

# THE TATTOO

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## When the college envelope is thin

By ELIZABETH WALLE  
The Tattoo

I wasn't expecting the letter until Saturday. Since they said on the website that they were *sending* the letters that Wednesday, I figured it would take a few days to get to my house in Maryland. So when I checked our mailbox that day, I was faintly hopeful but I didn't expect to find anything. But somehow there it was, hidden between a booklet of coupons, a phone bill, and about a dozen Christmas cards.

I almost missed it, it was so small, but it was hard to overlook the blue "Office Of Undergraduate Admissions" insignia.

God, it was thin.

Everyone always tells you that thick letter vs. thin letter thing isn't true, but this barely felt like one slip of paper.

I could see my dad sitting outside in the pickup truck through the raindrops on the windowpane.

I knew he was waiting, but I couldn't bring myself to open it. Finally, I ripped through the seal and unfolded the paper inside.

"Dear Ms. Walle, we regret to inform you ... blah, blah, blah ... admissions is very selective, good luck with your education."

The paper slipped from my fingers and noiselessly fell to the floor. I stood there, silent, suspended in the hallway, then shut the door.

My mind was blank. I wasn't sad, I wasn't even angry, I just jogged out to the car, dodging puddles and ducking under my raincoat.

My dad looked at me, but I didn't say anything so he drove on. "Are you all right?"

"I'm fine."

## senior journal

I almost missed it, it was so small, but it was hard to overlook the blue "Office Of Undergraduate Admissions."

Thousands more followed in its wake and suddenly I was shaking, first trying to stifle my sobs before giving way to open weeping. He rubbed my back and tried to say comforting things, but I made it quite clear that I had no desire to discuss it, so we continued the drive in silence.

Suddenly, my phone rang, blaring into the silence. I glanced at it and saw the name "Amy" bopping across the screen in blue letters. My heart sank; I knew exactly what was coming.

I cleared my throat and flipped open the phone. "Hey!"

"Guess what?"

"What?"

"I got in! I got in!"

"Really?"

"Yeah, I just got the email! I'm so excited!"

"Oh my god! That's so awesome, Amy! Did you tell your parents!"

"My mom. She's so excited. Oh god, this is going to be the best Christmas break! I'm into college! I'm in! I don't have to fill out any more applications or worry about it, I'm in!"

"I'm so happy for you!" I gritted my teeth.

"I'm sorry, you're still waiting, I know this isn't nice of me since you still haven't found out, but I'm just so excited!"

"No, Amy, it's fine ... it's great, you should be happy!"

"Okay, well I have to call my dad, but let me know as soon as you hear, 'k?"

"First thing!"

"K, love you, bye!"

Before I could respond, she hung up and I flung my cell phone back into my purse and leaned my head against the window.

I could see my dad struggling to say something.

"Did she—"

"I don't want to talk about it," I snapped, closing my eyes.

How could this be happening? I switched on the radio and tried not to think about it, but my hands curled into fists of fury and I couldn't open my eyes for fear of losing every drop of water in my body through tear ducts.

So I sat, and I cursed myself for not working harder. I cursed them for rejecting me. I cursed my college counselor for not trying hard enough, and we drove. And we drove some more.

I forgot where we were going, but gradually my hands relaxed, my breathing calmed, and my tears dried, leaving only blotchy skin and puffy eyes to remember them. When I got home that night, I burned the letter, turned on my laptop, and started to fill out applications.

I turned away and tried to focus on something, but it was all a blur. Was I crying or was it just the rain?

The car turned out onto Wisconsin Avenue and we sat at a stoplight, a blob of ruby melting into darkening sky. He looked at me.

"Did you just get some news?" I nodded, and as I did, a single tear slipped past the reservoir of my eyelid and streaked down my cheek.

## Bands to battle at teen day

By RACHEL GLOGOWSKI  
The Tattoo

A battle of the bands, prom dress swap and other activities are all planned for a free upcoming event for area teenagers.

High school students in private bands will take part in What's Up, a teen day scheduled for Monday, Feb. 20 at the Elmwood Community Center in West Hartford.

Organizers have many different activities planned for the event, which will run from noon to 4 p.m. and is open to high school students from the area.

"There will be a videogame tournament and an open gym," said Susan Hansen, a coordinator of the event. "We will have food and prizes, like passes to an ice skating rink, coupons and gift certificates, and a CD/MP3 player." Billiards and ping-pong tables will be set up as well.

But possibly one of the most interesting events will be the prom dress swap.

Before the event, girls are encouraged to donate their previously worn formal dresses for the swap.

During What's Up, they'll be able to browse through the donated dresses and take one home for \$10.

The idea is that girls will swap a few dollars for the dress of their dreams.

"Basically, girls try on dresses until they've found the perfect one," said

Hansen, "and they only cost \$10."

Another coordinator, Conard High School student activities director Penni Grigoraitis, said, "No girl who wants a dress will be turned away for lack of money."

The money made from the prom dress swap will go directly to the West Hartford Town That Cares fund, which is associated with the town's social service department. The fund supports anyone who might benefit from the aid, such as the elderly or low-income families.

