

Everything you ever wanted to know ...about girls | ...about boys

By **JOE WILBUR**
The Tattoo

Girls, Girls, Girls. That's right, boys — the main event. High school will mark the earnest beginning of your meaningful relationships with the opposite sex. You will, in all likelihood, fall in love for the first time, experience your first intense romantic involvement and you might even lose your virginity in the next four years.

All right, down boys — before you get all hyped up you should know this is all going to be much more trouble than it's worth.

The best I, or any other male survivor of the Four Years War that is high school romance can do for you is draw on our experiences and try to advise you accordingly. The rest is up to you.

And so:

1. RELAX. If you don't conquer some of your insecurity and suppress some of your fear about girls, you're going to spend four years playing Dungeons and Dragons with four guys named Alex.

Here's why: Truth is, girls are just as nervous about all of this as we are, and they don't know what's going on either.

2. ALL GIRLS DATE JERKS. It's a fact.

Although there's no sound scientific explanation for this sort of teenage female masochism, any grown woman will tell you it's true.

Don't spend four years torturing yourself over why the gorgeous, sweet, intelligent blonde who sits in front of you in English will walk on hot coals for the captain of the date rape team but won't give you the time of day, just accept it and move on.

3. AVOID DATING GIRLS WHO SAY THEY ALWAYS END UP WITH JERKS. Here's why: It's the truth.

You're just the latest in a long series of jerks and it will never work between you. If it did, she'd be happy and she will never allow that.

4. If at all possible, DATE UPPERCLASSMEN. Dating someone older will allow you to benefit from their experience and may help you avoid dating people as immature and screwed up as you are.

The theory is that they've already made some mistakes and they're a little less insecure and they've already tripped over stones on the path you haven't even seen yet. They can guide you.

This may also spare you the guilt and anxiety associated with dating a virgin, though this isn't always the rule.

It's true, most girls don't like to date below their class (some basic problems with male maturity have cemented this rule for many of them), but there are girls out there willing to look past that, if you prove worth it.

5. DO NOT MAKE ENEMIES. If you have to break up with someone, try to do it nicely.

The last thing you can afford at this early stage in the game is to provoke female wrath. The reason? Girls talk.

You establish a level of intimacy with one of them and then do her wrong, and you'll be lucky if she only tells everyone she knows about your odd birthmarks. Hell hath no fury, kid....

I'm afraid that's all I can do for you. The rest you'll have to figure out on your own.

It'll be fun. It'll be hell. And then you get to start over again in college.

