

THE TATTOO

BRISTOL PRESS

MAKING A PERMANENT IMPRESSION SINCE 1994

VOLUME 9 No. 1

Walking the rocky road to high school

A fond farewell to summer

By **ANGELIQUE CALIGIURI**
The Tattoo

As the days start to get shorter, it becomes obvious that another summer is coming to an end.

That means no more mid-night campfires with friends, no more warm, sandy, crystal-clear blue water beaches or concerts featuring the latest hip-hop, pop or R&B favorites.

Every darkening leaf carries your lost spirit as you realize the two summer reading list books you ignored all summer still need to be read.

However, with two weeks counting down you have a higher priority: the inevitable question about what to wear on the first day back to school.

Malls everywhere are crowded with paranoid students, worried they'll choose badly.

In two hours, whole summer allowances are blown and parents' credit cards maxed.

All around are Abercrombie & Fitch, Guess and Nordstroms bags, overflowing with low-rise denim jeans, tees, corduroy-lined fur jackets, shoes and outfits which could last the whole duration of a high school career, or at least the fall season.

With almost three months of summer gone and the crease of neither summer reading book bent, and just three days left before school, the only option is to skim and then search for a more productive way to study.

Using the Internet, students study Cliff notes, frantically reviewing the themes, ideas and characters relevant to each novel – and applicable for the annual tests.

On the much-anticipated, and yet still for some fearful, first day of school younger students storm out of the yellow limos or their parents' cars, with the fear of being seen, while older students coolly drive in their fresh leather-scented, shined cars to leave in the reserved student parking.

Meeting up with friends, many of whom haven't been seen through the summer, is refreshing.

But walking through the threshold of English class is terrifying.

Taking your assigned seat, both hands get sweaty and your blue ink pen in your right hand gets hard to hold from the new moist lining.

Then Mr. Miller places on your desk the rival: the dreaded test on summer reading.

You answer each question as best you can, improvising here and there to make the story plot of which you are ignorant more interesting, and then hand in the paper in unison with the school bell.

The next day, at the same time, your paper returns, almost red from the numerous corrections, and you realize you should have taken more time to study.

But you smile anyway, remembering that looking good and having a memorable summer easily compensate for one bad grade.

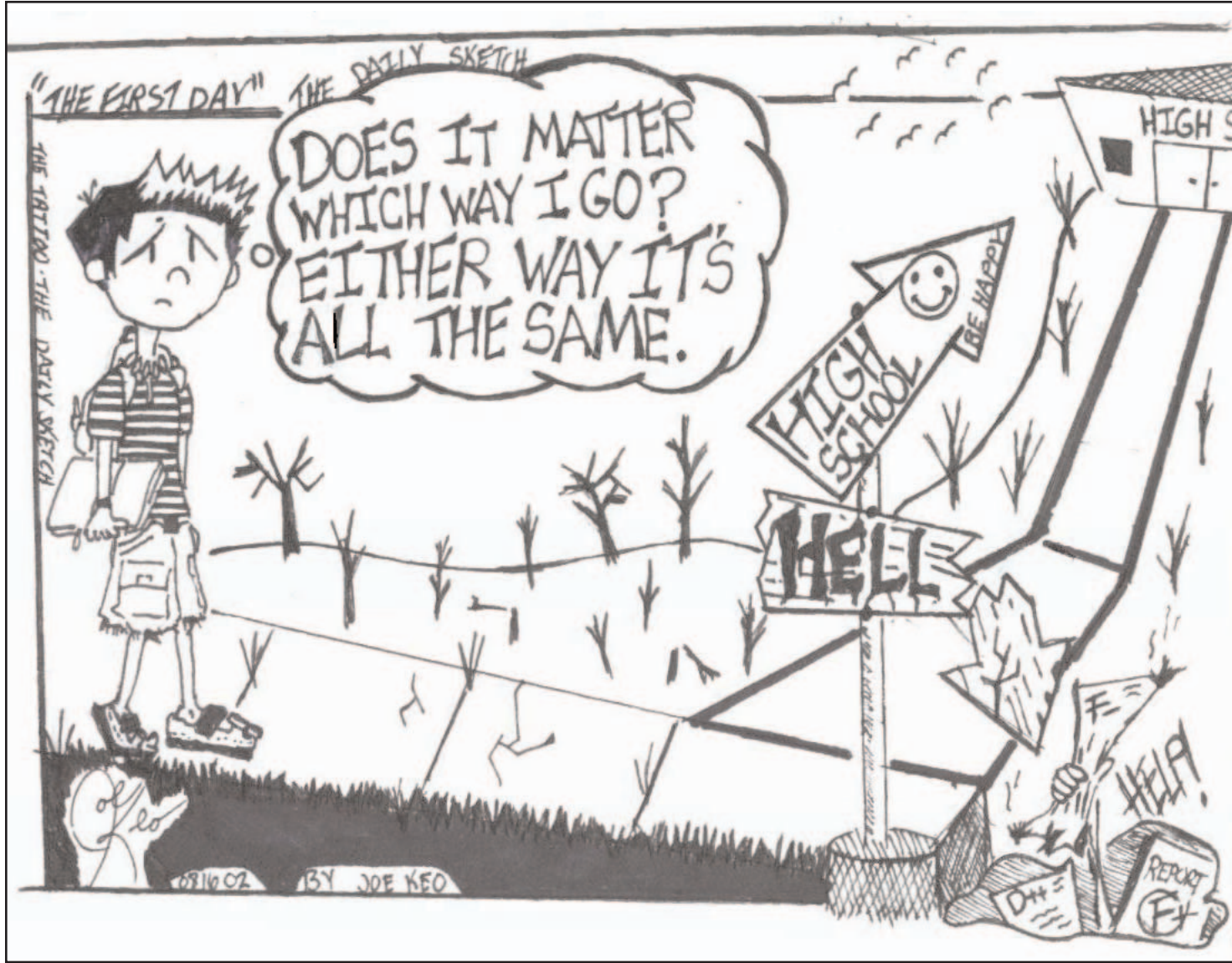
Besides, you still have the whole year to follow, plenty of time to do better.

