

THE TATTOO

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Find your way to 'Neverland'

By TEAGUE NEAL
The Tattoo

Inspired from the beloved and creative mind of J.M. Barrie comes an equally high-quality masterpiece of film, "Finding Neverland."

Devoted to remembering this fine playwright, "Finding Neverland" tells how *Peter Pan*, one of the world's most cherished tales, came to be.

Filled with charm, charisma and cheer, "Finding Neverland" begins as the mastermind of *Peter Pan* takes a seat on a park bench in London's Kensington Gardens and suddenly steps upon a young boy who has stuffed himself underneath. He says, "Excuse me, you're standing on my sleeve."

The lad then says that his brothers have captured him from a vicious felon and Barrie (Johnny Depp) plays along, telling their newly widowed mother (Kate Winslet) that they were no trouble in the least.

Thus erupts the volcano of red hot friendship and love that Barrie develops with this single mother and her four boys, especially the youngest, Peter.

The movie melds reality with fantasy as Barrie dares to dream and let kids be kids. He fills their minds with interesting ideas and their days with flying kites and playing Indians in the woods at his expansive forest.

One night as the kids are jumping on the beds while their mother is trying to put them to bed, Barrie says, "Young boys should never be sent to bed. They always wake up a day older."

The film is filled with comparisons between rigid Edwardian England in 1904 - a life that the boys' grandmother and Barrie's wife espouse - and the dreamy, dazzling world that Barrie lives.

One night, the whole group has dinner together. The grandmother and Barrie's wife view the evening as a disaster, but Barrie and the boys' mom find it to be a great time.

Afterward, Barrie and his wife go to turn in for the night, and we find out just how their perspectives differ when they simultaneously open their doors. Beyond Barrie's door is a beautiful, glowing magical forest, while behind his wife's door is nothing but the darkness of her room.

The story of how Barrie turned his life-altering experiences into *Peter Pan*, the tale that touched millions around the world is enchanting, and recently out on DVD.

By the time the credits roll, I assure you, you will be changed for the better.

Enjoy what life offers today because we all grow up, though Peter Pan never has and never will.

The Tattoo named Best Young People's Coverage

The Suburban Newspapers Association recently recognized *The Tattoo* in the organization's 2004 annual journalism contest.

The Tattoo took first place in the category Best Young People's Coverage for work through October 15, 2004. In making their decision, judges reviewed a number of editions of *The Tattoo* from last year.

This is the second time the SNA has given the award to *The Tattoo*. The teen paper also won in 2002.

Judges selected winners from 2,246 entries submitted from 2,000 newspapers from across the continent.

Now in its 11th year, *The Tattoo* offers a chance for young writers, artists and photographers to develop their skills and make a difference through a teen-written newspaper.

Jackie Majerus and Steve Collins are founders of *The Tattoo* and serve as advisors to the young people who join. They are senior reporters at *The Bristol Press* and have volunteered their time to *The Tattoo* since its inception in 1994.

The Tattoo tackles tough subjects like teen suicide, school violence and world issues, but also covers travel, music, movies and more.

The Tattoo is open to any teenager in the world, though it's based in Connecticut. The group meets weekly at *The Bristol Press*.

Interested teenagers are always welcome, and should contact Majerus or Collins at (860)523-9632 or email them at TheTattoo@gmail.com for more information.

Leaving an ancient school

By JOHN ELFED HUGHES
The Tattoo

LLANRWST, WALES - Nearly 400 years after the first students began taking classes at Llanrwst Grammar School, its doors have closed for the last time.

With nobody there, the old senior school now looks eerie. Its windows are boarded up with black planks.

"It's sad," said Elgan Thomas, 18, a student from the village of Penmachno.

Eleri Williams, an 18-year-old from Egwylsbach who is a former pupil of the school, said she thought the old school had character.

But, she said, it needed significant maintenance work to the interior because there were cracks in the walls and the windows.

The closure of the historic school, after nearly three decades of planning, allowed senior pupils and teachers to move in February to a new school that also included younger students.

But the move left the worn-out old building - where buckets were needed to catch the rainwater that leaked through the roof - vulnerable to thieves.

The absence of students has also hurt nearby businesses in the small market town.

Since the 1960s, the historic school has been called Ysgol Dyffryn Conwy, in keeping with the Welsh heritage of the Conwy region of northern Wales. Its students speak Welsh and English.

Not long after the headmaster of the school, Ifor Evans, expressed concern that the empty school would get vandalized, computers got stolen from it and the old stone steps were broken.

Michael Bone from The Farm and Dairy Produce shop near the former school said his business has "dropped since the school closed."

He said this is "always bad" news and that probably many other local businesses in the area felt the same.

But students may be better off since they may now opt for a full school meal instead of stuffing their faces with fish and chips at lunchtime.

Now all of the more than 800 pupils, from ages 11 to 18, are on one site at a newly improved school said to cost £9 mil-



Tattoo photo

The former Llanrwst Grammar School, later the Ysgol Dyffryn Conwy, in Wales.

lion - about \$17 million - funded under a Private Finance Initiative.

Evans said the new school meant that "there is less commuting for staff and students" and that the sixth formers could act responsibly and set an example as senior students of the school for the younger pupils.

Charlotte Jones, a 16-year-old from Bryn Pydew, said she doesn't like the new school as much because now there are younger children everywhere. She said she preferred the old school, which just had senior students.

Billy Williams, one of the school's deputy heads, said that having the school further from the town meant that students would be more orderly since they could no longer go there easily.

Some students used to cause trouble when they went to the nearby town at lunchtime.

In the past some had even decided to walk on the nearby railway track, a potential hazard.

When the old school remained open, teachers had to commute at least a mile between the two sites.

