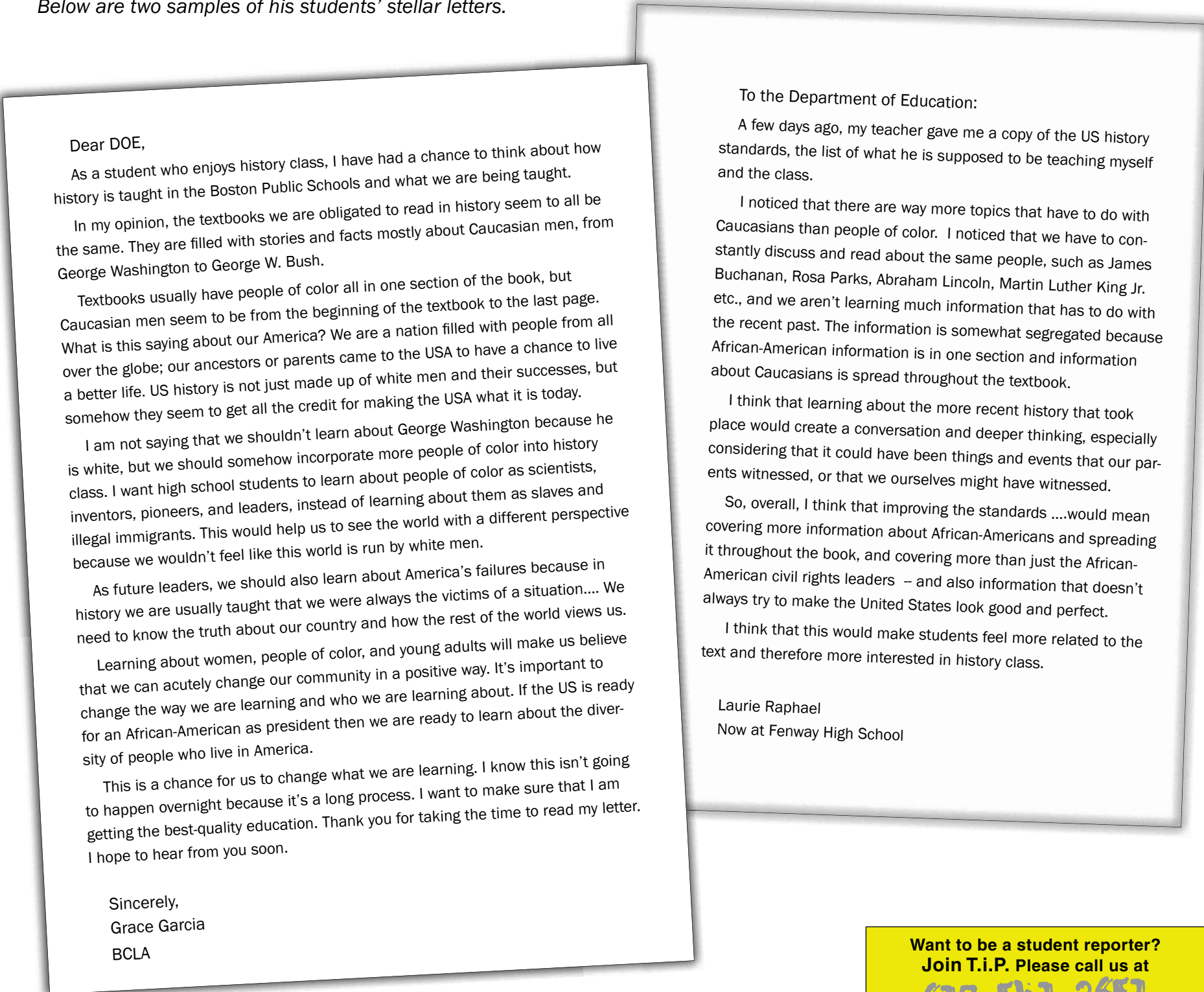
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www.poweringupboston.com

A history lesson for the state, from teens

Teens in Massachusetts are all too familiar with the English, math, and science MCAS. Though recently delayed, there’s now a history MCAS on the drawing board.

