

# Speak up, it's your life!

## Encouraging the discouraged

When I was assigned an opinion column, it took me a moment to decide what I would tell the world (or at least my corner of it!) about. It just happens that I chose a subject that touches me personally.

Here's a sad truth that some people (especially the ones who are involved with it) won't want to admit to. You can't spend your life, even the early part of it like high school, lying down and taking whatever others dish

out. Even if those others are your parents or teachers. Now I'm not telling you to stand up in class and call your teacher a big meanie, and I'm not saying you should completely ignore what your parents say, but there comes a time when you have to stand up and say, "Enough is enough."

For example, in my own life I have let people (\*cough cough\* my parents), control everything I did. I was too afraid of doing something that would disappoint them. Finally, I got sick of it (and myself). I stood up and told my mother exactly what I wanted, just how much time I was willing to sacrifice (a lot!), and she stood right beside me. It took about a month of clearing schedules, but I got my temps. I'm now working on the license. I got what I wanted because I

was willing to stand up for it. That's all.

Here are some tips for those who want to learn to stand up for yourselves, and for what you want: First, compliment yourself. At least once a day. This raises confidence, which is

### The Truth Hurts

By Joanna DeSalvo



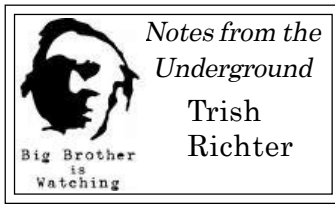
key in standing up for what you want. But be careful not to become to egotistical!

Second, don't be afraid. Keep telling yourself,

"I am brave; I can do what I want." Third, remember that it's your life. Even when people tell you that their choice is best remember that it's your choice you'll have to live with. However, if you agree with them, don't blow them off.

Finally, the big step. The giant leap for confidence, courage, and a happy life. Tell everyone. I don't mean people you don't know on the street (but hey, if that's what you want, why not?), but everyone whose been a part of that controlling machine. Now step back and let them absorb it all.

In my opinion, if you want something you have to stand up for it. Don't let anyone tell you that it's not worth it. So what?! It's *your* dream; it's *your* life. Why shouldn't you enjoy it?



Senior year has definitely been initiated rather rockily. *The Messenger* is now left in the hands of six frantic journalists, the lack of a stairwell has triggered hallway congestion and a daily race to beat the tardy bell, and a fond farewell has been addressed to another of our building's most brilliant minds.

This year's class of freshmen have not been given the pleasure (or mere experience, depending on the individual) of meeting social studies teacher Gail Weldon. Her personality and mind are quite contrary to her petite and compact external appearance. In my opinion, Ms. Weldon was the most broadminded and intelligent individual within the school. She is still the most intriguing individual that I've come across in my life. There aren't many people with whom it's possible to have a three hour conversation concerning Mark Twain's religious beliefs. Not only that, but we sat down and researched whether or not he published a document proclaiming his beliefs. Funny thing is, that document is now posted on my wall. You don't find many people in your life that are open to concepts such as that of the Matrix and existentialism, especially adults.

After I became aware of Ms. Weldon's accepting and

# Gone but not forgotten

## Social studies seraphim

### will be missed in many ways

broadminded tendencies, she became a frequent source of quotes for my articles. She was my method of inserting my own opinions toward issues without turning a news article into a column. As alike as we were in our thought processing and perceptions, she constantly managed to broaden my perspective by presenting numerous angles on issues that bothered me. She prevented me from becoming blind to many things, even the reasoning behind opposing arguments of my own opinions. Ms. Weldon helped me to grasp and better understand the mechanics of our world and society in general. We frequently discussed human nature, which often caused us to circle back to Mark Twain.

Another quality within Weldon which I highly respected was her morality and courage. Authority figures never seemed to intimidate her to the point of influencing her natural reaction to situations. She believed what she believed. No one tampered with that. Not only does this apply to authority figures, but to students and peers as well. Despite of the jeering and mocking that she often endured for her quirky predispositions, she never changed her ways. I'll never forget the day that she held up a cup in front of the class and asked, "How do I know that I'm

seeing the same glass that you are?" I grinned while the majority of the class scoffed and laughed. Comments such as this were what triggered me to linger after class.

Regardless of whether or not she actually had the time, she was someone that I could depend on if I needed to talk. Our conversations addressed worldly and local issues; past and present. When I first met her, I believed her to be rather one sided and slanted on her views, radical if you will. I came to realize quite the opposite. For that I thank her, she changed me into a much less blinded and ignorant person of the opposite outlook of my opinions.

As she told me, it's not as if she's gone for good, "You go where they need you." All the same, time spent in this building won't be the same for me. Running into her was a highlight and the comic relief of my day. Her goofy smile and ridiculous headset, audible through an entire floor of the school building, will be missed. I consider her to be a far stretch from merely a member of the staff. She's a friend, ally, teacher, mentor, and a fellow thinker. Like you've told me so many times, Ms. Weldon, keep fighting the good fight, and I hope to see you around.

