

# THE TATTOO

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## Hopes up for skatepark

By **JOE KEO**  
The Tattoo

Bristol Eastern High School sophomore Kevin Rushlow said he really wants the city to build a skatepark.

He said he's tired of being "hassled by police" while skateboarding.

But where is he or the hundreds of other young skateboarders supposed to go? "It's pretty dumb because they kick us out of places that we skate," said John Munn, another Eastern sophomore.

"We skate there because we don't have any where else to skate," he said.

Perhaps, though, that will change soon. The city recently discovered an extra \$145,000 that Mayor Frank Nicastro and some other city leaders are hoping to use to build the proposed skatepark, which was put on hold this fall when money ran short.

Nicastro said the project should move ahead now.

"The children of Bristol deserve no less," he said. "I have said all along that we should have one [skatepark]."

But some remain hesitant. Chris Ziogas, a Board of Finance member, said at a recent meeting that perhaps the additional money should be used to help cover a cost overrun on the proposed youth and family conference center on High Street.

To complete that project, the city will have to pony up about \$350,000 more than

it anticipated.

The finance board, which meets Nov. 26 at City Hall, will consider both ideas and perhaps make a decision about the skatepark's future.

Nicastro said he's feeling confident. He said he believes the project will gain the panel's approval.

The mayor has been a strong supporter of the \$125,000 skatepark project and has

### Make your voice heard on the skatepark issue

Want your voice to count? The finance board meeting is open to the public. It is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 26 in the City Council chambers on the first floor of City Hall. The meetings rarely last more than 90 minutes.

fought and pushed for it many times when the plan was down in the dumps.

Preparation is underway for the skatepark if it's given a thumbs up by the nine-person finance board. The mayor is one of the nine people on the panel.

Park officials are looking at possible locations for the park.

Some possibilities include putting it off Lake Avenue or on Chippens Hill or Page Park.

Officials haven't decided whether they will charge for use of the skatepark if it is built next year.

Nicastro said the issue of a fee for the use of the park hasn't yet been figured out yet.

But, he said, "if we had a fee, it would be minimal, minimal."

The skatepark's hours are another issue that officials have to consider.

One thing's for sure, there won't be any kids skating around at 1 a.m. there.

If the park is built next spring, as the mayor and park commissioners hope, there will no doubt remain an excess mass of bikers, skateboarders and bladers riding around the town.

Former Mayor William Stortz said the city should consider a second skatepark since not everyone will be close by if only one is put up.

With transportation and traffic problems to consider, Stortz said, a second park would be necessary to balance the accessibility of the parks to the city's youth. He said it "might be safer."

Putting in a second skatepark would double the cost of the project and Nicastro said that's not in the cards now.

He said it would be better to get one and then consider whether to build another one.

So if all things go well with the finance board, Bristol's young people can look forward to having their own skatepark by next summer.

## Friends gather, mourn 'Gooche'

By **MIKE NGUYEN and JOE KEO**  
The Tattoo

Surrounded by a group of friends and family on the front steps of Dupont Funeral Home recently, Lanita Thomas couldn't remember even one bad moment with her murdered younger brother.

"Every memory was a good memory. There wasn't a bad memory with him," Thomas said.

Thomas and hundreds of



Anthony "Gooche" Thomas

friends, family and classmates of her brother, Anthony "Gooche" Thomas, gathered to mourn Thomas.

He died of a single stab wound inflicted during an Oct. 11 fight at a party at the Sunnydale Avenue home of Nicole Bosse, an 18-year-old Bristol Central High School senior.

A former Bristol Eastern High School student, 24-year-old Kamani Barrett, is charged with killing Thomas. His family says he acted in self-defense.

Thomas' friends and family members said Thomas intervened to break up an argument between Barrett and Matt Myers, another Central student.

Thomas was remembered by many for standing up for people in distress.

"That was my chillin' partner. He was my bodyguard. Everywhere I went, there he was," Lanita Thomas said.

