

THE TATTOO

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VOLUME 11 No. 7

Student-run play gets new direction

By **ASHLEY MICHAUD**
The Tattoo

Actors in the fall play at Bristol Eastern High School are taking direction from someone new this year — a fellow student.

Kate Leber, a 16-year-old junior, is sitting in the director's chair for this week's production of "The Importance of Being Earnest."

Leber is the first to take on the new task of student director at the school.

Cast member Heather Magnoli, 16, said Leber is a wonderful director. The cast couldn't have had a better one, Magnoli said.

"The Importance of Being Earnest" is a Victorian comedy about two guys who do everything in their power to capture the hearts of two girls, with some complications along the way, naturally.

Leber called the play "an amazing show by Oscar Wilde."

She was immediately drawn to it, she said, and "wanted to see it done."

"The language is hilarious," said Leber. "It pokes fun at the Victorian society," she said,

with verbal battles between characters intertwined in a "comedic love story."

Leber played the part of Rebecca in Eastern's production of "Our Town" last year and was involved in both musicals her freshman and sophomore year.

But she had never directed before.

To get the role of student director, Leber had to meet with Drama Club advisor Lisa Carol and go through an interview with the student officers of the club.

The interviewers asked the potential directors why they wanted the job. At her interview, Leber put on a puppet show and her creativity paid off.

Carol, who is in her second year of running the school's drama program, said Leber was "very prepared, shows great compassion and is doing very well."

The advisor said she thinks having a student director is a great way to let students see things from the other end and "look at a peer in a different way."

Leber's debut is also her last



JESSICA BALOWSKI / THE TATTOO

Bristol Eastern High School junior Kate Leber, far left, director of "The Importance of Being Earnest," talks with stage manager Josh Lessard and cast members Susie Schon, Kayla Hickerson and Amber-Leigh Brzezinski. The fall play, a comedy by Oscar Wilde, opens on Friday.

director's role, at least for now. She said she just wants to see how it goes from here and doesn't know if she wants to pursue a career in this field.

Leber said she chose her cast of 12 from an audition open to all students at the school. Each potential cast

member read a section of the script that Leber chose for them.

She said the auditions were her greatest challenge.

The casting call was the "first real step in directing but after that everything flowed," said Leber. The most rewarding

aspect of this journey, said Leber, was working with the cast as a director.

The 12 students involved seem to appreciate everything Leber is doing for them.

"She's doing great!" said Susie Schon, a 16-year-old junior.

Leber said she worried at first about telling cast members what to do because so many of them are her good friends. But she said she is "totally respected as a director" by her peers.

"She makes it fun and easy to come to her for help," said Schon.

Other cast members also praised Leber. They said she is doing a great job helping students with their roles, especially for such an inexperienced director.

Getting started was another challenge, Leber said, but she said it got easier with every rehearsal.

Kayla Hickerson, a 14-year-old sophomore, said Leber "has the trust of the cast."

Leber's hard work is paying off.

"It's great to see the whole thing come together," the young director said. She said she's

excited about opening night, but sad to see the show come to an end.

To other student directors, Leber had this advice: "Be very patient and enjoy yourself."

Who:

Kate Leber, student director

What:

"The Importance of Being Earnest"

When:

Friday, Nov. 12 and Saturday, Nov. 13 at 7 p.m.

Where:

Bristol Eastern High School

How much?

\$8 for adults, \$5 for students

Teens will inherit pain-filled world

By **MARESE HEFFERNAN**
The Tattoo

Teenager — a word that sends chills down many adults' spines.

Once upon a time, the word meant a person from 13 to 19 years old. But now, teenagers are labeled as hooligans, vandals and all-over bad people.

But is this stereotype really fair? Are teenagers truly as bad as adults describe them? We teenagers are people, too.

We, too, see the horrific images on the news — images of war and poverty and global injustice.

And you know what? You can sit at home and cry over the terrible things in this world, but you can also go to bed knowing that none of it will ever affect you.

But we can't. We go to bed knowing that one day, the

world will be in our hands.