Freshmen: still need help?

See our complete

Insider's Guide to High School
all online at:

www.ReadTheTattoo.com



Joe Koo / The Tattoo

Back to school ads are surreal

By **KATIE JORDAN**
The Tattoo

It's that time of year again, and back to school sales are more plentiful than the wads of chewed gum stuck under your desk.

There are plenty of great deals to be found in catalogues, newspaper inserts, and practically everywhere else.

If you need a combination lock, head over to Office Max, where you can buy one and get another free. Now you can forget two combinations for the price of one!

For its back to school sale, Rite Aid has a great deal on paper shredders, in case your dog just can't stomach the high school workload.

Of course, you might also want to stock up on Rite Aid's Scotch tape – just in case your teacher really insists on having that last homework assignment.

If it's technology you need, stores like Staples and Radio Shack try to capture your attention with intriguing ads made possible through the magic of computers.

One ad, from Staples, depicts two children poking their heads out of the pockets of a backpack. At least, I hope it's not an actual photo. I mean, I know it's tough getting your kids back to school, but I'm sure stuffing them into a piece of luggage constitutes abuse of some kind.

Another even more disturbing ad from Radio Shack features a group of kids with large electronic gadgets lodged between

their shoulders instead of heads.

Sadly, not all stores are so technologically, or monetarily, inclined. An ad for K-Mart, for example, pictures some children surfing gleefully. On ironing boards.

If you're like the majority of teens out there, you just can't shop for the new school year without getting something to wear.

An advertisement from Bob's Stores pictures countless back to school outfits. Oddly enough, few, if any, of the models are actually in a school setting.

Instead, they're all at the beach or in an alley, looking suspiciously happy. "Bob's Stores: the coolest clothes to skip school in!"

Bob's also has a wide variety of shoes that could be worn skipping – or walking (but I wouldn't recommend running in the high heels).

You could buy a pair of Sketchers "waffle stompers."

We're lucky the school doesn't serve waffles or else you could count on a whole new set of bizarre cafeteria rules.

Then there's "Air Icarus" from the ever-popular Nike.

For those of you who aren't Greek mythology buffs, Icarus is the guy who used a pair of wax wings to escape imprisonment, only to fly too close to the sun,

melt the wings, and fall to his death.

Not somebody I'd want my shoes named after, but maybe I'm just picky.

Go ahead and buy 'em, just don't sit too close to the school's faulty heating system.

If you've already left high school behind, faulty heating system and all, don't feel left out: there are plenty of absurd advertisements aimed straight at the college-bound.

One such promotion boasts of Todd Oldham, "boy wonder of the fashion world."

The young designer came up with a totally revolutionary idea for dorm room décor: mixing patterns and colors!

Such a brilliantly simple idea, it almost seems like anyone could have thought of it.

Then again, Todd certainly wouldn't want to over-estimate the intelligence of today's consumers.

In fact, he's conveniently labeled his products for you! Never again will you suffer the embarrassment, or chafing, of confusing your rug with your bath towel.

If you've looked everywhere and still can't find what you're looking for, don't lose hope.

An insert from Walgreens claims that it's the place to "find everything you need to stay ahead of your class!"

That includes such classroom essentials as notebooks, pens and the Denise Austin Thigh Tek XL Thigh Toner and Body Conditioner (as seen on TV!).

I spy with my little eye... kids stuffed in backpacks

Twelfth year: a senior saga

By **LYNN RENEE RICHTER**
The Tattoo

Nine months and five days. That is all that stands between me and freedom from the world of high school.

Soon, I will be finished with Abercrombie-land for good, and believe me, I am thrilled.

Don't get me wrong. It's been a great three years so far – and I'm sure this last one will be fantastic – but I can't help wanting to be done with it all.

