

## 'Idol' is cruel, comical School chief quits

By MIKE NGUYEN  
The Tattoo

Watching the Fox network's new hit, "American Idol" is like watching a conveyor belt of popstar wanna-be's go through one door all shiny and giggly, and out the other, tearful and in obvious emotional distress. But, hey, it's the most entertaining conveyor belt I've ever seen. The show's premise is half "Big Brother," half "Popstars." Take thousands of tone-deaf idealists and crush them into depression with Simon Cowell, one of the most unsympathetic and witty British people since Anne Robinson from "Weakest Link."

Remind me never to live in Britain, I think I see a pattern appearing. Anyways, back to the show. Cowell and his two other judges, producer Randy Jackson and '90s pop icon Paula Abdul, go city to city searching for the next big thing. They're in search of the next solo artist that will hit it big in the States instantly.

But, very few are singing the tunes of Christina and Britney — most of the songs are classics and are older than the young teenage performers.

The show is looking for nice voices, good looks, and pure talent only. For everyone else, Cowell dispenses his harshest judgments.

"You have no talent," "Get a lawyer and sue your voice teacher," "You're a loser," and the crowd favorite, "That was just awful," are only the kindest of Cowell's quips on everything from the performers' appearance, voice, and attitude.

Sure, it's harsh, but it makes for some great entertainment, and never is it far from the truth. That's the hook, but "American Idol" is so much more.

The judges, for the first few episodes, narrow it down to 30 bright hopefuls, and each week, 10 performers compete for three spots in the Final Ten. How do they get it? Well, by us, the viewers. Each Tuesday, contestants sing their little hearts out for a minute or two, and then face the arduous task of facing the judges and taking their criticisms.

But the power is in the viewing audience, and at the end of each show, they vote for who they like the most. Winners are announced on Wednesday. The top three from the 30 will go on to the Final Ten. One will be chosen by the judges.

The 10 will live together, and again perform each week to desperately beg for votes, because

the contestant with the least amount of votes from viewers will be ousted from the spotlight each week until there's only one "American Idol."

Calls are toll-free, so vote as much as you like. The show is a copycat of the British show "Pop Idol," in which Cowell was infamously involved as a judge. Not only did the winner, Will Young, win the contract under BMG record company, but so did runner-up Gareth Gates, and others from Britain's Final Ten have been signed or are close to getting a deal themselves.

Both Young and Gates have record-breaking hit records in England, making them huge celebrities. Young received more phone votes in the short two-hour span after his final performance than the Conservative party got in England's most recent election, according to the "American Idol" website. Fox is looking for the same success.

So far, "American Idol" is growing in viewers, and it's only on its first few weeks. The latest show logged seven million votes already. I mean, who wouldn't be entertained by hearing their favorite classics covered by some fresh young talent?

If you don't, you'll be sure to like "Nasty Simon's" remarks. As the contestants get better, his mouth only gets sharper, critiquing everything from their choice of clothing, song, appearance, their singing ability, posture, breathing, anything and everything he can get his mouth on. It's funny, in a sad way. You can't help but feel bad for some of the contestants, but hey, brutal honesty hurts.

However, some of Cowell's remarks have backfired. Two contestants Cowell called "a failure" and "not fit enough for this competition" have gotten the sympathy of voters and moved into the Final Ten.

There's no "Survivor" twist, or "The Mole" sabotage, just pure talent and three oddly paired judges. And in the end, I think there's not only going to be a great and successful series, but more than one successful recording artist out of it.

If you have a slow summer night midweek, catch "American Idol" at 9 p.m. on Tuesday, and 9:30 on Wednesday on Fox. The show's length varies each episode but it's usually a half an hour or an hour. So watch it while it's still early, and keep your eyes and ears on the potential superstars, because if an ugly, no-talent kid becomes the next Madonna or Elvis, you have no one to blame but yourself.

By JOE KEO  
The Tattoo

After five years at the helm of Bristol's school system, Superintendent Ann Clark is leaving.

Clark, who earned about \$128,000 in Bristol last year, will take a superintendent's post in Fairfield County, a job that offers a considerable raise.

During her time in Bristol, Clark tried hard to convince city leaders to spend more money on education — and sometimes she got it. She

pushed for all-day kindergarten to help the city's children get off to a better start.

A full-day schedule for Bristol's youngest students would comply with President George W. Bush's "No Child Left Behind" program, Clark said, and help elementary school kids meet national education standards.