Ricardo Valencia, a history teacher at Boston Community Leadership Academy, recently asked his sophomores to weigh in with letters to the state. He asked them, “If you had the chance to tell the Massachusetts Department of Education what you think about the curriculum standards for US History II, what would you say? Are the topics relevant and important? Do the standards reflect the diversity of our cities and society? What should high school students learn about US history and why?”

Below are two samples of his students’ stellar letters.



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Whizzing by

Harry Potter visits the Museum of Science

By Joey DiChiara // Staff Writer

Take a ride in your favorite flying Ford Anglia and journey down to Boston’s own Museum of Science for Harry Potter: The Exhibition anytime through February 21.

Across the main hallway, and up the musical stairs, you’ll find yourself in an entirely different world.

Take an audio tour, guided by the movies’ producer, David Heyman. But before venturing in, stop and visit the magical sorting hat to see which house you really belong in, whether you’re a Gryffindor, Ravenclaw, Hufflepuff, or Slytherin.

Ever found yourself watching any of the Harry Potter movies and then later fantasizing about what it’d be like to wander the halls of Hogwarts? The exhibit has pictures and doorways from the sets, featuring some of your favorites, like the animated singing lady outside the Gryffindor common room. Take a walk around and you may end up in Professor Umbridge’s office, at her detention desk.

Or take a trip into the forbidden forest, where you can look the Hungarian Horntail Dragon clear in the eyes. You could also end up in Hagrid’s hut, where you can take a seat in his personal chair and see how tall the forbidden forest attendant really was, as the museum features all of the characters’ costumes. How big was Harry? Maybe the question should be how small, judging by his clothes from

the first movie. There are other samples: from the characters’ casual outfits and sleepwear to school uniforms and even Hermione’s Yule Ball dress.

An interactive side of the exhibit features a chance to test your luck at Quidditch, where you are cheered on by staff. Not only is the exhibit a traveling show, but the English-accented staff members are also aboard, adding a feeling that you had just stepped off the Hogwarts Express. Speaking of which, it’s hard to miss the large, steam locomotive opening the exhibit, which Victoria Fitzsimmons, 15, of Charlestown, said left her “amazed” and “totally obsessed.”

The food from the movie doesn’t exactly launch out and attack you, but it sure looks good. It’s a shame it’s behind glass... and fake: roasted chicken, large grapes, a cake the size of a kid’s body. With the Great Dining Hall’s famous feast and the Hogwarts Express’s candy shop, it’s a great place to be – if only you could taste what you see. ■

For more information, please check out <http://www.harrypotterexhibition.com/>



▲ Courtesy of TM & Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. Harry Potter Publishing Rights © JKR (s09)



▲ Photo courtesy of Chris Hollo, Hollo Photographics, Inc.

The hut of Hagrid: Do you dare sit in his chair?

The bowl shebang

Hyde Park parlor has ice cream to spare

By Gabriel Ward // Staff Writer

It's a cold, rainy evening and you're freezing. You're bored and want to call a friend, but what would you do? Play video games or watch TV? Or you could mix it up by going to Ron's Gourmet Ice Cream and 20th Century Bowling in Hyde Park, where you can conquer your sweet tooth, as well as invite a friend to go bowling.

I wouldn't recommend Ron's if I didn't think it was a warm place to chill during the bleak months.

The atmosphere at Ron's is comfortable, with nice, cool and slightly humid air, and the sound of bowling balls hitting the floor. The menu has over 25 varieties of ice cream.

Surprisingly, owner Ronald Covitz didn't intend to start making gourmet ice cream. "We had always had soft serve ice cream machines," said Covitz. He bought the soft serve mixture from Hood. "What happened is they sent the wrong mix," he said.

After this, some 30 years ago, the vice president of Hood came out to investigate. "He suggested that gourmet ice cream was going to be the wave of the future, and I ought to give it a try," said Covitz.