High school is almost over, and life awaits me!

But first comes the nitty-gritty of finishing this last year.

There are the SATs to take, colleges to look into, caps and gowns to order, graduation announcements to select and send, and, of course, the task of surviving "senioritis."

Then, when the big night arrives and I am holding my diploma in hand and smiling for the 38th picture of the night, there are friends to tell goodbye.

We will smile for the cameras, hug and promise to keep in touch, but the reality is that for the most part, we will get on with our lives. Friendships will slowly fade.

It is a dilemma I am not looking forward to facing.

But I also know that life is opening up for me.

Thirteen years of school will lead up to that one night, when I will finally feel the crisp diploma in my hand and hear the whispers of unknown dreams in my ears.

By **MIKE NGUYEN**
The Tattoo

For months, I dreamed of pulling up

effortlessly

into the

school parking

lot on the

first day of

school in my

shiny new car,

with excited

eyes gawking

at me, wonder-

ing who the myster-

ious driver

was.

As I

opened the

door and

stepped out

with my

brand-new

white sneakers,

people would

realize that it

was me, and

they'd be

ashamed of

not contacting

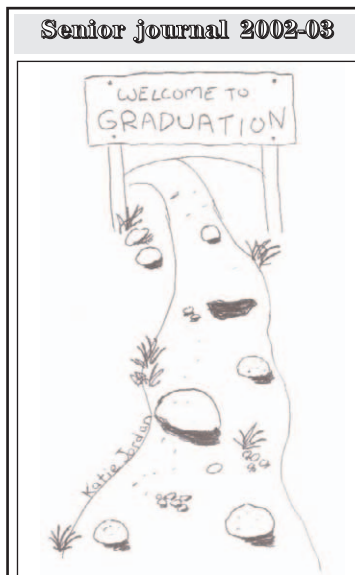
me over the

summer.

I was

already too

cool for them, anyway, going on my own journey of self-discovery and growing in immense maturity.



Katie Jordan / The Tattoo

Follow our seniors as they write about their journey through the final year of high school in an occasional series here and on the web.

Tooting their horns for the love of band

By **SARA GREENE**
The Tattoo

As the glorious days of summer come to a close, students in Bristol rush to buy school supplies and compare schedules as the school year gets underway.

Many of them are also busy with one of the most rewarding – and fun – high school activities.

At Bristol Eastern High School, the band offers one of the best learning environments available. Rehearsals are relaxed. Asking for help and staying after school for practice are encouraged.

Wherever the band travels, it appears that all the young musicians are having a great time and lots of fun. Whether they're marching in a parade, practicing for a concert or sight reading a new piece of music it seems everyone is content and enjoying themselves.

To many students the band is more than just a class. It's a place to talk, tell jokes or hang around with friends.

Band starts early. Performances take place as early as September, so band director Brian Kelly and the band's officers devote part of their summers to work out details for marching and field shows.

At band camp, just before school starts, musicians have a chance to pay their instruments and practice marching. It also serves to make freshmen feel more comfortable before classes begin.

It pays off. Eastern's band program won some spectacular awards last year after putting in 84-minute practices every other day, rehearsing after school frequently and working hard.

Some of the highlights last year included: the Eastern Marching Band won first place at the New Haven St. Patrick's Day Parade and the Forestville Memorial Day Parade and the Eastern Concert Band and Jazz Ensemble performed for cheering crowds in Toronto and Buffalo. The concert band also secured a "superior" rating at a national band festival.

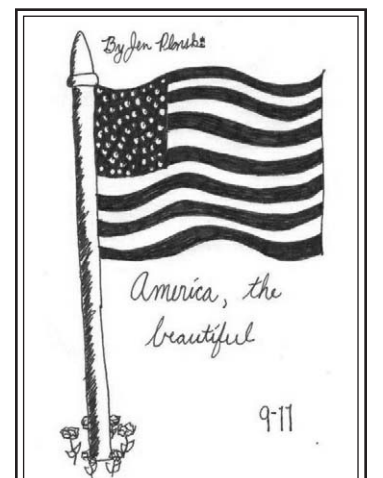
Eastern's band program focuses mainly on helping student musicians improve rather than competing with other bands. In reality, the only band Eastern is competing with is itself.

At many events the band gets to listen to other groups and gain feedback from judges. These educational experiences help to improve the band.

So with a lot of practice and hard work, Eastern's band is preparing for its first performance of the school year at the Mum Festival Parade on Sept. 22 in Bristol.

At the parade, the band will march the parade route in front of enthusiastic crowds as confident and proud as ever.

Greene is a band member at Bristol Eastern High School.



Jon Plonski / The Tattoo

Read reactions from Tattoo writers from around the world as they weigh in about the first anniversary of the Sept. 11 terror attacks at www.ReadTheTattoo.com.

WWW.READTHETATTOO.COM

The best teen journalism in America. For questions, comments or to join, contact advisors Steve Collins and Jackie Majerus at 523-9632.