

CATALYST

issue 03

America Comes Crawling Back to the British

Last night in a statement to the press president George dubbaya Bush announced that after it's many years of insolence the United States would concede power to it's rightful rulers in Great Britain. "I don't know what we were thinking, can you ever forgive us?" stated Bush in a plea for acceptance back into the United Kingdom. This shocking turn of events is thought to be the result of the past years of recession the United States. "Looking at my recent budget plans I realized that I really don't know what the hell I'm doing"

Bush told reporters, "all these numbers and symbols added with the red and the black, it all just looks like 'fuzzy math' to me." Much like the fable of the prodigal son, the United States broke away from it's home long ago and squandered all it's wealth. Bush now hopes that the motherland will accept it's lost child and allow us to return to "all the glory that is an absolute monarchy". When asked to comment on the Untied States behavior Prime Minister Tony Blair told the catalyst "those blokes have flipped their lid, we

haven't been an absolute monarchy for hundreds of years, we weren't even an absolute monarchy when those bloody Americans broke away in the first place. The last thing we need is 270 million overweight funny talking Americans polluting our pure British citizenship." Authorities are still unsure of how to proceed further. Rumors have surfaced of a bid by Iraq to take charge of the recently defunct United States.

via peter.

Logger Sit-In Continues

For the past two weeks, loggers from Pacific Northwest have been continuing their sit-in of Gloria Nelson's petunia garden.

"For too long we have sat around doing nothing!" cried Adolf Baskerville, their organizer. "We must take action, unite, and destroy this menace that threatens us all!"

Loggers all around the nation have detested Gloria Nelson's beautiful petunia gardens since their beginnings in the early 70s. They believe that Nelson is destroying the

logging potential of Washington State, a heavily forested prime logging community.

"Once we crush all of Washington's rainforests under our harsh heel of barren wasteland, where will we find more to obliterate?" remarked one of the sitters. "Nowhere! People like Gloria Nelson are bringing down America!"

America, well-known across the globe for its tireless pursuit of environmental destruction, is undoubtedly on the side of the logging com-

munity.

"Flowers? Trees? Give me good old carbon monoxide and concrete jungle gyms any day!" President Bush commented on the crisis. When told it should simply be "concrete jungle," he shrugged and attempted a witty comeback, which failed miserably.

Catalyst attempted to contact Mrs. Nelson herself, but she was too busy "helping" to "save" the "environment."

via soma.

Don't Be Late!

After years of determined administrators handing out referral after referral, sending countless numbers of students to ISS and after school suspension, Courtland High's tardy problems have still remained unsolved. This past year they even attempted a random school sweep program, locking the doors directly after the ringing of the bell, then corralling all the lagging students into the cafeteria to take a survey. Other deterrence measures taken by the school have been the restriction of driving privileges and the confiscating of student parking passes, but alas, nothing seems to be working.

A recent decision by the Spotsylvania County School Board, however, regarding tardies, may change this all together. The school board has just proposed a 2 step, Zero Tolerance Plan for the elimination of student tardiness.

Step one of this zero Tolerance Plan, is once again the confiscation of the student's parking pass. This would occur on the first offence, and this offence could be as mild as a student failing to be seated and having materials ready at the time of the bell. The restriction time has however been lessened for good measure, to maintain to the students that their school board does in fact have a soul. Students will be kept from driving, only for the morning of the offense. This means that when they arrive at

school late, they will not be able to go back in time and drive to school that morning again, they will however be allowed to drive home that afternoon, and every morning following the day of said offense. Tough, yet fair, lets move on.

The punishment for the second offense is where the board and administrators get a little out of control. The new law states, "Any student caught acting in said manner, in tardiness or any other means for lack of promptness for a second occasion, will be relieved to the authorities, and charged with "Tardy in Public" and capital offense punishable by death." Now this is where I think things get out of control. I can understand putting the student to death, because, personally, I have had enough of my fellow classmates being late, but do we really need to get the authorities involved? I think we should take it easy on the offenders. By being put to death, they are getting their "Just Dessert", but do they really need to leave this life with one more tally on their already saturated permanent record?