Ron's story is based on pure serendipity, but Covitz sure is proud. His ice cream has been rated the third best in the world by National Geographic.

I started with the flavor that Covitz recommended for teens: Oreo. "I think that I make the best Oreo ice cream in America," he said proudly.



▲ APH photo by Hadden Hodgson



▲ APH photo by Hadden Hodgson

The first thing noticeable about the Oreo ice cream was how soft it was. It had a very creamy taste, and a surprisingly large amount of Oreos. Overall, though, it felt like it was missing an ingredient. I give it 8 scoops out of 10.

Next, I tried a few of Ron's signature flavors: Brownie Nut, Caramel Fudge Brownie, and Coffee Madness. As I tasted the Brownie Nut, the first thing I noticed was that the crunch-less ice cream had a strong taste of nuts. All of the nuts were in the brownies, and at one point I got a really large chunk that made it taste like a sundae. Overall, I have to give it 9 scoops out of 10 due to its rich, nutty taste.

What caught my attention about the Caramel Fudge Brownie was its very smooth and sweet caramel flavor. It tasted slightly chocolaty, but it lacked any soft and chewy bits of brownie. I give it 7 scoops out of 10.

Next, I finally got to the Coffee Madness, and the first thing that grasped my taste buds was the thick and delicious coffee taste. It was some of the best coffee ice cream I have ever had, and then I picked up the crunch of a tasty almond. Between the almonds there was the occasional, soft chewy Oreo cookie. I give it 10 scoops out of 10.

Overall, when I look at Ron's from a total perspective, it seems like quite the community hub. With people bowling and eating ice cream, there's no doubt that this is a good spot to gather with your friends, rain or shine. ■

Ron's Gourmet Ice Cream and 20th Century Bowling:

1231 Hyde Park Avenue, in Hyde Park's Cleary Square.

Ron's also makes delicious ice cream cakes, and sells ice cream by the quart.

In defense of soccer

By Guychardson Destin // Contributing Writer

Why isn't soccer as popular in the US as it is in the rest of the world? Everybody knows that soccer is the most popular sport in the world. In every country you go to you will find people who can't miss a soccer game. Places like Brazil, Argentina, Haiti, Italy, France. But in the United States, do we have people like that?

Luigi Paul is a 17-year-old-soccer player from Roslindale. He wants to be just like Ronaldinho, a Brazilian footballer who plays for Italian's AC Milan and the Brazilian national team, and who is one of the best soccer players in the world.

Paul thinks Americans don't have any respect for soccer. "In the United States, the Americans believe that the other games have more money," he said. "When you go to a park, what you usually see are a basketball court, a baseball field, and a kids' playground."

To young people like me from another country, soccer is life. It doesn't matter what our race is; what matters most is that when we are on the field, we are like a family.

My country, Haiti, is crazy about soccer. If you are very

good at soccer in Haiti, you are like a god because people will ask you to join a team. Your friends respect you for that, and you can make some money.