# Driving school mayhem

## The ins and outs of terror

After a far too short summer break, everyone strolled into school on Wednesday morning showing off their new shoes, purses, clothes, haircuts, and anything else they could. But for some people, their favorite thing to show off was their driver's license. But what did these people have to go through to get their license? Was it really as hard as some people make it sound?

As summer began, I began driving school. Driving school was the worst part of my entire summer. I guess it wouldn't be that bad if there seemed to be a point in it. But considering all we did was sit there and watch the images on the television screen change while everyone had side conversations, it was entirely pointless. The instructor didn't tell people to stop talking; she sat there chatting with friends on her cell phone. The room quickly became louder than any sporting event I've ever attended.

I quickly became angry when people continually complained about how many times they had failed the test when they were the loudest people in the room who made no attempt pay attention.

In order to take the test for your license, you must complete 50 hours of driving with a parent or guardian,

pass the written test given to you at driving school, and then complete eight hours of in-car training with a certified instructor. I'm not sure which one I dreaded more, the in-cars or the class time. My first in-car began with my instructor calling me a spoiled brat; even if it was true, should you really say this to someone you met five minutes ago? Nevertheless, passing driving school was far too easy.

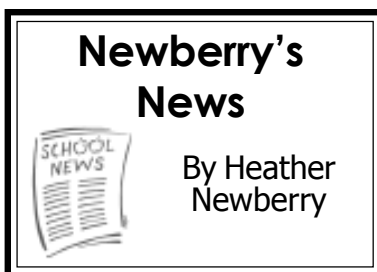
The questions on the written test are mostly common sense, so no wonder no one wants to pay attention during class. The main things people need to know about driving they typically learn from their parents. And the in-cars, even if you have an instructor that continually degrades you, are fairly simple also. My instructor seemed to be less aware of driving laws than some of the worst drivers I've ever met. How she became a certified instructor is a

good question.

When I think about the people who were in driving school the same time I was, I really don't want those people driving on the same road, or in the same state as me. If they

are that easily distracted in a classroom, it must be far worse when they are driving. Not only is this thought scary, but listening to some of the

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stories students told about their own driving experiences was worse. Some students talked about going 20 above the speed limit, talking on their cell phone while driving, and other various things. And yes, their parents were in the car with them. What good example setters.

I constantly hear adults complaining about reckless teen drivers. I understand that some people are simply immature and don't care how they drive, but instead of complaining about the drivers, how about we complain about the drivers education schools that these people attended. If the schools showed students they were serious and demanded the attention of students, then maybe the students would realize they should take driving seriously.

Instead, driving schools, or at least the one I attended, make everything seem like a joke. Even when watching a video about car crashes and other similar things, there was far too much laughter filling the room. So next time you see a bad driver, instead of calling them an idiot, why not ask them what driving school they went to, that way you can make sure you, your friends, or your child, doesn't go to the same one.

# Perilous preseason football: a waste of time?

## This columnist says definitely yes

As any man should know, preseason football lasts for four weeks at the beginning of each season, three games and a bye week for each team. Some people may say preseason is necessary to get players into game shape and help them get used to playing a full four quarters at game speed. But in my opinion it is unnecessary, or at least a little excessive.

Every year during the preseason a starter on nearly every team sustains a severe injury, and this season has been no exception. In week one of the Bengals preseason, the team lost Kenny Irons for the season with a torn ACL.

Then the very next week against the New Orleans Saints, second year linebacker Eric Henderson will also miss the entire 2007-2008 season after he suffered a broken right wrist. Other season ending injuries from this preseason include, D.J Shockley of the Atlanta Falcons, New York Giant Michael Jennings, and Ebenezer Ekuban of the Denver Broncos.

That is five professional athletes missing an entire season of their short careers in games that have no effect on making the playoffs or their ultimate goal, the Super Bowl.

The point is that during the pre-

season too many players are getting hurt for no reason, the preseason means nothing to almost anyone. I say almost anyone because the only two people who care are Michael Vick

and Pacman Jones, and that is only so they can see who will have their job IF they can manage to stay out of trouble so they can play next season. So the least the NFL could do is

shorten preseason to only two games. In the 1970s the preseason was six weeks long, and then shortened to four weeks, now with athletes for the most part being in better game shape they don't need three games to get into the swing of things.

So I guess the good thing is that by the time the 2035-2036 preseason there will only be two excruciatingly boring games. If you are anything like me you don't waste your time watching the entire game, all you have to do watch the first series and after that everyone on the team you have never even heard of will be in the game and you can get on your computer to pick someone up in your fantasy draft because you just saw them run a 55-yard touchdown against the Houston Texans' second string defense. And if you do want to spend two and a half hours watching a useless football game, be my guest.

