

Enduring the summer book list

By SARA GREENE
The Tattoo

As the last few glorious days of summer drift by, the reality of school kicks in. Students are faced with the back to school rush, with new clothes and supplies needed.

And, after putting it off for weeks, it's

time at last to tackle the summer reading lists.

"I think it's quite pointless, no one ever does it," said Jeff Zammett, a junior at Bristol Eastern High School.

Both Eastern and Bristol Central High School hand out a summer reading list. Students are required to choose a book, read it, and take notes on it.

During the first week back in the classroom, students must write about the book they claim they read.

Students have a wide range of opinions on the value of the summer reading requirement.

"I personally love summer reading because we wouldn't know about (the books) if you didn't have a list," said Amy Grover, a freshman at Central.

But Eastern freshman Bryant Wong said, "I thought the books had no relevance to school whatsoever. For successful learning, students need to see the worth of the assignment."

Zammett said many students just cheat. Websites have made it easy to fib about this assignment. A student can easily find a summary for a number of books on the reading list on the Internet.

Even though they grumble about it, many students are willing to do the reading assignment. But a few suggested changes.

"I don't think it's that bad, I think we should be reading during the summer," said Lindsey McDowell, a freshman at Central. "One book isn't going to kill you, but it should be an option because some kids don't like reading."

Hannah Clifton, a freshman at Eastern, said, "I think that instead of giving you books they should give you authors, that would let you choose the books, but gives you a lot more freedom."

Maybe summer reading assignments need to include options to match the wide variety of students' needs, some said.

Many students interviewed agreed that availability of books was a worry — particularly since many students wait until the end of summer to complete their assignments.

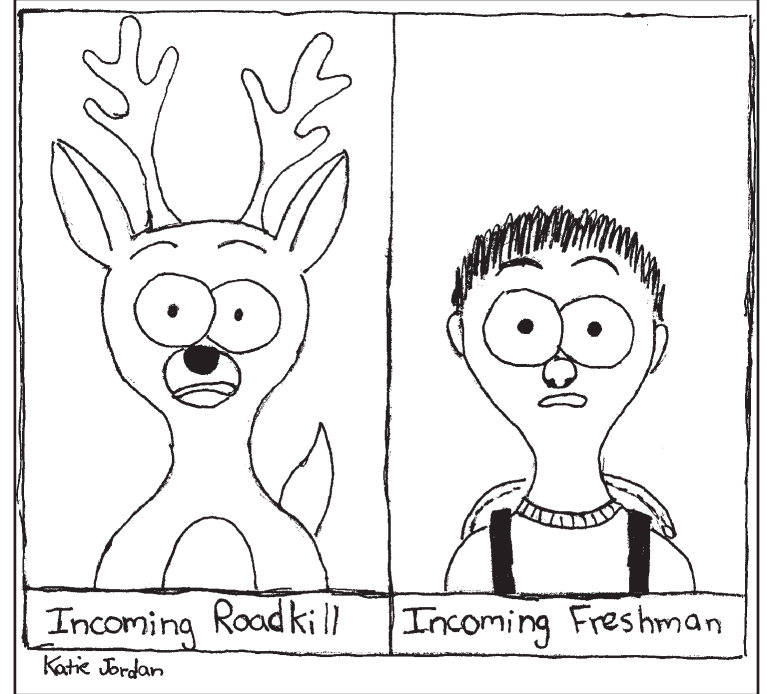
Only a few of the books have reading appeal, students said.

This leaves lots of people scrambling for the same books at the same time, creating some frustrated and anxious students.

But many generally agreed that summer reading assignments can also be a good learning experience.

In order for summer reading to be valuable, said those who like the assignment, book lists and follow-up assignments need to be reviewed regularly.

Tattoo staff writer Mike Nguyen contributed to this story.



Katie Jordan / The Tattoo

Don't be a deer in the headlights

By MIKE NGUYEN
The Tattoo

To avoid sudden and abrupt crashes with speedy and tardy upperclassmen that could leave you dead or permanently injured, you should always follow in packs. And what better pack to follow than the pack that makes up *The Tattoo*?

We'll feed you, we'll invite you to our parties, and we'll let you meet people who will make you realize the hot junior in your gym class isn't cool at all.

Oh, but you'll need to write stories or draw cartoons or take pictures.

Surely, you like to do one of those things, and you don't have to be good. We'll teach you. We're in a mood to recruit new people and it might as well be you. Why let everyone else have all the fun?