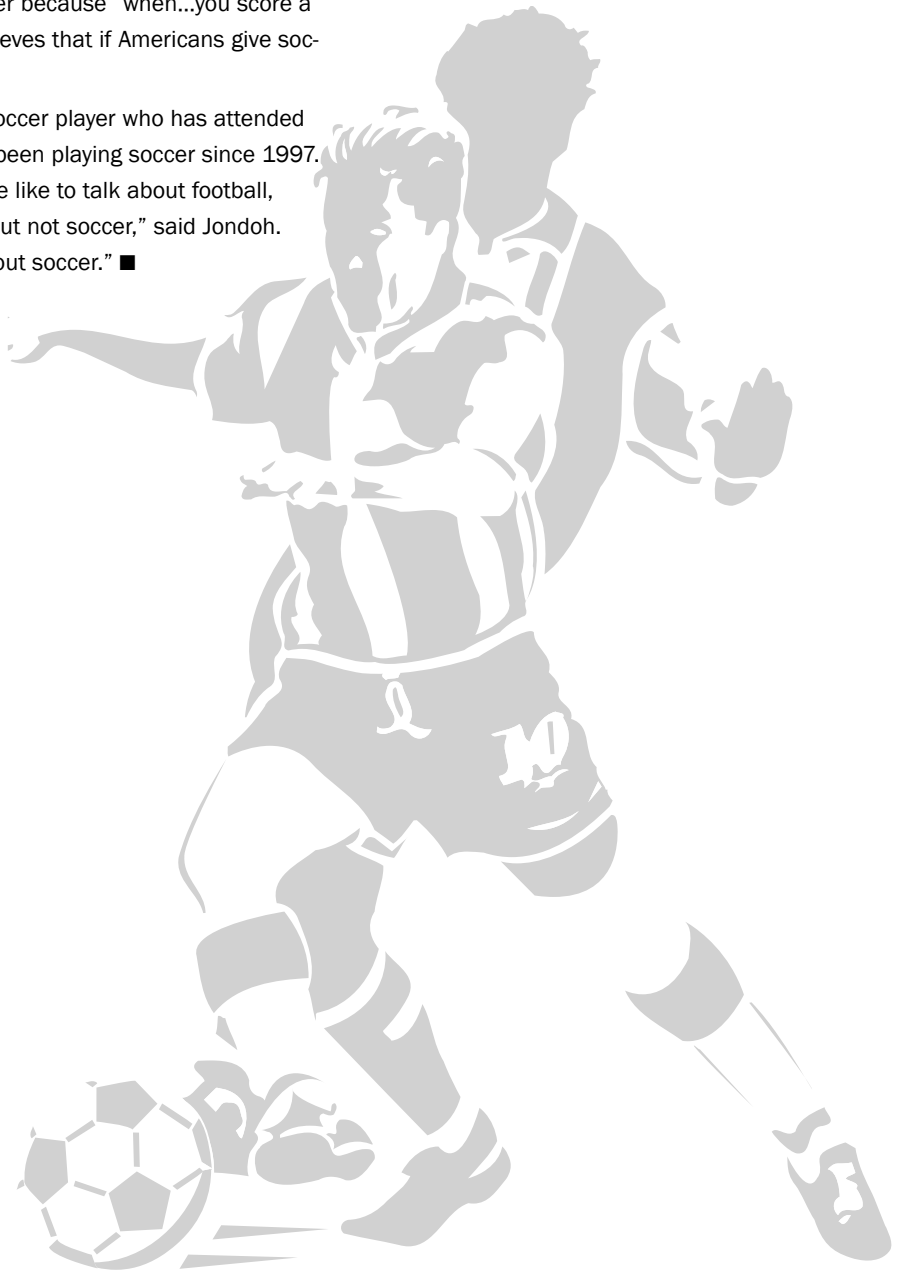
The World Cup is a championship tournament that happens every four years. The Haitians love it. The Haitians like to bet money and other stuff. One guy even bet his wife.

Soccer is one of the easiest games in the world. There are not that many rules. You can play soccer with your hands and your feet. Soccer is very different from other games. You can't be selfish when you are playing; you have to pass the ball. Soccer is all about sharing.

Sebastian Rodriguez is a 15-year-old soccer player from East Boston. He likes soccer because "when...you score a goal it feels good." He believes that if Americans give soccer a try, they will love it.

Yaovi Jondoh, 18, is a soccer player who has attended Charlestown High. He has been playing soccer since 1997. "It's kind of sad that people like to talk about football, basketball, and baseball, but not soccer," said Jondoh. "They should talk more about soccer." ■

To young people like me
from another country,
soccer is life. It doesn't
matter what our race is;
what matters most is that
when we are on the field,
we are like a family.



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Mario re-newed

The famous plumbers return to the Wii

By Trevor Ward // Staff Writer

It's been almost 20 years since a Super Mario Bros. game was released for a home console, and that has been too long. Now, just in time for holiday shopping, we get "New Super Mario Bros. Wii" for, of course, the Nintendo Wii. This game is, like every other Super Mario game, a breath of fresh air for the franchise. It keeps the same elements as every other Super Mario Bros. game (i.e. jumping, running, bashing bricks, etc.) with some new additives. This game could possibly be the first Mario installment to bring elements from every other adaptation of the series together into one title.