"We do know that the money is going to a good cause," said Hansen.

Members of the West Hartford Teen Task Force organized What's Up, or the West Hartford Area Teen Students Ultimate Party.

The Teen Task Force is an organization that is based in West Hartford. Members are associated with certain teen and student-oriented groups, such as the town's high schools, family and community centers, and the public library.

"The initial goal (of the Teen Task Force) was to establish a teen center in West Hartford where kids would have a place to go to hang out," said Grigoraitis, a member of the task force.

It proved to be a success, as the group eventually established a teen center at the Elmwood Community Center.

Last spring, the group decided to resurrect the teen day.

Hansen, a task force member who works in teen services at the West Hartford Public Library, said there used to be a teen day several years ago, but it stopped.

Task force members decided to try it again.

The coordinators of What's Up are aiming for a successful day.

"We're hoping for wonderful attendance, and that teens will come and say 'Oh, this was fun,'" Hansen said. "We're hoping to do it next year. If we get 100 kids, then we'll consider it a success."

What's Up, held on the first day of winter break for many area students, is free to all public and private high school students in West Hartford and nearby towns.

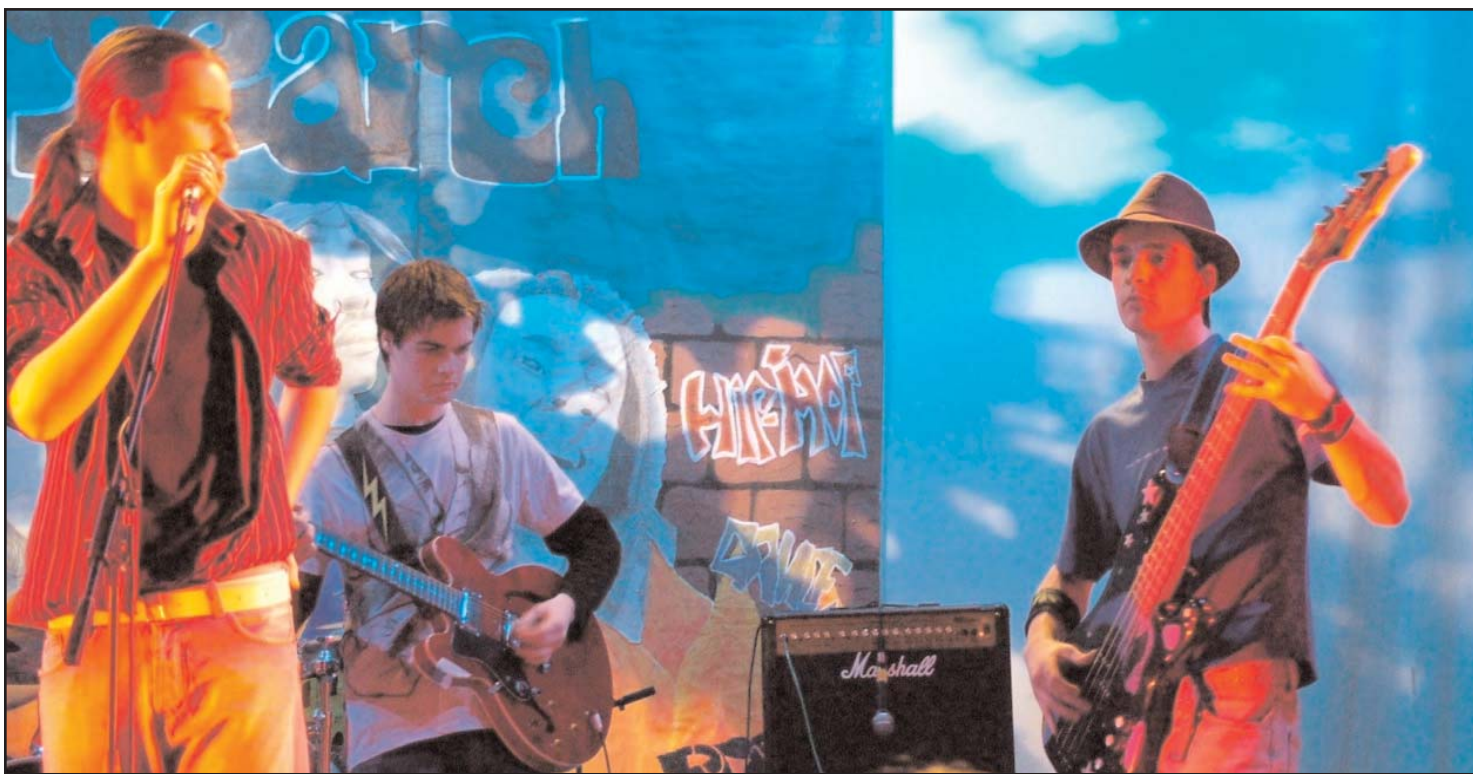
It'll be held at the Elmwood Community Center at 1106 New Britain Ave., West Hartford.

Anyone interested in donating a dress can contact Grigoraitis at 231-5082, Hansen at 561-6996 or Cory McGann, an organizer from Hall High School, at 232-4561.