This reporter is just saying think about it School Board, that's all, otherwise I think you're doing a darn fine Job. Keep up the good work. And fellow classmates, I'll see you at 7:34, next year.

via welford.

are you a HOAX?

Are you a hoax? Are you actually completely non-existent although many others think that you are real? Use our practical and informative checklist to find out!

- I have never actually seen myself.
- I reside in Canada.
- I work at or frequent a Food Lion.
- I work at or frequent a Food Lion in Canada.
- I am an "integral" part of N.A.S.A.
- I am some sort of mythological creature/monster.

No Checks: You are not a hoax. Feel relieved.

Two Checks: You may soon become a hoax. Keep yours eyes open.

Three to Five Checks: You are almost certainly a hoax. Feel disturbed and very worried.

Six Checks or Greater: How is it possible that you are filling out this checklist? You are obviously not real.

via zaben.

DAMN THE MAN?

Fighting the power is a term that is thrown around a lot in school and in this magazine. But often, instead of living our lives normally, it seems that some people are hell bent on trying to find this "power" and destroying it. But I have a question to ask to all of those spending all of your time trying to find and overthrow this power : if you acknowledge the power, without it ever interfering, aren't you letting it oppress you? What I am saying is this; when we acknowledge a so-called "power" without it ever protruding into our path then this power has already beaten us.

But fear not, for there is a way in which we can fight these powers. I have learned that the best way is to just live freely. Don't hesitate to put a message out or dress a certain way. Don't worry about the powers that be, because when you look for trouble you will probably find it. Live your different lives and spread your different messages, without worrying about oppression, because if you are constantly preparing for oppression, you

are constantly living in it. And if you are constantly living in oppression then you are certainly not doing a very good job of "fighting the power."

via macy.



END OF THE WORLD .

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then god said "let there be light"; and there was light." And so on.

After 5 days, God decided that he would make something in his own image. He called it human. He made a male and a female, and he put them in a garden. You know the story. God gave these humans very interesting characteristics, even a few flaws. One of the worst flaws in all human existence is boredom. Boredom is both a flaw and a blessing. Because of boredom, we made things up. We called the things we made up "inventions". These inventions led to technology. Whenever we got bored with what we had, we made up something new. In the 1940's, humans got bored again. People who officially made up things called scientists decided to make something new to entertain the human race. They made a system that could transmit moving pictures to big black boxes, all over the world. They called it the television.

In the 1960's, the television was introduced to the average society. It was a smash success. People began to make things called "television shows", which had people called "tv idols" in it, and these tv idols became mass celebrities. As time went on, the television became a part of our lives. It was our friend, it was our teacher, it was our religion, and it was our government. It still is today.

My name is Rupert Angston. I am an average American. I live in a small town, I have a small little family, and we own a television. On October 12th 2000, a miracle happened. We have been waiting for this miracle for thousands of years. I feel obliged to write down my personal experience of this event, for future generations to read and cherish.

It seemed to be an average week, but it wasn't. It was a week many people (including myself) have been waiting for, for almost a year. It was season premiere week! That week was when all the shows that kept us going in life started a whole new season. Some people were looking forward to the Simpson's. Some were looking forward to watching a whole new season of Dawson's creek. But for me, I was anticipating the premiere of friends. Chandler and Monica were going to get married!

5:00 P.M. 3 hours to go. My wife Aurora was sorting her herbal remedies. She doesn't believe in medicine. She truly believes that all medicines given by doctors are sugar pills, and that they are just money hungry fools who have no sympathy for the sick. When she was little, her father went to the hospital to get his appendix taken out, but they made a terrible mistake and amputated his leg. Since then, she has hated doctors. My daughter Tori was talking to her lover, Jennifer on the telephone. I was first upset when I found out that Tori decided to be a lesbian, but I read in woman's world that many girls do it for attention (Don't ask me why I read woman's world).