You'll even reap the rewards of your small fruits of labor — maybe by winning professional and teen journalism awards and college scholarships like so many *Tattoo* staff have — but certainly by gaining so much journalistic experience, you won't know what to do with yourself.

So, feeling in need of something to get you through four years? This is probably it.

The Tattoo has been around for eight years, and in that time, has sent teenagers up in balloons and blimps, to interview everyone from teachers to extreme athletes, mayors to poets, MTV personalities and kids roaming the high school corridors.

We're not for the faint of heart, but we'll help your confidence grow along with your skills.

If you're interested, send us an email to majerus-collins@home.com or call our advisors, Bristol Press reporters Jackie Majerus and Steve Collins, at 523-9632. They are always there waiting for another eager beaver to join the fun. Really, they are.

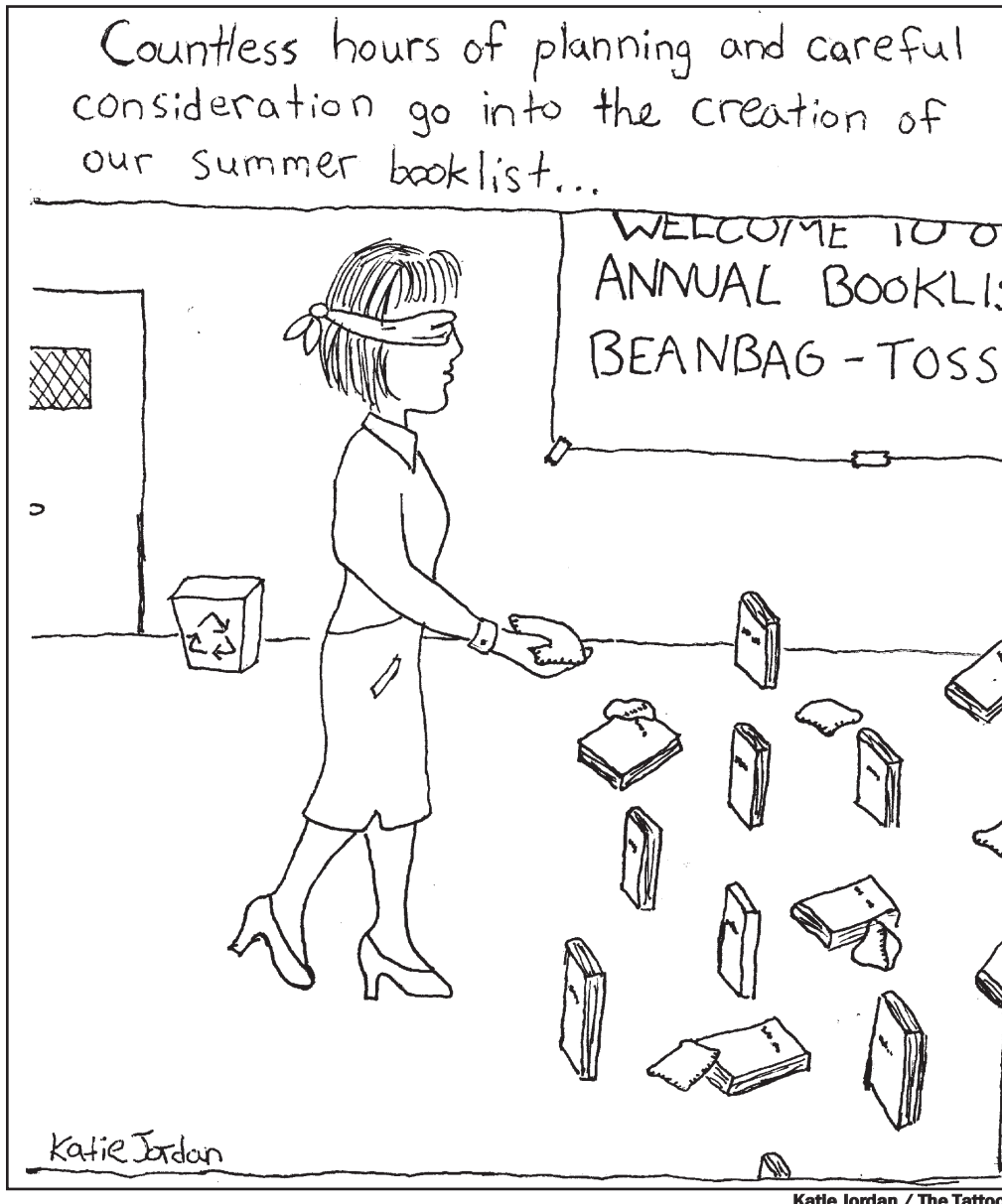
Just want to read more of *The Tattoo*? We don't blame you.