Samantha and Joyce McLellan, cousins of the Thomas', remembered his basketball games at the Racquet Club, winter snowball fights, his big laugh and "his big afro."

"He was the nicest guy," said Samantha McLellan. "He was a role model to everyone."

Mark Paparello, a sophomore at Central, said he was glad to see the huge turnout for Thomas at his wake, but was disappointed it took something so tragic to make people appreciate him.

"It doesn't feel the same going back to class without him, not at all," Paparello said.

According to Paparello, an argument over a dent in a car sparked Thomas' stabbing. The dispute between Barrett and Myers happened in Bosse's garage while her parents were out of town.

The cousins said that when Barrett hit Myers with the butt of a butter knife, Thomas tried to intervene.

McLellan, who was attended the party, said Thomas hit Barrett with a broomstick in hopes of breaking up the fight, but was stabbed in the lungs.

Barrett's family has said that the accused murderer acted in self-defense.

For his friends and family, Thomas' death leaves a deep sadness.

"It's going to be hard to forget him," Jose Galindo, a senior at Central, said. "He was a

big dude. I can't see the big dude anymore."

Fawn Newbury, a sophomore at Central, echoed the sentiment.

"He would've done anything for anyone," Newbury said. "He could be in the worst mood and still walk up to somebody and hug a person that was upset."

Newbury said she and Thomas were close friends who sat together at lunch everyday.

In tears, she said, "He died a hero."

**"There wasn't a bad memory with him."**  
-- Lanita Thomas, sister of Anthony 'Gooche' Thomas

## Band, chorus bound for Boston

By **SARA GREENE**  
The Tattoo

Every year, April vacation brings a new destination to music students at Bristol Eastern High School.

The band and chorus embark on a field trip each spring break, traveling out of state for three days, performing and generally having a great time.

Band director Brian Kelly described the field trip as, "an educational, bonding, and performing experience." Each music field trip combines all these aspects to give students a weekend adventure that they wait impatiently for all year.

No matter the destination, students say they have a great time every year.

Trumpet player Scott Garlick, a sophomore, is a big fan of the annual trip.

Last year's journey to Niagara Falls, Canada and Toronto was "loads of fun and we all got the chance to go to many interesting places," Garlick said.

The music department also recently traveled to Rhode Island. "I have a good time every year, it brings the best parts of school on the road," said junior Sarah Arnone, a clarinet player.

This year the group will spend the weekend performing – and enjoying themselves – in Boston.

Although the activities during the trip are still up in the air, the announcement of the trip delighted students in the department.

During the trip, students perform at many schools.

"We perform for other schools who might not have as good a music department," said Kelly. "Exceptional programs like we have here at Eastern are not the norm."

Band president Mike Georgeon said the music field trips are a

great experience for high school students.

"Music field trips are a great way for students to bond together and grow musically," Georgeon said.

Each of the programs in the school's music department has a moment to shine on each trip.

The concert band, jazz band, chorus, madrigals, and Strawberry Fields singers showcase their talent on these trips yearly.

The music field trip is not all performances.

Students get a schedule loaded with activities, including stops at gift shops, restaurants, and attending special events.

Last year in Niagara Falls, students toured the Falls, watched the musical "The Lion King," and ate a fancy dinner while watching a Medieval jousting tournament.

"The bonding the kids experience on the buses or in the hotel rooms brings them closer together after the trip," Kelly said.

Even the students feel the music field trip is an important life experience.

"So much happens each year, we have a good time," said Maureen Giblin, the band vice president.

Mishaps are just part of the trip, according to Giblin. "Kids get sick," Giblin said. "Midnight runs to the hospital are all part of the experience."

Band and choral directors are now working hard to choose activities the music students will take part in on the trip to Boston.

Meanwhile, one detail lingers: money. The trip costs close to \$300 per pupil.