My son Jonah locked himself in his room again. He put a sock on his door-handle, which signifies he wants privacy. The stupid kid thinks he is in college or something. But I give him his space. At first, I was annoyed with all his privacy issues, but I remember being a kid and wanting my parents not to barge into my room while I was smoking up or masturbating. God, I must be going through a midlife crisis. I must say, my family is a bit dysfunctional. We are never together. Aurora makes dinner, then goes to yoga. Tori goes out with Jennifer almost every night, and Jonah rarely leaves his room. But there is one thing that brings us together. Friends. Every Thursday, we watch friends together. Aurora doesn't have yoga on

Thursdays, Tori's girlfriend doesn't like Friends, and we won't let Jonah have a television in his room. Friends must be a miracle from God. This tradition has been going on since friends first appeared on TV. Nothing could stop us from watching it, or so we thought. 7:30 PM. This is when we start to congregate around the couch. It is my turn to hold the remote. Last year, a terrible fight was broken out over the remote. It resulted in a bloody nose and a broken finger. Since then, we have a weekly schedule of who holds the remote.

7:40 PM. Things finally start to get quiet. That human flaw boredom struck me, so I started flipping channels. Simpson's, M.A.SH, fox 10 evening news, Bush get caught with crack... again. In between all the channels, I hear my children yelping "stay there! I like that show!" "Ew that show sucks, change it!" I've learned to ignore them now.

7:55 PM. The moment we had been waiting for was so close. Will chandler and Monica get married? Will something happen to foil the plans? Ahh the tension was killing me.

7:56 P.M. 7:57 P.M. 7:58 P.M. 7:59 P.M. Then it appeared. The show of God! It felt like the world finally lit up again. Hearing the theme music and watching them dance in the fountain fills me with so much happiness. But, that happiness wouldn't stay. I was engulfed in every word, every footstep, and every move the actors made. I listened to every sentence, laughed at every joke, and cried when the audience said "aww". That had to have been the happiest moment of my 40 year long life.

Joey was about to say his classic line 'how you doin?' when something out of the ordinary happened. The screen started to get brighter and brighter. "Damn it all to hell, is someone sitting on the remote again?" I hollered. "Um... dad? The remote control is in your hand." Tori replied back, in a condescending manner.

END OF THE WORLD . continued...

"Well, then what are you doing to the T.V?!" I hollered, getting into a bit of a hissy fit. "Oh my goodness! Honey! Look at the screen!" Aurora cried.

I turned around, and I saw the strangest sight any man could see. The T.V was getting brighter and brighter, and little rays of light were shooting out of it. All of a sudden, everything went black. A light mist was emanating from the antennas. On the screen was a short man. His skin was black, yet white. His eyes seemed to shine like a rainbow. His hair was red, and he had a receding hairline. Then, this mysterious man spoke. "Hello. I bet you do not recognize me. You think you don't know who I am. It will all come clear soon. My name is, (in the distant background, I heard whispers of a mysterious voice saying 'Son! Stand up straighter! Smile more! You have to look perfect for your children!) Dad! I know! Ok, now where was I? Oh yes. You have been waiting for me for a very long time. Yes, you guessed it. My name is Jesus.

It's been a long time since I have visited you. I promised you I would come back, and I did. But you misunderstood a few things in the Bible. Ill show u! Everyone have his or her bibles ready? Ill show you the mistakes you made. Now, #1... in revelations what it really means is..."

"What the hell is this filth?" I cried and shut off the television. I turned around to see the reaction of the rest of my family, but they were gone. Tori was walking out the door, on her way to Jennifer's house. Aurora was in the kitchen meditating and burning incense, and Jonah was once again locked in his room. The one night my family had been waiting for was ruined, all because of the psycho man who thought he was Jesus! What I didn't know at the time, was that it was really Jesus after all. Every household on the planet had a similar reaction as we did. Every soul on earth turned off their television, in disgust. But we got what we deserved. The next morning, every T.V on the planet mysteriously exploded. The light that gave the world hope went out. Many people went into denial, staring at their broken television blankly for weeks. Some were so distraught that they had to be put in the mental hospital. And this, is what happened when Jesus finally came back for his children. "The grace of our lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

via jonny.