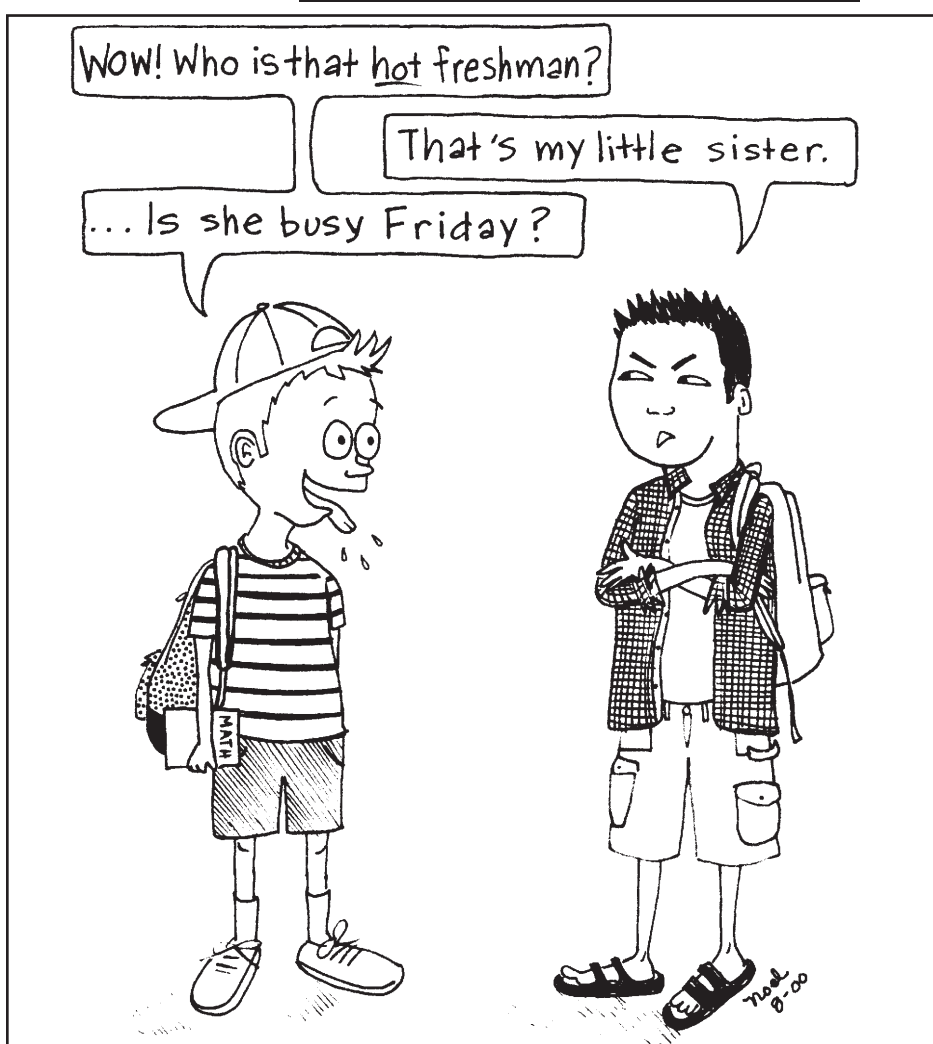
An insider's guide to high school

Last in a series. If you missed 'em, see the first three parts online.

Wow! Who is that hot freshman?

That's my little sister.

... Is she busy Friday?



Noel Fahden / The Tattoo

By **NATALIE MINOR**
The Tattoo

So you've started high school. We all know what the first thing on your mind is. Don't try to hide it... everyone knows what you're thinking about. You've been anticipating this day since you graduated eighth grade, and perhaps even sooner.

If you're a boy, you're out of luck. But if you're a girl, watch out — you are about to become prey.

I remember my first day at in high school very well. I was in awe. I had just gotten out of middle school, full of prepubescent boys who still made farting sounds and had scrawny chicken legs.

Suddenly, I was surrounded by these visions ... upperclassmen. It seemed that they were all tall, athletic, bleached-blond Abercrombie models. Some of them even had cars.

Of course, my friends and I were flattered by all the attention we received from them. Before long, the freshmen girls had abandoned all of their middle school crushes and were on to bigger and better things.

Freshmen guys, realizing that older girls didn't have much of an interest in them, sat around and waited for next year, when they could prey on the new class. After all, why not? To them, you're innocent, you're sweet, you want to be cool ... basically, they'll assume you're an easy catch.

I'm not saying that all high school males are bad. In fact, most of them are pretty nice guys.

But we all know that they simply don't know any better. They see girls that are easily taken advantage of and they pounce.

Take, for example, the epidemic that occurred in my school last year. All of the guys in the sophomore class had previously been neglected. Therefore, they didn't waste any time making ties with the frosh.

This doesn't mean that these girls wouldn't receive any attention without the freshmen hype. I'm sure that regardless of their timing, guys would have liked them. I simply mean that they see new girls just as we saw new boys the year before and go crazy. There seem to be so many of you, all innocent to the ways of high school boys.

It's understandable; they had been ignored by most of the girls in the school for so long that they couldn't pass up the chance.

In any case, beware. It's a trend that moves on to every incoming class. You can't avoid it any more than you can resist it, but make sure you don't let yourself be used.

I'm simply saying that you need to be aware of the moves that will inevitably be put upon you. Don't let yourself be as innocent as they think you are. Play with their minds, manipulate them, and use them just as much as they will use you.

Most importantly, be nice to upperclassmen girls. You don't want them on your bad side any more than you want a vengeful ex-boyfriend.

Older girls are annoyed by little girls who think they are the center of attention.

Even if you are, even if the hottest guy in the junior class is calling you every night, never, ever act like you are better than the girls that are his friends. They'll hate you, and you'll probably pay for it later.

Consider yourself warned. All you need to do is remember these things:

- 1) Upperclassmen guys are fun. They are not gods. There is a reason why they can't get any girls their own age.
- 2) Don't neglect the freshmen guys. You're going to need a senior prom date eventually.
- 3) It's better to have upperclassmen girls on your side, not against you. They can make your life a living hell.
- 4) The most obvious: Don't let yourself be used. The last thing you need is a reputation in your first year of high school. It could stick with you throughout the next three years.

Keeping all these things in mind, have a good time in the years to come.

You will learn a lot, love a lot, and be hurt a lot ... if you're lucky. Just know that you'll be all set if you can handle the upperclassmen guys.

Don't get lost in the system

By **JOE WILBUR**
The Tattoo

As I look back on the last four years, I am filled with a silly sort of nostalgia one never imagines he'll have about high school. I remember lessons I've learned that have nothing to do with parabolas or the five paragraph essay, the scientific method or obscure foreign verb tenses. The most important lessons I've learned — those I'll take with me farthest and longest, have been practical lessons: assume nothing, don't compromise, take responsibility, DO NOT procrastinate.

And, when I think of these things, I'm filled also with that warm, just-out-of-the-dryer feeling about the teachers and friends who've taught me these things. I've been fortunate to have had many great mentors, many great leaders. But as I remember each of them and what they've taught me — all those selfless people who spent hours filling empty, sometimes disinterested students with knowledge, pride and determination — I realize that the person who's taught me the most about life and living in the past few years did the least work possible, and as slowly as he could.