One of the first things you'll notice about this sequel is that almost all of the background images are identical to the "New Super Mario Bros." for the Nintendo DS. Another

returning feature is the return of the Koopalings from "Super Mario Bros. 3." But what is probably the most popular returning game mechanic is the ability to ride Yoshi, which hasn't been in a Mario game since "Super Mario Sunshine" came out in 2002.

However, this game has a lack of the Mega Mushroom, which could turn Mario and/or Luigi into a giant. But the new power-ups make up for this.

Although not quite new, the Ice Flower returns from "Super Mario Galaxy." However, in this game, it's more frequently used, and has been refined and perfected so its use is not timed. Another new power-up is the Penguin Suit. Now, the Penguin Suit has a similar ability to the Blue Koopa shell from "New Super Mario Bros." But, as opposed to spinning like a shell, you slide on your belly,

much like a penguin. It also lets you chuck ice balls in the same manner as the Ice Flower. But the most emphasized new feature is the multi-player ability. Two people can play as Mario and Luigi, and the third and fourth players can play as Toads. And the final huge new twist is motion-sensor platforms. One player can stand on a seesaw platform and tilt the Wii remote to keep the player from falling off.

This is the first "true" Mario title for the Nintendo Wii. Fans from E3'08, who got a preview at the annual video-game conference, have been pleased by the nostalgic value of this game, and newcomers will still enjoy it because it can be played as an original title all its own. It should be a truly refreshing return for the 28-year-old Plumbers. ■

AFI's "Crash Love" doesn't crash and burn

By Daja Taylor // Staff Writer

AFI's eighth studio album, "Crash Love," hit the stores this fall. As with any other AFI album -- from the wintry detachment of "Decemberunderground" to the punk-rock feel of "Answer That and Stay Fashionable" -- "Crash Love" has a solid theme.

"This is definitely more of a rock album," says bassist Hunter Burgan in an interview with myspace.com.

This album is surely something new for the Cali-based band. "Crash Love" lacks the morose and emo feel of many of the preceding AFI albums, such as "Sing the Sorrow," and "Decemberunderground." The sound is a little bit harder and faster than their other works, and is not as electronic as some.

On the band's myspace page, frontman Davey Havok says "Crash Love" is about a destructive kind of love. Some songs are about unhealthy relationships, while other tracks are about loves that crash and burn.

The album has received generally positive reviews due to its intricacy and the band's overall musical growth. The band has already released the video for the album's first single, "Medicate." Other tunes worth listening to are "Torch Song" and "Too Shy to Scream." This is an album that really raises the bar for AFI -- 4 out of 5 stars. ■



★★★★☆



A step too far

By Joey DiChiara // Staff Writer

Slowly inching closer, but quickly falling apart.
Time seems to stop just long enough, to see past it all... yet nothing is there.
A moment too soon, a second to spare.
Nothing left to do but think.
Sit and stare and watch time slowly pass you by.
What is there left to do?
After all it's just a dream right?
A dream that never ends.
They say anything is possible in a dream; I'd like to think that.
Until that happens, sit and think and wait.



▲ AFH painting by Loray McDuffie

A little bit of inspiration

By Joey DiChiara // Staff Writer

What's Inspiration?
The dictionary says the arousal of the mind, to special or unusual activity or creativity.

For me?
It's more like a surprise.
Like walking down the street and finding money.
Or waking up to the smell of a fresh breakfast waiting for you in bed.
It could even be something as strange as walking into a five-star restaurant and finding a hair in your food.
Or looking at your car and seeing a bug-splatter across your windshield and feeling it come alive in a way you've never experienced.

The pen hits the paper and the room draws silent.
The walls open and nature escapes in.
Suddenly the rocks can speak and the sky can sing.
The leaves no longer fall to the ground, they gently tiptoe their way to the awaiting surface ready to catch them with a warm embrace.