Janet Hughes, another deputy head, said that the sixth formers could take part

in the school's buddy system.

"This is an exciting time for Ysgol Dyffryn Conwy," she said. "The feedback I have received is generally positive. I don't think there is anything negative about the school."

The new school has several security cameras across the site, something the old school didn't have at all.

"It's nice to know the children are safe," said Delyth Algeri, a headmaster's secretary.

Tilly Goodwin, another secretary, who has been working in the school for 36 years, said she really likes the combined school and described it as "spacious."

She won't have long to enjoy it, however, since she's retiring in June.

"I won't miss getting up at half past six, but I will miss the companionship of administrative and teaching staff," Goodwin said. "I will of course miss the pupils!"

Most students said they are much happier in the new school.

For example, the toilets in the old school hardly ever had toilet paper and the locks on the doors were broken.

In the new school, the toilets are clean and there's even soap.

But at the old school, there were fewer restrictions on students. Now the catering company Sodexho operates the new school and many students feel it clamps down on them too much.

"I felt that the old school had more freedom for the senior pupils," said Emyr Algeri, an 18-year-old from Llanddoged. "I think pupils need more freedom during the later years of school or else they'll feel dominated and unable to cope in the world on their own."

It's unclear what will happen to the old building now.

Sir John Wynn, who's been dead for nearly four centuries but who donated the school, dictated long ago that it could only be used for educational purposes.

Tattoo photo

The nearly 400-year-old school is now closed, and students are now in a brand new building.

Legal at last with my learner's permit

By ZACH BROKENROPE
The Tattoo

There are steps every teenager must take to become an adult, or so I believe. These include such things as the first time you sneak out of the house, the first rock concert you go to by a band that your parents have never heard of, and the step I just completed today: getting my learner's permit.

Of course all this means is that I can learn to drive *legally* now. For the past six months, I've been secretly driving on country roads shrouded by darkness with my dad, a town police sergeant, by my side.

For the entire week leading up to my birthday, my dad had been gently reassuring me that if I didn't pass the test on my first time I would be in very much pain.

"No Brokenrope has ever failed their driver's test," he told me, which is just stupid of him to say because only like the past three generations including me have actually ridden in cars. Before that, my family lived in teepees and rode on horses.

Even though my dad's intimidation doesn't really work on me, I still studied for that test like none other.

Every night for a week I read through the stupid little rule book, just

memorizing rules and regulations. So that's why I was extremely confident in myself as I entered the big stone courthouse this afternoon, my Social Security number and birth certificate clutched tightly in my hands.

I was determined to pass the test.

the freshman diaries

"Welcome to the DMV," the lady at the counter said hastily as I entered the small room in the courthouse basement.

The place looked like it came straight from the '70s - green shag carpet, mustard yellow walls, and even that old smell to it.

"Just sit right here and press your head against the viewfinder," she said, rushing as she took the papers out of my hand and began quickly typing the information into the computer set before her.

"Now please read me the third row of letters," she said. Her fingers still hitting the keyboard at a startling rate, she seemed like she'd had way too much coffee.

"K,Z,Y...", I began, my forehead pressed up against the monitor.

"NO, NO, NO! The third row of letters. You're trying to read the third column," she screeched.

"Oh ... sorry," I said apologetically. This couldn't be good. I hadn't even

got to the actual test and I was already screwing up. Man, I'm such a loser.

When I finished the vision exam, the lady gave me a large piece of paper covered in plastic with the test questions on it, a felt tip pen, and another sheet of paper covered in bubbles.

"Okay, what you do is, you read the question, take the pen and fill in the bubbles," she said, and snatched the pen out of my hand.

"Be very, very, careful to fill in *only* the bubble you want, and if by some chance you mark ..."

Obviously this lady thought I had never seen a test before, but I smiled, took the test and the pen in my hand and sat down at one of the ancient tables that filled the room.

I stared at the sheet.

"When you approach a bus coming in the opposite direction with its

stop arm extended, do you stop?"

True or False?

Crap. I hadn't seen this question before.

My palms begin to perspire and instinctively the pen rose to my mouth and I bit down on the cap.

I stared at the question, the words burning themselves into my mind. Finally, stumped, I used the one thing that had always proven to get me out of tough situations: "Eenie, Meenie, Minie, Moe."

I landed on false.

"Okay," I thought, and marked the little box with the pen.

Fifteen minutes later, fairly confident in myself, I took the test to the lady at the counter and waited. She pulled out the little checking sheet and ran it down the page.

"Yes...yes...ohhh... No," she said.

My eyes glanced up from the floor. What did she mean, "No?" I knew every question on that test, minus the one that I wasn't sure about.

"Okay," she said as she finished grading the test. "You passed, only missed one. Good job."

I grabbed my test from her hands and looked at it, scanning to see which one I missed. Question number five glared at me; the big red swoosh next to it bled against the black ink on the page.

"When at a four way intersection

with no signs you always yield to the

right?"

I practically screamed at the page: "You always yield to the RIGHT!" I KNEW that!

I looked at the choices below and the bubble that I had marked. Damn! I'd marked that you yielded to the left.

"Okay, now please go upstairs to the office on the left and get your ID made," she said, ushering me out.

I walked upstairs and entered a room with license plates covering every wall.

"Good afternoon," the lady behind the counter said. "Here to get your ID?"

"Yeah," I said, handing over the paper. "Here."

She typed in my information even faster than the other lady.

"Okay, if you'll just stand right there, I'll take your picture," she said, and pointed to a big blue screen hung up against the wall.

I turned and stood against it, my best smile plastered onto my face.

The camera flashed once and click! Five seconds later my ID popped out of the machine.

I stared at the picture, my smug grin and information stared back at me.

Mission accomplished.

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