One day, when all of the current adults are dead and gone, we will have to face up to a ruined, polluted and deadly world.

What I say

And who is responsible for the ruin and the pollution and the deadliness?

It isn't teenagers that create problems in the world, much as adults would like to think so.

We can protest and scream and cry until we have no fight or lungs or tears left inside of us. But no one listens. Why? Because we are teenagers: deadly, rough little hooligans who don't deserve to have a say in what happens to the world.

But remember this — the future is in our hands. We are teenagers — hear us cry.

Casting my first ballot

By **TYLER WENTLAND**
The Tattoo

There are certain milestones in life that they say everyone goes through, such as getting your first kiss, your driver's license and making your first vote.

I got my first kiss, I got my license and Tuesday, I voted. As I pulled up the driveway an elderly man was sitting in a lawn chair wearing a big furry hat, smiling and waving to me as I drove by.

It felt good, almost welcoming, like I was doing the right thing and everyone, even strangers, were proud of me.

As I walked along the sidewalk of Main Street School, which I had attended so many years ago, I felt like everyone was watching me and smiling.

I walked through the doors and was guided to the table where I showed identification and they crossed my name off of a long list of registered voters.

As I waited in line, I felt a hand caress my arm and I looked to see an elderly woman who said, "It's so good to see the young people voting; there are too many old fogies around here."

We had a good laugh and talked about those who complain about politics yet refuse to put their voices in to change it.

Then came the time to actually vote, press the levers and put my "money where my mouth was."

As I left the booth I received a sticker that said, "I voted today." I put it on my jacket and left feeling a little more adult, not

older, but more independent.

I guess that I feel a little more like a citizen of this country. I feel like I was listened to for once and maybe I contributed to a change that can effect everyone.

The bitter truth

By **CHLOE STEAD**
The Tattoo

I didn't vote.

For a start I'm not even American, and secondly, I won't be old enough to qualify for another two years.

Teenagers obviously can't be trusted to vote in the same way politicians obviously can't be trusted to run the country.

I'm bitter that George Bush won the presidential

election.

I'm bitter that Tony Blair is my prime minister — Britain's leader.

I'm bitter, as I'm sure you all are, that there's absolutely nothing I can do about it.

There are those who think teenagers don't care about politics; yet here we all are, caring.

And we speak the truth, which is more than they can ever say.

Shoot me! Perils of the senior photo

By **KATIE JORDAN**
The Tattoo

I hate having my picture taken.

I cringe when I hear a photographer say, "Okay, now SMILE!" Of course, that cringing expression always makes for a lovely shot.

I know I'm not the only one who feels this way. But even if I'm not alone in how I feel about having my photo taken, the fact is that when you're sitting there on some uncomfortable stool with the evil, unblinking black eye of a camera focused on you, you are alone. Well, except for the photographer.

But let's face it, that's not always a comfort.

"Turn your head a little. No, the other way! Farther. No, too far! Let me do it."

Oh, yeah — nothing puts me in the right frame of mind to smile attractively like being frozen in an unnatural position after having some stranger's hands all over my face.

It's not the photographers' fault, though, even if I would like to blame it all on them. And believe me, I would.

No, the fact is as plain as the cringe on my face: I'm just not good at being photographed.

It hasn't always been this way. Once, my mother entered a photo she took of me in a "Pretty Baby Contest." My picture won a very prestigious award: a free pizza. It was a proud moment for my family.

But on the other hand, I am one of very, very few people in the world who actually also have bad baby pictures. Most babies are naturally photogenic. I was a rare exception.

As my mother explained to me recently, she used to take pictures of my older sister when she was a baby, and had expected to do the same with her second child. But, as she explained it to me, then I came along — and she gave up.

All through school, my pictures have been pretty lousy.

In elementary school, I think it was caused partly by my big purple-rimmed glasses and lost teeth, and partly by the fact that the photographers tried to be cute by telling us, "Say jellybeans!"

Senior journal

Come along for the ride as our seniors travel the pit-filled, adventure-packed road to graduation.