Clark, who told The Tattoo in 1997 that all she wanted for Bristol was "the kind of school system where kids want to be in school," said in June that she enjoyed her time here "very

much." In the 1997 interview, Clark said, "You can always do a better job. Living is about trying to improve things. We have great kids and wonderful teachers."

She'll miss the staff and students, Clark said. Clark said she's most proud of "hiring great administrators and very dynamic teachers" here in Bristol.

Clark, who said she opted to leave "because it's a great opportunity for me," starts her new job in Fairfield County today.

On the tube:  
'American Idol'

## World Cup a real kick



Joe Keo / The Tattoo

By JOE KEO  
The Tattoo

The sport is called football everywhere else in the world, but here in the good old United States we like to call it soccer.

The Fédération Internationale de Football Association's World Cup, held every four years, determines which country will prove itself as an elite in the football world.

It's a craze throughout the world, and this year, South Korea and Japan are hosts for the World Cup.

Even though the World Cup takes place in the Far East, back in the West many loyal soccer fans are still raving and going wild over the popularity of football. The World Cup has generated such a buzz all over.

As an American, I wanted the U.S. team to win the World Cup, but unfortunately, due to Germany's win over America, that desire has evaporated, but I still had my eyes glued to the television.

With the U.S. out of the picture, my next choice to win was the South Koreans.

But once again the Germans had to come in and ruin my day by defeating South Korea 1-0.

You might think that ended my reign in front of televisions set, but I'm still in the game.

I stayed in front of the screen and watched the rest of the remaining matches.

Not only am I still attracted to the game of football, I'm also pulled in by the traditions and commercial attention that surround the universal sport.

For example the traditional jersey swap at the end of a game is very confusing to me. Who in the right state of mind would want the sweat and stench of the opposing team? It's just not sanitary.

They must have lots of spare jerseys in the locker rooms or something and they needed to get rid of them, who knows?

Another tradition that interested me is the goal-scoring celebrations.

When football (that is, soccer) players score a goal, the fans go wild and the player feeds off the energy by doing funny and weird antics and dances.

I've seen guys do the worm, a dude doing back-flips, and another guy just looking like a complete baboon running with his jersey over his head (how can he see?)

The commercial attention of the World Cup is also wild and crazy.

As we Americans do with the Super Bowl halftime, the rest of

world does with the World Cup halftimes.

Many billboards and ads are displayed in and throughout the host countries. Hyundai, Coca-Cola, Gillette, McDonald's, Master Card, Toshiba, Nike, Adidas and others were among the plethora of sponsors trying to get noticed during the World Cup.

On television, commercials clutter the screens at every halftime.

One set of commercials that sticks out in my mind is the one by Adidas about a new epidemic called "footballitis" where everyone was addicted to football and everything related to it. The commercials showed scientists researching and trying to come up with a cure for "footballitis."

The ads were just plain hilarious. What's funnier than seeing grown men running around with their shirts pulled over their heads?

Now that the World Cup is over, football fans will have to wait until 2006 when Germany hosts the next championship tournament.

Though the World Cup is mostly about competition, it thrives on nationalism.

Win or lose, at the end of the day we all take pride in our homeland.

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## Jewel shines like a gem

By KATE HAIRE  
The Tattoo

Guitar is what she plays, her name — Jewel.

Most people know her by her first singles, "Foolish Games" and "The Morning Song," but her music is far more than that.

Jewel's songs tell a story with emotion and talent that only true artists can achieve.

The Oakdale recently hosted Jewel, and her opening act, M2M.

M2M (Marit and Marion) played some of their better known songs, and one tune that hasn't been released yet. Their heart-breaking lyrics and belting voices were a good opener for Jewel.

Both girls said Jewel is a major inspiration to them.

M2M performed well, but I was ecstatic about seeing Jewel. As a guitar player myself, Jewel has also been a major inspiration to me.

Hit songs from Jewel earned loud screams from the audi-

### Concert review

ence. The show was set up in three parts, the beginning and end sets had loud music with drums, a keyboard, a bass, and two lead guitarists.

Jewel did not play her guitar until the middle set because of her broken collarbone and rib.

The middle set was Jewel with her trademark acoustic style, singing by herself on stage.

She shared an amusing

story of her first time in Connecticut when she was 18 on Christmas. Jewel sounded very down to earth. She signed autographs on stage and talked to people.