Senior Superlatives

So I saw the recent issue of the Courtland Chronicle Senior Edition and I happened to glance at the senior superlatives.

I thought about it and realized that half those categories were BS. So here I've inserted what I, with the help of some other people, think to be some better categories. Now these are probably BS too, but at least they're entertaining!

best Killian: Ed Yun

best four-square player: Soma

biggest slacker: Angelo Salerno

most run-down car: Jesse Morgan

Friel's favorite: Som"er"

most anti-popular: Aaron Williams

There was a tie for this next one, so we made a girl and guy winner

Craziest Hair: Dick McGrady and Melinda Wolfe

most truant: Nathan "Pancho" Boyette

Unabomber look-alike: Mike Westphal

biggest eyes: (unanimously) Mo Jones

best Stello: Ed Yun

most likely to be a porn star: Sean Donohu(g)e

most likely to be killed by his peers: (unanimously) Nick Byram

best kung-fu: Jen Stello

best Mrs. Dewey: Laura Soulsby

[and, ehrrm, y'know, its just courtland, y'know.. bear with us, non-courtland kids.]

via dick.

THE BEST YEARS OF OUR LIVES ?

So here we are, the final issue of Catalyst (hopefully just for the year) and many of us are moving on to a better place... post high school. Some have warned us, those of us that are going off to school, that we have to watch out for the horrors of freedom and make sure that we study hard for what lies ahead is more difficult than anything we've ever experienced. Some wish us luck with a pat and a chuckle talking of how we're entering the best portion of our lives. BUT still some remind us of the good times we've had and clue us in that the best time of our lives has just swept away with a little piece of paper they call a diploma. But are these really the best years of our lives?

Now I am not trying to judge this and tell everyone else how high school is, but I'm merely looking at the pros and cons, as I see it.

We remember with longing the simple days in Kindergarten when we were graded on creativity and citizenship, we often wish that things were so simple in high school. But in actuality life is simpler. In the "good ol' days," we used to walk down the halls with a finger to our

lip, but in high school we were allowed to socialize in the halls and even... (dramatic pause) be late to class! At lunch we were forced to sit with our class and keep a reasonable noise level. Not in high school! We can freely roam the lunch room and be as loud and rambunctious as we please. And creativity? Sure that's great to be graded on, if you've got it... but for those who like to color between the lines there's the endless number of "holes," to be filled in high school. These so-called horrible "holes," are really a blessing. They allow hundreds of people a year to pass through their high school career totally unnoticed, without causing a stir but still doing their job well. But what about those of us out there who do want to express our creativity? Well a teacher will gladly point us in the direction of the nearest hole we can fill to squelch that creativity. There's nothing out there except holes! Thus a catalyst is needed as a forum for free speech (now do you understand Ms. Lanceley?). Not to pick on Mrs. Friel but let us use her bridge building lab as an example. We each receive roughly a thousand toothpicks to make a bridge

that must hold 30 pounds of weight. Yay! Let the engineer/architect in us take over... but wait, the bridge must have 2 x 6 cm space underneath it. Fine, that's understandable, we need to keep people from cheating. Oh yeah the bridges must have two girders with cross hatching over top... no triple girders. Ok maybe she wants the bridges to be fair in that the crossbar isn't totally loaded and ready for weight. The girders must be 5 x 5 toothpicks. Aren't they all gonna look alike?

Friel: What are you doing Dick?

Dick: Building a girder.

Friel: No, no, no! You're doing it all wrong let me do it!