All our issues are online at www.ReadTheTattoo.com, including an updated Insider's Guide to High School aimed especially at incoming freshman, this summer's series on the X Trials, a tough look at teen suicide and other award-winning articles.

If you missed...

'An Insider's Guide to High School'

Don't worry — you still can check out our insightful series, written especially for freshmen by students who have been through that ringer. See it on our popular website at www.ReadTheTattoo.com.



Katie Jordan / The Tattoo

Will your teachers like you?

By MIKE NGUYEN
The Tattoo

They say looks will get you farther in life. Maybe they don't, but they'll get you through high school easier.

After all, teachers are just as guilty with stereotypes (although they won't admit it) as your peers are.

A warm and friendly smile, and good preppy American Eagle outfit will make a perfect first impression for any teacher, no matter how mischievous or drunk you may be.

And you don't even need to look like Brad Pitt or Jennifer Aniston to do it (although it helps).

Teachers aren't as shallow as your freshman counterparts, but you'd be hard pressed to find a teacher who would favor a student with a large green mohawk and shirts with skull and bones, no matter how nice they are on the first day of school.

For years, the preps have far ruled their high school niche, getting good grades and still staying mildly popular (meaning they have friends).

Their clean looks and conservative appearance

(bleaching your hair is a far cry from liberal) probably gets them a few extra points on their final grade and extra potty breaks.

You've probably been in school long enough to realize that they can get away with a lot, and why wouldn't they?

Just look at their innocent faces, cute smile, and acne-free cheeks. Anybody who devotes so much time to their face and body can't be truly bad.

So, who needs to work hard and write 20 page essays and hand them on time?

With a bit of persuasive skills and a clean record, you're allowed a Get Out of Jail Free card every once in a while.

And the way to get it the easiest is to make a good first impression.

Be old-fashioned, dress clean, and answer questions.

Giving the teacher an apple might be a bit much, but giving them a smile and positive attitude is definitely a gift they will appreciate.

Maybe yes

By SARAH JORDAN
The Tattoo

Want to annoy your teachers? Here are 10 ways:

1. Make that \$80 graphing calculator worth it: Play and exchange games in class.
2. Be a considerate individual: Always wave to your friends when you walk by their classroom.
3. Potty Mouth: Bathroom breaks are a must, ask to go whenever you want.
4. Organization is key. Keep your notes and homework neatly jammed into the front of your textbook.
5. Brain food: Don't be hungry, eat lunch in class.
6. Dress for success: Wear your coat so you can give your full attention to the subject, not your thermally challenged digits.
7. Dream student: Catch up on your Zs napping in class.
8. Tune out your teacher with the help of your favorite CD.
9. The Only Dumb Question: Ask again, they love to repeat the answers, they've only been doing it for years.
10. Better late than never: Make the teacher hold the door while you swagger in from the hall, it's what they call individualized attention.

Maybe no

Attitude 101

By SAM YOSAFI
The Tattoo

Here's a little rundown for freshmen coming into high school this year about the different herds they'll find in the hallways.

Expect to see a lot of "cliques." If these groups aren't obvious on the first day of school, then rest assured they will form later. A lot of these cliques you won't like, some of them you may join, but I can guarantee you will walk around the hallways class to class with a label on your back.

What I say

mostly like crap.

But don't get so mad if you're not considered cool. It's usually the popular kids that get made fun of the most behind their backs. Flocks of sheep will be roaming the hall together, where you will witness them talking loud, and all participating in a secret game.

The rules to this game: there are no rules. The point to this game: see who can be the most immature. You will hear people yelling out random profanity, see things getting thrown, and teachers slamming their doors shut from all the ruckus in the hall.

If you look down on this hybrid of people, just do what's best for you, and stay away from them. Or else you'll suffer undeserved and unwanted harassment.

You'll find the potheads stick together when cutting class to go smoke a bowl in the woods and come back next period for their English class or whatever. These guys are usually a laid back bunch, so don't mind them, because for the most part, they don't mind you.

There will be a lot of "preppy thugs" who think that they rule the school, or at least their grade. Yes, they are dressed in Abercrombie & Fitch, but they too often act like Eminem.