You come back into reality and realize everything around you is different.
You think in entirely different ways.
You suddenly relate your thoughts with what you hear.
Who knows when it'll hit you...

I'm happy

By Sandra Semexant // Contributing Writer

Love was known to be as dangerous as how jealousy was considered as a common illness. Two love-struck teens experienced a great war of relatives that forbid them to continue communicating. The closest touch she had towards him was the one that she could only remember and... desperately imagine. She would recall looking at him and slowly get lost and drown in his big coffee-colored eyes. But, she purposely would eliminate those thoughts because they resulted in her grasping the reality.
From a frequent stage of having his voice as the first and last entering not only her hearing but also her heart to:
3 long, dreadful months of no words being exchanged.
2 individuals who have attempted to hide such obvious feelings.
1 day...1 call resulted in such a change that made her world continue revolving...her heart continue beating... her lips curve to a smile...a symbol of returned happiness.
Yet slowly she realized...she could no longer lie to herself and others. She could no longer hide behind those words that were the perfect conceal. She knew that her "she's" were really "I's" & her "her's" were really "my's."
From a constant common stage of having YOUR voice as the first and last entering not only MY hearing but also MY heart to:
3 long, dreadful months of no words being exchanged.
2 individuals who have hidden such obvious feelings.
1 day... 1 call resulted in such a change that made MY world continue revolving... my heart continue beating and my lips curve to a smile indicating... Once again...I'm happy.



▲ AFH painting by Maggie Kryova

Lead my way

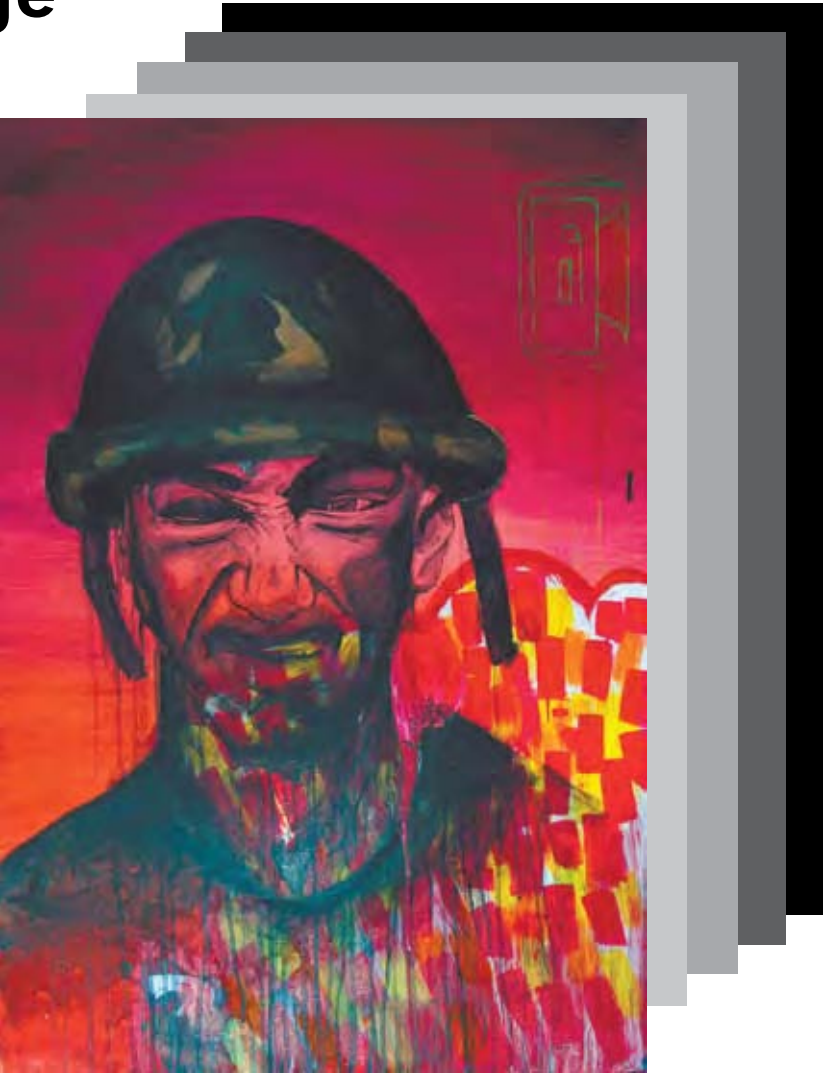
By Alicia Jennings // Contributing Writer