Jewel ended her concert (after an encore, and about five minutes of the audience clapping) with a song called "The Other Woman," not written by her, which she said was probably the only song you would ever hear her sing that she didn't write. It was different, not like her style, and a little more jazzy.

Overall, the evening at the Oakdale was very enjoyable. I would go back to see Jewel in an instant.

Jewel could be compared to a diamond — she goes with everything, shines bright, and should last forever.

Want to join us? *The Tattoo* welcomes new teens. Call advisors Steve Collins or Jackie Majerus at 523-9632 or email us at majerus-collins@attbi.com.

## Players not invincible; baseball mourns Kile

By T.J. O'CONNOR  
The Tattoo

We sit in front of our televisions and watch these miraculous athletes perform every night with perfection, and think of them as invincible. They cannot be touched, but they can.

St. Louis Cardinal pitcher Darryl Kile was found dead in the team hotel on Saturday, June 22. Kile was only 33 years old and he had a wife and two kids. The pitcher died from a blocked coronary artery. His father died when he was 40 years old shortly after he had a heart attack.

Kile is just one of the many great athletes that have died when they were at the pinnacle of their careers. Steve Prefontaine, possibly the best collegiate runner ever, died in a car crash the day before one of the biggest races he would ever had run.

It shocks us when an athlete dies because we see them as champions, as untouchable heroes. When they die it scares us because we see how precious our lives are and how they can be taken away in an instant.

Kile's death affected everyone who knew him, including the three baseball franchises that he played for: the Houston Astros, the Colorado Rockies, and the St. Louis Cardinals.

I turned on ESPN June 22 to watch Baseball Tonight and to find out the scores of the recent games. Instead of checking out the scores, I was unpleasantly surprised to find out that there was a death in the baseball world.

We watch these great athletes play one day and the next we watch them being buried. It comes with sports. Kile is just one athlete who died young.

Darryl Kile is dead at the age of 33.

### On the ball

By SYED HUDA  
The Tattoo

I can just imagine it: people are walking towards their shops and offices, drivers are furiously pressing their horns in the congested street, while the strong summer sun bothers all. Everything's normal.

But, suddenly, at the corner of the U.S. consulate compound, a vehicle explodes.

Now there's a change in scenery: car pieces are thrown at the other side of the road, engulfed by flames.

Every glass is shattered: car windows, shop windows ... even the windows at the Frere Hall — the city museum — are shattered (a place where my father once played with his friends when he was young).

The result? Twelve people killed, none of them American, and 40 injured in the June 14 blast.

Twenty-year-old Muhammad

Irfan told The Independent that his father and brother were killed. And the sad thing is that Irfan knows that his family did no wrong.

The big question has been asked by many over the last year: *why* America? *Why* are Islamic militants killing Americans? *Why* do they hate them with such a passion? *Why* do the Islamic soldiers hold their copies of the Q'ran in the air as if the Holy Book justifies their actions? *Why...?*

When a *Reader's Digest* writer put these questions to a Pakistani child, who studies at a local madrassah, the child merely replied: "America is controlled by Jews."

Ah, there's the answer to the big question. All over the world, most Muslims believe that America has been lenient to Israel over the years.

Did it condemn Israel, for example, when Palestinian

leader Yasser Arafat, a symbol of hope for Muslims, was trapped within his headquarters?

Remember the fear in Arafat's mother-in-law's shaky voice, when she spoke with CNN over the phone?

Following this, Israeli troops invaded West Bank towns.

An astonishing number of 1,382 Palestinians have been killed since September 2000 due to the Israeli occupation.

Perhaps there's more this. There has to be.

For instance, when Pakistan immensely helped America during the long war with the Russians in Afghanistan, what did it get in return — a pat on the back?

Maybe America should've done more.

Maybe America should've sided with Pakistan on the

Kashmir dispute.

Maybe America should've offered Pakistan, and not India, the 'anti-radiation' pills during recent war scares.

Sadly, the Karachi car bomb blast will have no positive effect for us.

This is the *fourth* attack in Pakistan which was aimed towards the Americans.

And the security in the city isn't improving.

People like Irfan will just have to suffer.

At the hospital, where he was in tears, he told a reporter that if he finds the culprits, "I will ask them what was the fault of my father and brother."

Like Pakistan, Irfan wishes to do something.

And, like Pakistan, he still can't prevent another attack from occurring.

*Huda is a Tattoo writer who lives in Karachi, Pakistan.*

### Opinion