

THE TATTOO

BRISTOL PRESS

MAKING A PERMANENT IMPRESSION SINCE 1994

VOLUME 9 No. 2

Freshman traumas on the second day

By KATIE JORDAN
The Tattoo

"Everyone's a little worried the first day of high school."

Yeah, they told us: On the first day everyone's confused; everyone's shy; everyone loses something vitally important, whether it's their schedule or themselves.

Basically, the first day of freshman year is an embarrassment waiting to happen.

Yeah, well. They should have warned me about the second day.

I don't mean to say that I didn't get lost, say something stupid, and generally make a fool of myself on the first day. I did.

But somehow I thought maybe the second day wouldn't be so overwhelming. I thought I might miraculously not get lost. I thought it would just generally go better.

I thought wrong.

Oh, it started out all right. I asked a teacher if we were supposed to go to homeroom today and they told me no. So I ended up in the right place, to begin with.

Notebook

In fact, drama class went well, too. I made it there in time and had no problems except

deciphering the seating chart.

Did you ever hear the phrase "the calm before the storm?"

So drama was over, and I'd had a blast. Unfortunately, gym was next. I don't like gym, even when I know all we're going to do is get handed papers about grading systems and make-up work. I think it might have something to do with bad experiences as a child, or my complete lack of physical ability.

So it would have been bad enough going to gym class if I'd known where it was - which, of course, I didn't.

I was lucky to meet a friend of mine in the hall who was also headed to gym. She wasn't sure where it was either, but between us we basically decided - or guessed - that it was somewhere down the hall. I figured that if we were wrong, the gym was big enough that we'd find it eventually.

But after some walking and a lot of guesswork, I decided not to test that theory. So I did the only thing to do in the face of a crisis: ask someone who knows what the heck they're doing.

So I called out to the nearest person in a suit, "Uh, excuse me, Mr. Teacher Man?" Yes, in the face of crisis, I always know just what to say.

"Yes, Miss Student Girl?" he replied. I'm not sure whether he was annoyed or amused, but as he's not one of my teachers, it didn't really matter.

"Um, do you know where the gym is?" No, Katie, no he doesn't. He's only been working here for years.

Well, he told us where to go and we made it into the gym just in time to sit on the bleachers for 10 minutes waiting for the teachers to arrive. Thank goodness.

After a long speech about gym clothes, make-up classes, participation and such, we got to look around in the locker rooms and the torture chamber - uh, I mean the weight room, yeah ... right.

Then it was off to my next class, English. I was going to use my best strategy for not getting lost: follow somebody who knows where the heck they're going.

Unfortunately, the crowds at Eastern are huge, and I couldn't find anyone to follow. So I was on my own. It was time for me to test myself.

I failed miserably.

I found stairs, after a little hunting, and I was headed in the right direction. I thought.

That was before I jumped up and down to see some room numbers over the crowd. No, that didn't seem right at all. I decided to backtrack and see if that was the right way.

It was. No, wait. It wasn't. Or was it?

I was confused, so I kept walking. I figured, if I went around in a full circle I'd run into the room eventually, unless I was on the wrong floor, which really wouldn't have surprised me.

Nope, I found it. After the bell rang.

"You have the first lunch wave, so you can just go down to the cafeteria," said the teacher. Great. And after I went all the way around the school to get here.

So I dropped my bag on an empty desk and went on downstairs again. And no, I didn't have any trouble finding the cafeteria. There were two other people going there ahead of me.

So I got in the lunch line behind another friend of mine, and started to tell him how badly my day was going so far.

Then I realized that I left my lunch money upstairs in my backpack. Some people would rather go upstairs to get their money than not eat lunch. But I wasn't going to go all the way back there now, especially since I wouldn't go without a meal.

After all, I had a mint. And I did find a table to sit at with my friends, so lunch wasn't a total bust.

Then I had to go back to class, this time with a group. Together we found the stairs and went up.

And then I told them which way to go. Why? I honestly don't know. Maybe I was possessed by mischievous demon. Or maybe I'm just a complete and total idiot.

Anyway, you can predict what happened. We had to wander around the school before we found our room. After which I promptly told the others never to listen to me again.

English was alright, too. We did a few activities, as opposed to listening to the teacher drone on about the same stuff we'd already heard a million times. It was a nice change.

Then we went to history, where the teacher discussed all kinds of things, from plays to Europe to the weather. It started to rain right before school let out.

So I marched soggly along to find my mother's car in the packed parking lot. Good luck.

Time to join

If you like to write, take photos or draw cartoons, *The Tattoo* - which offers the best teen journalism anywhere - may be the place for you to shine. We welcome all enthusiastic teenagers, and now is the perfect time to join us.

If you are interested in finding out more, take the bold step of calling advisors Jackie Majerus or Steve Collins, or, send us an email at majerus-collins@attbi.com.

Our teens learn how to interview and write and win awards and scholarships while they're at it. They also make friends and have a great time along the way, so don't delay, act now!