Lead my way to happiness,
Lead my way through fear,
Lead me through this sadness,
Lead me through these tears,
Lead me when I'm feeling incompetent and even when I'm feeling strong, Lead me through the adversities that make life feel so wrong, Lead my way to a better life, One that doesn't cause me to fight, Fight within myself because so many things aren't right, Lead my way with encouragement, Lead my way with faith,
Lead my way with support, Lead my way with strength, Lead my way...
Day by day...
Lead me to success.

A child-soldier's message

By Tucker Gaye // Contributing Writer

"I would like you to give a message"
To heal the wounds of sacred hearts
Confused minds of three thousand plus
...and painful memories
That brings frequent nightmares
In the minds of us young
Nightmares of me pulling the trigger on my brothers
They couldn't recognize my soul
...The Day I freed theirs
Nightmares of my mother abused and raped
Before my innocent eyes
Now these eyes are eyes of a lonesome wolf
A blood-thirsty killer
That tears through the heart of beasts and foes
Nightmare of my father who traded his life for mine
And all those whose souls dwells within me
Bum! Bum... Bum! Bum...
Listen, Death's footsteps dances to the beat of my heart
Which skips as Satan's commanders command my moves
I know if I trip I shall DIE
Without my story being told to the ones that appear unseen
Tell the World
Regrets fill in the scars in my life
I'm pleading for Forgiveness
Guilt has taken over me
At times I'm drugged, and whipped till forgetful
It's only pain that signals I still exist
Every hit, reality hits
Let all know I'm still searching for my blood
Although my country "Liberia" is still killing their blood
I'm strengthened by Pain
Energy taken by force
We are used and wasted
Seen and hated
As I'm beaten to serve or conquered
Those who couldn't recognize my soul
...The day I freed theirs
We are survivors of the dead
Rebellious rebels
For insecure protection
Manipulated conscience
"I'm one-one"
"Now you're sixteen" I'm told
As they placed the crown that blinds fear into the common
An army cap and rags
To hide my innocence
I'm lifted by the collar
And came out a coldhearted thug
I don't know what we're fighting for
"Up, Down"

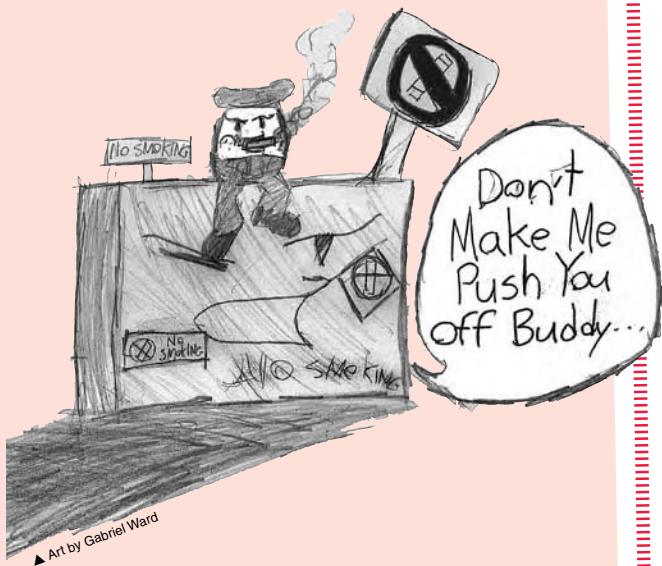


▲ AFH painting by Reginald Pinekinney

"Turn left"
"Turn Right"
I roll in the moist cold earth
Of Gravestone Bridge
AK-47 in hand
Aiming at familiar faces
To get near the eyes of Charles Taylor
Bodies scatter in pieces around me
A man dances
Dodging stray bullets that flash at night
Name's Buttnaked,
Most notorious of us all
The scene has every sensation of my body drained
Built to live and deliver recklessness and suffrage
A living weapon
Yes
But it kept me alive or am I Dead?
I have no boundaries or peace
It hurts to hear them plead
It smells to see them bleed
Is hell the place for me?
I'm insane
Is innocence the major theme?