Organizers are collecting donated dresses until February 10.

They can be dropped off in West Hartford at Conard High School, Hall High School, or the Elmwood Community Center.

## Rockin' in Dublin



Niamh NI Mhaolleoin / The Tattoo

Irish bands took to the stage at Castleknock Community College in Dublin last week. In the top photo are sixth year students Jeff Dorrity, Kyle Goslin and Sean McEntaggert playing "Sweet Home Alabama." In the photo above is sixth year student Paul Blake playing, "Karma Police" and in the photo at left are fifth year students Ian Plunkett and Des Ward, performing "Wicked Games."

## English youth visit Bristol

By MOLLY HORAN  
The Tattoo

Choral students at Bristol Eastern High School will be playing host to a group of teen vocalists from Bristol, England this week.

Michael Coderre, Eastern's choir director, said 36 students and five chaperones from England will be crossing the Atlantic to sing with their Bristol counterparts in Connecticut.

The English students will arrive Friday and will perform in a 7 p.m. concert Saturday in Eastern's auditorium.

The show will also include Eastern's 20-member madrigal singers, performing with the English choir and alone, said Coderre.

The concert is free and open to the public, he said.

On Sunday morning, they'll sing at a 10 a.m. service at Asbury United Methodist

Church at 90 Church Ave., Forestville. The church service is also open to the public, Asbury officials said.

According to Coderre, the English students range in age from 12 to 17 and attend two schools. The boys will be coming from Queen Elizabeth's Hospital in Bristol, England, and the girls from The Red Maids' School in a Bristol, England suburb, Westbury-on-Trym.

Bristol is the group's first stop in the United States, according to Coderre. He said the British schools are very old.

According to the Queen Elizabeth's Hospital school website, the students will be traveling on during their half-term break.

Besides visiting Bristol, Conn., students on the tour will also visit Guilford, Conn. and Ipswich, Mass.

They'll be performing a wide variety of choral and instru-

mental numbers, "from classical sacred music to Lennon & McCartney," the website says.

The school site said that both Queen Elizabeth's Hospital and The Red Maids' School have a "strong musical tradition."

It's their third tour the two British schools have done together in recent years.

While in Connecticut, the English students will stay with Bristol Eastern chorus or band students, Coderre said, though a few will be staying with members of the Asbury United Methodist Church.

This isn't the first time that Bristol, England teens have visited Bristol, Connecticut, according to Coderre. He said there was a similar exchange with Bristol Eastern in the '80s.

This time, the English schools contacted the Bristol Rotary Club to see if a visit was possible, according to Coderre.

There are no immediate plans for Eastern students to visit Bristol, England, Coderre said, but he added, "That's the goal, ultimately, to reciprocate."

Coderre said the visiting students are excited to see snow covering the ground, as they live in a section of England too warm for snow to stick.

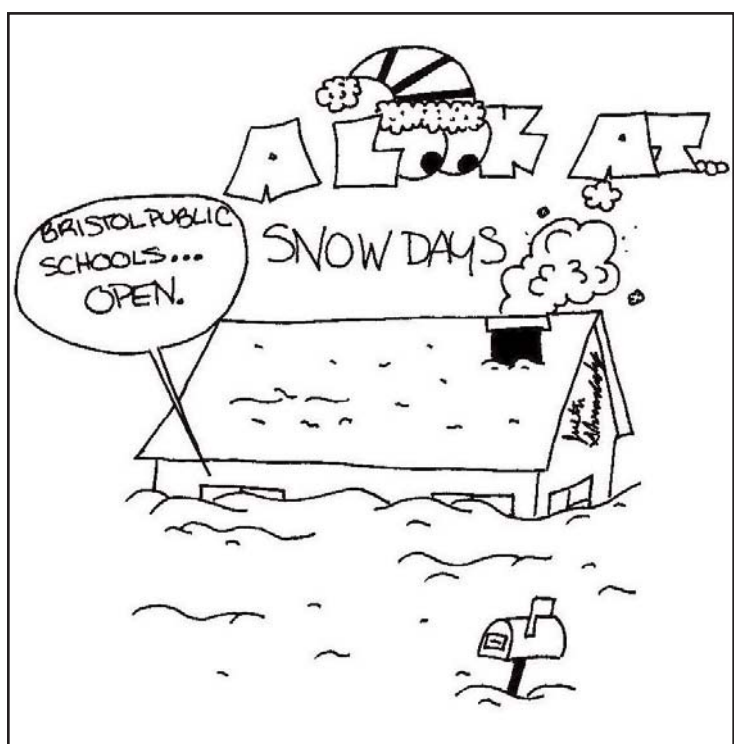
Whether Mother Nature will cooperate with snow for the English trip or not, Bristol Eastern music students are also eagerly anticipating the visit.

In recent weeks, choral students were scanning a catalog that held photos of the English musicians and exclaiming about what they saw.

Marcella Jalbert, a student at Eastern, said she hopes to make new friends.

Leyna Krauss voiced the opinion of many of the music students at Eastern.

"I just hope they have cool accents!" said Krauss.



Justin Skaradosky / The Tattoo

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