The social aspect of the high school life can also be fun and exciting. Everyday, just by showing up, we have a new chance to meet new people and see people who we've never seen before (even for those who've been here for 4 years). And when John and Janey break up, not to worry John, there's an endless sea of fishies out there. But then what if it's Janey's best friend? That's

continued in 6 pages

Murder Metal Rocks Area

With the rise of music among area regulars, one must notice the new music genre dubbed "Murder Metal." Combing death lyrics with ticker tape riffs and hideous on stage antics, this new sound has become the epitome of crime causing problems. I'd like to share a verse from a band known as 'Papa Roach':

"Cut my life into pieces, This is my last resort Suffocation, no breathing, Don't give a ****, If I cut my arm bleeding."

With such revolting words, I wonder how the industry did not put some sort of censorship on it. Here is some footage from an earlier inter-

view with a devoted "Murder Metal" music fanatic. "I want to kill everything around me. I want to grow up to be a lead singer just like Richard Punanni from DeathRules;" words from a teen who used to maintain a 4.0+ GPA. According to his parents, "He spends more time with that blasted guitar in his 'death chamber' as he calls it, then anywhere now. It really is frightening us."

Stressed parents, concerned friends, worried townfolk; this could only be the beginning. I might even go so far as to call this article a plea to all. Band names such as '911 Is For Sissies' and 'Lucifer Love' seem to attract the most

crowds. Spanky's owner Bob Johnson comments "They ripped down Spanky's wall during a local concert in our parking lot!" And there have been reports of weapons and drug paraphernalia around the concert areas. The parents despise it; the teens love it, so the battle might last for a while. I suggest forcing your kids to listen to John Denver or Cat Stevens. I know I surely will.

"...ride on the peace train."
- Cat Stevens

Don't do drugs. Don't do crime. Don't be you.

via stein.

Silver Out Of Land

Upon his totalitarian completion of Central Park, Carl D. Silver was shocked to discover no new land to develop on.

"I wanted to build a giant slip'n'slide amusement park in place of Route 3, but I was not able to allocate the required amount of jet-powered, monkey-navigated steamboats to

complete said task," commented Silver to a drunk, and quite possible insane, Scott King, owner of Cancer-D-Monium.

The Spotsylvania Board of Supervisors was also shocked at Silver's plight, as many of them will be forced out of their jobs. "When overcrowding doesn't exist in our area I have nothing to

complain apathetically about," reported Board member Daniel Estep. Comments from other members included "Damn!" and "...monkey navigated?!"

More as it unfolds.

via zaben.

Indie Press:

via soma.

a guide to the alternative high school press for those who think we can't do this, and those who want to do it, too.

can we really do this? isn't there some law against doing it at school? no, mes amis, and that's exactly what i'm going to fill you in on. this guide will fill you in on all of the hot topics that've been addressed to me by students, teachers, and administrators, a long with a few hints and tips that we've learned along the way.

but why?

freedom. only an independent newspaper can guarantee no censorship, a greater ability to be flexible, and a more student-oriented approach. for example, we wanted to put out the third issue one week after the second. could a school newspaper do that? no. we banded together, though, and worked til it was done. also, an underground paper is more diverse - we publish everything from rants to stories. long live freedom.

Supreme Court *Rules!*

our main source of legitimacy comes from supreme court cases involving censorship and free expression at schools. here's everything you need to know:

Tinker v. Des Moines: this case established that students "do not shed their [rights] at the schoolhouse gate", and lets us use our freedom of expression as much as we want as long as we do not "materially and substantially disrupt" the learning environment, or get in the way of the rights of other students or teachers.

Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier: this one said that schools could censor student-run publications as long as they had a reasonable reason to do it, but it loosened up on underground publications, by saying the school couldn't censor them at all. it also says that a school cannot prohibit an alternative newspaper, only place limits on the "time, manner, and place" in which it is distributed - and these restrictions cannot be aimed at destroying the paper, or else they are illegal.