For his seemingly endless ineptitude, complete inability to communicate and staggering over-confidence in the face of a complete lack of skill and resource, I am forever indebted to my guidance counselor. Yes, the guidance counselor — the one who pulls the strings. Even more than the gym teacher, this is the man or woman who can make or destroy you with an accidental twitch. Classes, transcripts, letters of recommendation — it's dizzying how much

power they have, really.

Mine was not a pleasant experience, it's true — but if not for the manipulation and deception of this champion bungler, I might never have learned the following lessons:

1. GO TO THE TOP. Bureaucracy, in high school as in life, is the root of all evil. If you can possibly go over the

See that pile of junk on your guidance counselor's desk? You're in there somewhere.

head of the person you're handing vital information to or entrusting with a great responsibility — do so. If it's going to go to the next level anyway, take it there yourself. Some may see that as rude, but I've found it to be necessary. If you really care about your education, well being and future, deal with as few people as possible.

2. NEVER ASSUME THAT ANYONE KNOWS WHAT THEY'RE DOING (NO MATTER HOW BIG THEIR DESK IS). If you want to take a class and your guidance counselor says you can't — check it out yourself. If he says you have to take a class you're uncomfortable with, check it out. If he cites a rule or makes any hard and fast statement about anything — ask to see it in print. Make sure you know you're hearing the truth and not the quick answer. DO NOT be put into a class you're unprepared for — DO NOT settle if you're not sure.

The halls and classrooms are littered with miserable kids who are convinced that they HAVE to be doing what they're doing, that

they have no choice, because they've taken their guidance counselors at their words. These people are not gods. They're not even angels. Hell — they're not even checkpoint charlies at the gates of purgatory. See that pile of junk on their desk? You're in there somewhere. So's everybody else you know. Kinda makes you queasy, doesn't it?

3. MAKE COPIES. If there is one copy of anything — a letter of recommendation, a transcript — someone in a tie WILL lose it. Spend five minutes soaking up radiation at the copy machine and start a file. When he says he's lost it, show him you're a step ahead.

4. KNOW YOUR DEADLINES. This seems easy enough. What I really mean to say is, make sure THEY know your deadlines. There's no quicker way to make yourself late than to allow something to be mailed for you if you can do it yourself, or to depend upon your guidance counselor for some vital piece of a deadline package. I once actually had to stand over the shoulder of my guidance counselor to make sure he faxed my transcript THE DAY OF a college deadline because he hadn't mailed it yet.

5. IF YOU HAVE TO BE A JERK, BE A JERK. Everyone wants to be pleasant. More flies with honey and all that, right? But the thing is — and this is a lesson you'll learn repeatedly throughout high school — if peo-

ple smell fear or apprehension on you, if they think you'll go quietly when dissatisfied or compromise when faced with adversity, you're dead in the water.

In a busy day on a busy job the last thing your guidance counselor (or anyone else for that matter) wants is a student who's a wall — an impenetrable force for what he wants or needs — and he certainly doesn't want to have to meet your parents, Mr. and Mrs. Wall. If he understands that you are that wall, spawn of those parents, he's not going to push you around.

That being said, remember this — not all guidance counselors are evil. Some of them genuinely want to help you — you'll know them in the first few minutes and they'd probably agree with everything I've said.

If you're lucky enough to meet a good guy, make him your friend immediately — it's nice to have friends on the inside.

Boot up the PCs (and hope for the best)

By **SAM YOSAFI**
The Tattoo

Technologically speaking, our schools are finally getting with the program.

In the fast-moving electronically controlled world today, schools are finally realizing that teaching kids the basics of technology is a key element to bringing in tomorrow.

Many schools now have developed an affiliation with a company named "Zap-Me."

Zap-Me helps schools by donating about 20 free computers to them, with a slim price of having advertisements on these machines. With this extra addition of computers, students can no longer complain that they don't have a computer when the teacher asks for something to be typed.

Another big plus is that these computers come with the Internet, and all of the computers are networked onto a satellite.

I never thought the schools were in tune with today, but now at least they have the technology.

The one problem is, the teaching staff at the schools doesn't know a hard drive from a mouse pad. So when something is wrong with a computer, they can't do anything about it until they call someone to come and fix the problem.

My advice to people entering high school is, take advantage of being able to use these computers. You can come in on almost every day after school to work on something, or during one of your free periods.

There are plenty of computers to use, and if you have no other way of getting your reports typed up — or just going on the Internet — your school computers will always be there.

Danielle goes to pieces for *The Tattoo*



I am one of the newest members of *The Tattoo*. I joined less than a year ago and I have already had one of my articles published last month. I found out about *The Tattoo* in school where it was posted in a classroom. The reason I joined the group is because I love to write and my teachers say I'm good at it.

I am one of the spunkiest members of the group — in fact, I got a certificate especially made for me, the

spunkiest newcomer. The members say I am funny and can get annoying but that's the kind of personality I have. I like to act, snowmobile, play with my friends, and play baseball. When I grow up, I want to graduate from college, become a veterinarian and be one of the first women to play on a women's only baseball team.

— **Danielle Letourneau**
Letourneau is an eighth grade student at Chippens Hill Middle School.