Is innocence the one to blame?
I thought innocence is to tame
I thought innocence is subject to change
As I lay back cock and aim
BANG!
It's not a dream
I'm a child soldier hear my cry
I'm a child soldier, Wonder Why?
I'm a child soldier...or I try
I've been starving since December
Now I'm aiming for the summer
Children are dying
Bullets are flying
...Even men are crying
My spirit battles my soul every day
The ones who cry now know how to pray
Pray for me, I forgot how
Help heal the wounds of scarred hearts
Help heal the wounds of sacred hearts
If not my life...save a life
"I would like you to give this message"
BANG!

THE WALL



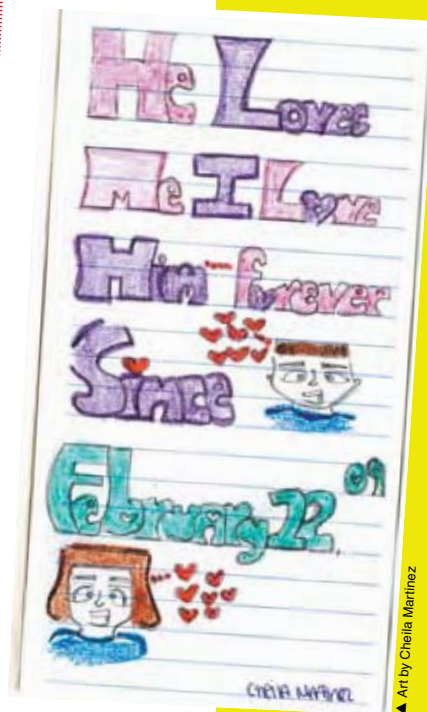
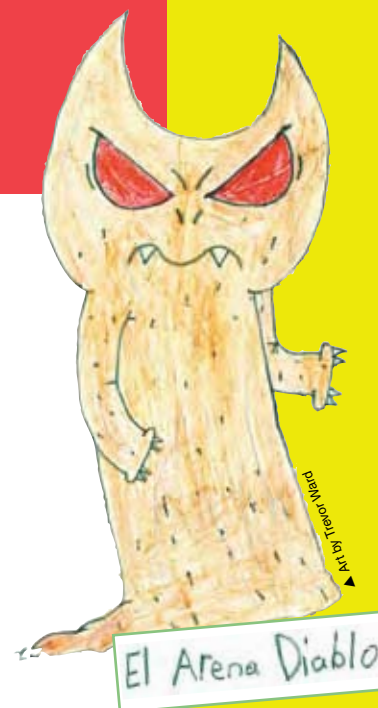
"No longer"

Shanasia Bennett

She sits and stares out her project window. She hears gunshots from a corner away. She sees a girl getting jumped because of what she has, and has earned. Tears roll down her eyes because she hates the environment she has lived in and only known since she was in her mother's womb. But tomorrow the pain and the hate will suddenly be washed away forever. Her suitcases are packed and her college acceptance letter and four-year scholarship award are hung up proudly on her mirror right next to the picture of her best friend who died at the young age of 12. She has nothing else to look forward to but her future and the success she will finally hold in the palm of her hand. No longer does she have to suffer and struggle like her mother or father do. No longer does she have to witness the terrible violence in the 'hood that she has lived in for so, so long. No longer.



Tyler Cohen
"When people ask me how I would like to die, I say I wouldn't."



QUIBB Boston TIP's Official Comic Strip

Gabriel Ward