Bethel v. Frasier : one day a kid decided to give a speech full of really explicit sexual metaphors, and he sure did get in trouble! this case set the precedent that what you can do cannot be indecent, but indecency depends on a few things....

Miller v. California : there are THREE criteria that must be filled before something, like profanity, can be considered obscene if :

a : *the work taken as a whole appeals to "lustful" interest*
b : *the work depicts something defined as obscene by state law*
c : *the work, taken as a whole, totally lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value*

in order for something to be obscene, it must meet **all** of the requirements. indie newspapers thrive on being of literary or political value. if you're trying to start up an indie paper, memorize these rules and you'll be good to go!

tyrrany!

or "why a school wouldn't like an underground newspaper"

i believe that when it comes down to it, it's all about control. the school doesn't like things going on around it that it can't control, things it can only watch but not touch. sure, the school has the mission of protecting the "learning environment" of itself, but in the case of attempting to restrict free speech and free expression they go over their bounds. how come when i violate the rights of another person it's called "crime", and i am punished, but when the school does it it's called "protection", and everyone celebrates it? whenever you have a newspaper that isn't affiliated with the school, you're sure to have opinions that certain students or teachers disagree with, but that is the purpose of an indie paper : the school paper would take it out, while an indie paper would respect the journalist. in this day in age, people enjoy to whine and victimize themselves - any mention of them may trigger a defense mechanism that will attempt to get you in trouble. going along with freedom of the press, however, you can only get in trouble if something is defamatory. if you say a teacher is horrible at their job? if you make a mockery of the

school board? if everything you have written is perfectly true, and isn't meant with malicious intent [attempting to destroy the other person's character], then you're 100% ok. the point of a magazine like catalyst isn't to simply spit out facts and regurgitate something we heard from the Associated Press, our job here is to provide insight into opinions and ideas, to make a public forum that you can't find elsewhere in school. and this is what the school fears. each and every time something goes a little too far off of the thin white line, every time something strays from the path, it is considered dangerous. schools attempt to keep themselves a land of barren facts and recitals, they fear the change, emotion, and thinking that free expression brings. uniforms, censorship, standardization, and many more are all examples of the school attempting to press conformity upon its students, attempting to force each one of them though a cookie cutter to end up the same, not caring whether they have to shave some of your rights off to do so. to quote Devin Aeh of Lock Down, "why are we doing this? because we can."

tips!

how to get your paper up and running [and successful].

make it free

for every cent you charge, you're losing possible readers. people don't want to pay to read something, especially a zine they've never read before.

own a copier

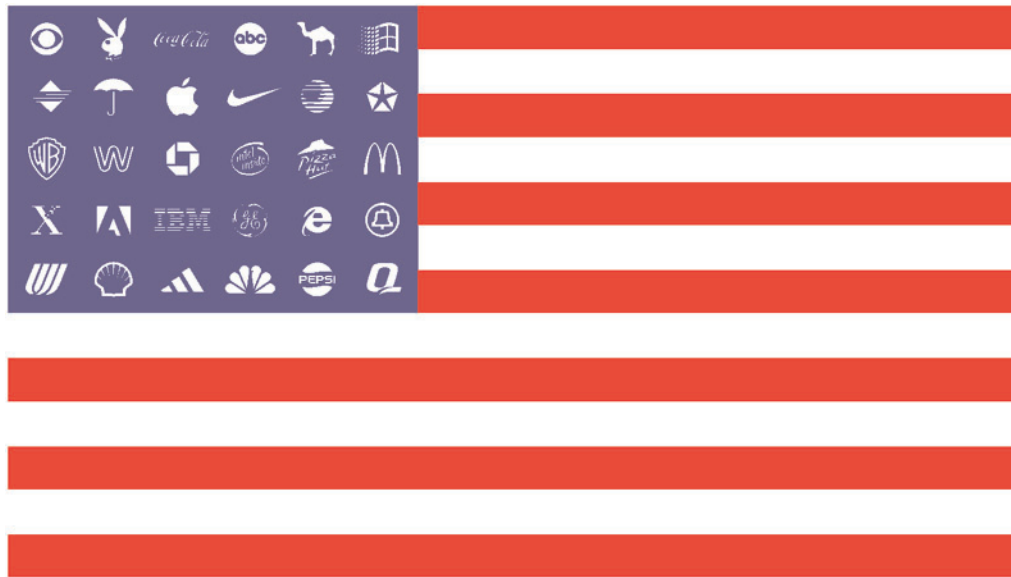
in order to get this issue printed at Kinko's, it would have cost us \$300. instead, we just bought paper and just used my industrial copier. cost? \$40.