Lines at the doc are as painful as the shot

By JOE KEO
The Tattoo

As a stream of youngsters poured through the doors of Dr. Arthur Blumer, clutching blue and yellow forms for mandatory school physicals, the Bristol pediatrician paced grumpily from one to the next.

Dozens and dozens of anxious students filed in hoping to get their forms finished before school started.

In late summer, parents and kids rush into the nearest doctor's office to complete the required physical exams and immunizations.

So many wait to the last minute that chaos breaks out.

At Personal Care Pediatrics in Bristol, where Blumer works, it gets crazy with the cries of babies, screams of children getting shots and the groans of irritated staff members. And that's not even taking into account the noise of the road construction out front on Farmington Avenue.

Office manager Chickie Friday and her staff deal with the same hectic atmosphere every summer.

"We try to be our cheerful selves," Friday said, and added that the office tries "to accom-

modate as many students as possible."

Even though it makes her job hard, incoming students getting physicals so they can play sports are a good sign.

"Kids doing sports keeps them out of trouble," Friday said.

All sorts of shots for hepatitis B, chicken pox, tetanus, measles, mumps and more are required for an incoming student before the new school year begins.

Younger children are often hesitant about going to the doctor's office, with the infamous needle fear always a factor.

For teens, it's just another thing to get done before going back to school.

With such things to be done as buying new school clothes (the latest trends, of course,) purchasing a massive list of required schools supplies, there seems to be little time for many to squeeze in the important check-up.

To comply with state law, physicals and immunization updates are required for kindergartners, entering middle schoolers and midway through high school.

With this, students must have a health assessment

record form, the blue form, for their physician or pediatrician to fill out.

If a student wants to participate in an extracurricular sport, a yellow form is necessary.

It must be issued before June 1.

With all these different colored forms and a bunch of patients clutching them, doctors' offices all over the state are swamped in the days before the start of school by crowds of annoying kids desperate to get their checkups done so they can enjoy the few days left before they return to class.

Biker's Edge pedals to Rt. 6

By JOE KEO
The Tattoo

After almost three decades on North Main Street, the Biker's Edge is on the move soon to a new location on Farmington Avenue.

Ed Bogun, the manager and salesperson at the popular bicycle shop, said that moving to the site of the old Redman Dairy is a good idea

because there's more traffic there - and that means more customers that can bring in more money. "Gotta get your name out while people are driving past," Bogun said.

The store started life as Kasey's Sporting Goods back in 1972, but for the last 18 years it has been known as Biker's Edge and kept its focus on bicycles and related equipment. In recent years, the shop has been the buzz for all BMX and related needs. It's a hit with young riders.

Selling bicycles for all sorts of riders, the shop has been

growing so rapidly that it needs more space.

"We don't have enough room, enough storage, we've tried to expand as much as possible," Bogun said.

Boxed into an old downtown retail space, Biker's Edge had to look elsewhere for a new site.

It found one a little west of the intersection of Jerome and

Farmington avenues, where a crumbling dairy building stood until this year.

Construction has been proceeding rapidly and the bike shop may move as early as October.

Bogun said that "everybody's thrilled" about the change in location and his customers say it's "the best thing to do."

The kids who shop there said the downtown scene isn't going anywhere and the decision by Biker's Edge to get out was a smart one.

The new property will have a bigger parking lot, which is more attractive to customers than trying to find a spot along North Main Street.



Danielle Letourneau / The Tattoo

Tom Baranowski, a senior at Bristol Eastern High School, checks out the goods at Biker's Edge on North Main Street.

On Route 6, more people from Bristol and from out-of-town will have easy access to the shop.

Bogun said he is excited about the new building.

"There will be a greater selection of bikes, better displays and more recognition" in the community for the long-

established business, he said.

So within a couple of months, bikers will have to pedal their cranks away from downtown and instead steer through all the traffic on Farmington Avenue.

But customers will gladly do it.

Canadians ponder Sept. 11

By NASRA AIDARUS
The Tattoo

SCARBOROUGH, Ontario - As time passes since the horrible day that the once-all-mighty World Trade Center fell in a cloud of debris, the memory and grief of Sept. 11 lingers and its lessons remain unclear.

"The rubble, while monumental, is not nearly as much as one would expect from the size of the buildings. Much of what had been the Twin Towers is now simply dust," said Donna Benson, a school principal from Scarborough, in the Canadian province of Ontario.

"Although many tragedies occur in the world on a daily basis, the incident of 9-11 traumatized America and the world," said 14-year-old Kyle Lang, also from Scarborough.

"I think many people were stunned because they weren't educated about cur-

rent world events," he said. "Many didn't know what was going on in India or the Middle East and until 9-11 many couldn't relate to their sorrow."

Lang said the atmosphere after the terror attacks grew more intense as the focus of the world's wrath became Osama bin Laden, the leader of al Qaeda.

"The actions taken towards the U.S." by the terrorists "weren't necessary," said Fathiya Al-Mahdaly, a Scarborough nurse.

"If Osama tried to create peace in his country, he obviously failed," she said.