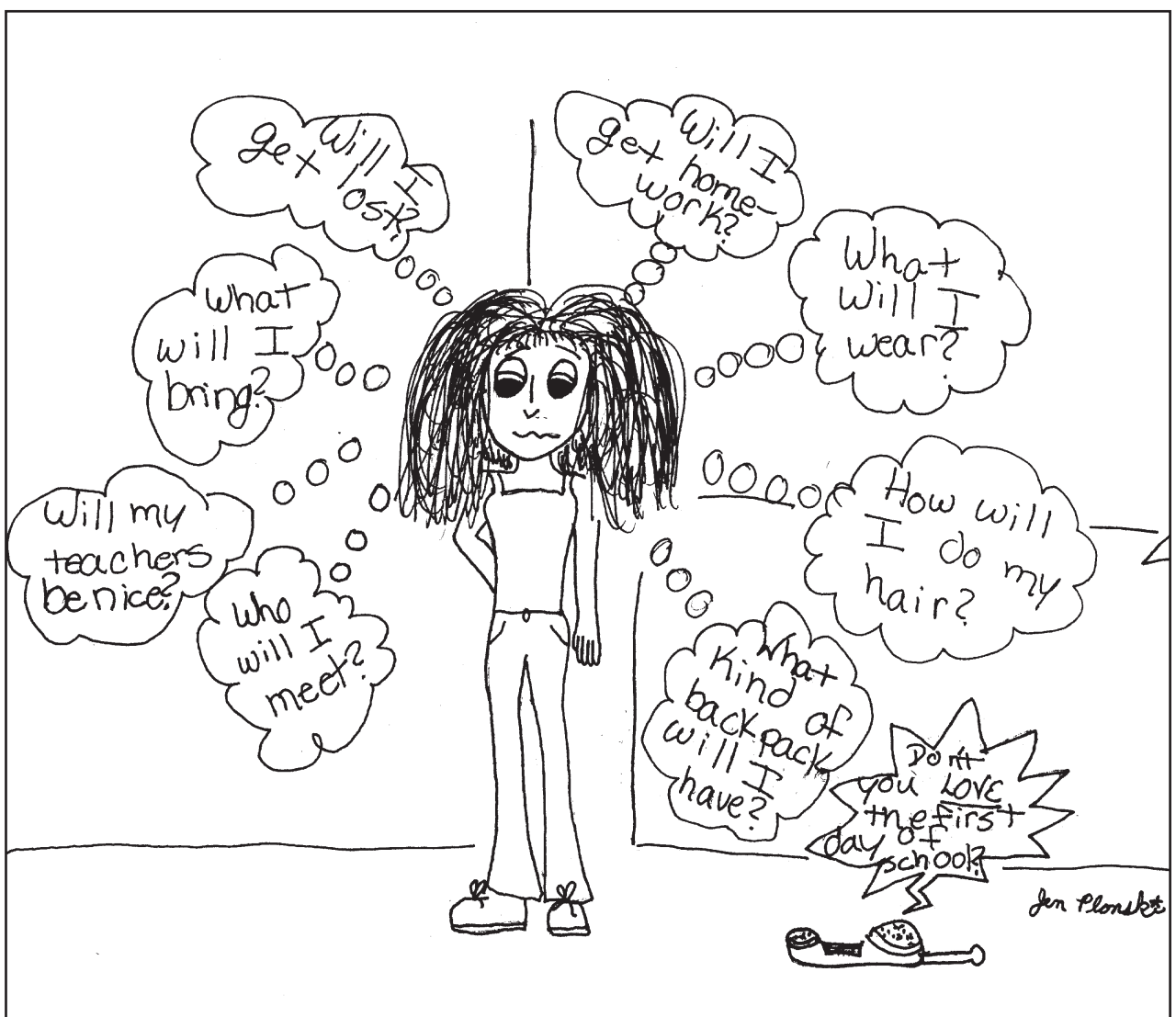
Whether it's the slang they speak or the dyed hair, Eminem is a blueprint for their personality. Don't mind them when they try to act like they're big and bad, it's how everyone else in their group acts. Therefore, at least in their logic, it's how they should act, too.

Hey, monkey see, monkey do.

If you didn't get anything that helps in this basic outlook on the high school social life, I hope that at least this message gets through: when you graduate, and look back on it, you'll wonder why you dressed like a rapper.

The point is: don't sweat how popular you are or how people feel about you.

When it's all said and done, none of this will mean a thing.



Jennifer Plonski / The Tattoo