The idea was to snap the photo when our mouths were shaping the long E sound, which produces an expression almost like a smile. But I doubt if their timing was that good, and the results could be bizarre — go make a J, L, or B sound in front of a mirror and maybe you'll see what I mean.

Plus, in elementary school I had no common sense and wasn't conscious of my appearance. In a lot of ways, that was a good thing. In other ways, not so good ... for example, the time somebody convinced me to stick my tongue out slightly in one of my school photos, saying, "Nobody will notice." Funnily enough, nobody did notice. Which should give you an idea about the kind of quality people expected from my school photos even then.

Every time I've received my school pictures in their big white envelope with the clear panel they put there so I have to take the photos out and flip them so only the backs show, I get the

same response from every person who gets to see them.

Both my mother and father say, not terribly convincingly, "Oh — it's not that bad this year!" or something to that effect. Well, actually, sometimes my dad just chuckles.

And so it's been for me all through elementary school and junior high, and now high school. Thankfully there are fewer witnesses now, since a lot of students don't want to buy the ridiculously expensive yearbooks at all until their senior year.

But my senior year is this year. And what that means is that I just had my senior picture taken.

I don't usually worry about things like this, but I will acknowledge that this is the most important school photo I have ever had taken of me. And of course that means it wasn't taken at the school.

No, I went to the studio of the company who takes the senior photos — Art Rich. (I'll resist making any snide comments linking the name of the company with what they must expect their customers to be, based on the prices of their packages.)

Actually, I could have had the yearbook photo taken at the school for free. But no. Most of the other lousy photos of me have been stuffed in boxes or hidden or tucked away somewhere to gather dust. This photo of me, lousy or not, will be given to relatives and probably even framed. (Framed — I'm thinking that's what the poor photographer is going to claim she was when she realizes she will be forever associated with my photo.)

And so, since the photo is to be given out to those lucky recipients, we had to purchase copies, which means we had to drive to the Art Rich studio for the session.

Of course, we went for the cheapest package. I doubt a package of pictures of me, no matter what magic the pho-

tographer employs, will ever be worth a cent over the lowest price available. Oh, but I would have paid any price to get out of that studio once I was trapped there.

The place looked something like a bizarre movie set, with strange props like staircases that lead to nowhere. And cameras. It gave me the willies.

I have nothing against Art Rich, and especially not the photographer who took my pictures, who is probably



Art Rich photo

the nicest person ever to hold a camera.

But I still wanted to run for the hills, because — as I think I might have mentioned before — I hate having my picture taken.

Running was out of the question, though. My glasses were forsaken to a dressing room nearby, since lenses reflect the flash. I'm very nearsighted, so it's a wonder I even made it to the little stool in front of the backdrop

without any accidents.

Then came the posing. I followed directions like a slightly clumsy little robot, tilting my head the way she told me to, then trying to hold still after she came to adjust me herself.

That was tough enough. But then I had to smile.

I'm a lousy smiler. Oh, I smile fine when I'm actually happy (at least I think I do — but how often do you happen to be in front of a mirror when you feel happy?) But remember, I hate having my picture taken.

So I have to try to smile. And it's obvious that I am trying. A forced smile always makes you look bad, in a deranged psycho-killer sort of way.

But I smiled my way through the 15-minute-long, who-knows-how-many-photo session, although my smile may have looked more like a wince by the end because my cheek muscles were aching from the exertion.

Two weeks later, a card from Art Rich arrived in the mail. It was to inform us that the "previews" of my photos were ready, and that we "must call" to make an appointment. After we ignored the card for a day, they called us.

Art Rich allots a week for customers to make the all-important decision of which photos to buy. My mother and I rifled through the pics a couple of times and didn't have any difficulty picking the two that we thought came out the best.

Of course, when my dad looked at the photos, he just chuckled.

He pointed out that I had the same expression in all of them.

Evidently he was surprised.

I refrained from pointing out that that expression is called a "smile." Maybe I should have tried something more adventurous, like sticking my tongue out?

What the heck — nobody would notice.

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