Besides practicing their scales and concert numbers, music students are working hard selling pies, chocolates, scarves, jackets, and flowers to raise money for the trip.

## The agony of the college essay

By **MIKE NGUYEN**  
The Tattoo

When did anyone care how long my parents have been a permanent resident of Connecticut? Well, apparently UConn does.

I'm caught in that uber-stressful stage in most high school seniors' lives called "Applying to College."

There's that confusing task of deciding whether you should begin your insanity two months early and apply for early decision to your childhood dream school.

And there's filing through all those college viewbooks you've gotten that all look the same at around midnight.

But the worst, yet critical, task of getting into college is applying.

First, you have to request an application from all the colleges you're interested in, which means filling out dozens of online forms, or making calls to admissions offices, all of whom request the same old thing: your name, address, social security (optional), and major of choice, to name just a few.

Some colleges are kind enough to send you an application without even asking, but I'm always wary of schools that desperate.

And after three or four weeks, you get these large envelopes that never fit in your mailbox correctly from the colleges you picked out.

Sometimes, they'll send you two or three of the same oversized paper package, because admission offices don't bother to erase your many impatient attempts at re-requesting or your college visits.

Well, you now have your application, or maybe you don't, because your request is still rotting on the admissions computer, but let's assume you do.

Inside each application is the same hassle you went through to get your form in the first place.

You'll need yet again to provide your name, your address, your major of choice, and so forth.

But added to the same repetitive stuff you've been filling out all summer and fall, are more useless if not annoying questions. They need to know your SAT scores, your parents' names, any alumni, your (lack of) participation in school and out of school, awards, essays, recommendations. They're all there.

Sure, they're crucial, but for the less

**Senior journal**  
An ongoing series about life as a high school senior

organized of seniors, applying means rummaging through your messy room looking for test result sheets, certificates, and medals to brighten up your resume.

This is before you realize your school keeps track of everything that has happened to you in school.

And, that you'll need to probably pay money to send your SAT scores out to colleges that you haven't already, because it's not enough for admissions to take your word for it in the application.

Then there's those recommendation letters you'll need to get from your teachers.

It's tragic payback if you have spared no teachers in your relentless tomfoolery. If you still can be nice or at least tolerable to at least one teacher.

Be prepared though, because they're going to need a list of your activities, awards, and other accomplishments, which means you'll have to rummage first, ask later.

Oh, and those horrible essays.

There's those vague prompts that ask you to write anything about yourself, although you know they're looking for that stage in your life where you grew up and became a mature, responsible adult who can write with good grammar, which of

course never happened.

Or maybe they'll have those specific questions that deal with your "life's goals" or "page 271 in your unpublished autobiography" or "the person who's influenced you the most."

In reality, your worldly topic is how cool Amsterdam is because they legalized marijuana, or how on page 271, you'd probably talk about how you hooked up with your best friend's girlfriend, or that the most influential person in your life is your drinking buddy.

But of course, we all write about how we want to become president of the United States, or how we dealt with when we discovered the world isn't filled with white teenagers, or how Jack Kerouac fits into your beatnik life.

Eventually, it's that false image of yourself that colleges love to reject.

But, hey, something is better than nothing, which is what you've done all through high school.

Once your piles of papers are all filled out, there's one last hurdle: giving it to the guidance counselors.

There's only one person who has it worse off than you at this point – your counselor.

They'll take your applications and fix all your spelling mistakes, find and print out your transcript and list of activities, write their own letter of recommendation, fill out their own forms, and then have the task of mailing an application to California from Connecticut in two days or less.

God forbid high school procrastinators would change their ways in their senior year and submit their application way before deadline. That'd be unnatural.

After you've done all you can, I assume you wait in total agony to find out whether you really had all the right stuff for that dream school, or any of the schools you filled in applications for.

I wouldn't know, as it hasn't happened yet, but you'll hear from me when it does.



Katie Jordan / The Tattoo