"He cannot try to bring peace in on part of the world, cause havoc in another and expect nothing back," Al-Mahdaly said.

Bin Laden, she said, is "doing all the things he says is wrong. He uses Islam as his backup when Islam has nothing to do with it."

"Personally, I don't think what Bin Laden did was correct," said 13-year-old Mohamed Al-Mahdaly of Scarborough, but

"he's not all evil."

"He was raised in an environment where he learned that declaring a holy war was a loyal thing to do in the name of Islam," he said. "Some may argue it is and, yet, others may argue it isn't."

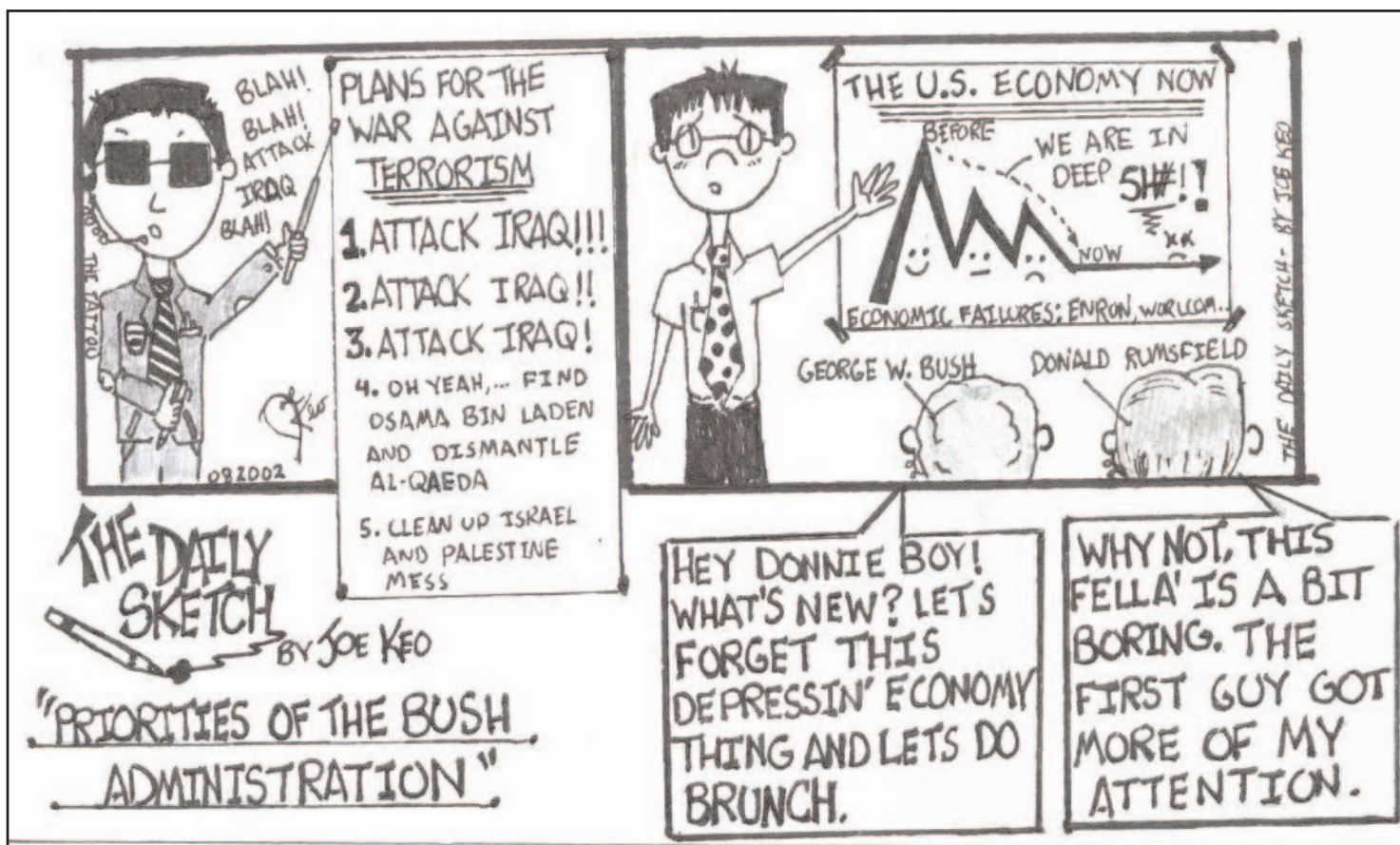
Bin Laden "supported what he believed in and embraced it," he said.

"I realize his actions were wrong, but he believed it was right," Mohamed Al-Mahdaly said.

Benson said the attacks demonstrate that "peace is not just a word on the news, or a prayer on a Peace Pole."

"It is an action you choose every time you demonstrate respect for those around you who are different in culture, religion, race, gender and your community," she said.

"Nothing is more indispensable to a community than its commitment to tolerance, humanity and the peaceful resolution of differences," Benson said.



Joe Keo / The Tattoo