have a mission

be clear in what you want to do with your paper. is music your thing? rebellion? a little bit of everything? no matter what, just make sure there is some kinda of focus so readers can relate to it

know the law

i guarantee if you try to publish a zine at school they'll try and shut you down : know the law and your rights, along with your limits. nothing is deadlier against oppression than knowledge.



corporate america.

THE AMERICAN WAY

i am going to reveal to you the meaning of life. if you don't think you can handle it, read no further.

getting more stuff. absolutely nothing in this world is more important, according to ever-right society. every step you take in life is geared towards this, each thing you do attempting to set you up to get more stuff.

as a child you lived birthday to glorious birthday - one day out of 365 where materialism became ruthless, it became everything. The size of a box deems it's worth, an "accidentally" left on price tag gives a quantitative measurement to one's love. Native Americans were raised to believe that the world was to be respected for no other reason than it was grand, and that gifts from the heart were the greatest of them all. Modern day Americans, however, are bribed into the land of goodness with the fruit of gifts, each christmas a giant day of payoffs for being a decent human being through the rest of the year. our childhood was simply lesson after lesson that things you can hold and count are the things that matter, and goodness is simply something that one might be forced to pretend to have in order to get more.

next comes 12 years of forced labor, monotonous day after monotonous day, every bit of knowledge They deem as important, whether relevant to life or not, drilled into our soft skulls. pass or fail, they'll drag you kicking and screaming until you turn into an adult. if you inquire as to why they

want you to know this, or why you need to know that, They screech that they'll expect you to know it in college, and as we have all been taught to believe, you won't get by without a college degree - you'll end up eating molded scraps of bread of out a dumpster without that scrap of paper. and we wouldn't want that, now would we?

enter college. welcome to the "big time," where you are finally going to learn something "useful." useful for what? doing what you want in life? au contraire, college is nothing more than a vigorous regimen directed at preparing you for whichever stifling occupation has been picked for you. every year you will pump thousands of dollars into this establishment, with the faint hope that when you leave you will be the best robot alive, able to perform any number of mundane repetitive taasks more adeptly than your other college graduate photocopy clones, thus ensuring you can acquire piles and piles of money.

as soon as college is over, society rushes onto you like a rabid dog, frightening you into getting a job. what's a job do? make a difference, change something? no, a job keeps your wallet thick and your mind content. you will be thrown from job to job always looking for a few more cents on the dollar, for a better-equipped office. as soon as you set into this awe-inspiring mindset of blatant materialism, you cannot escape. content to live with a 13" television? impossible. you will never be lauded for humble living, only persecuted in this modern day for your lack of pretty pieces of frivolity. society

wishes nothing more than for us to pursue "higher goals" - this phrase being interchangeable with "shinier stuff."

The purpose of life is taught to us as to get more stuff. From the moment we are born to the moment we pass away in our piles of acquired goods, nothing is more important than progress in the name of property. Sure, you may be wasting your life from any other perspective than that of one the given to you by our stifling society, but in the end, materialism truly is the real American Way.

via soma.

PIT MY LAF

ok, kids, this *truly* is the last of the school year catalysts. we'll be releasing them monthly over the summer, so email catalystmag@bolt.com so we know who to give some to. whenever you're done reading, be sure to pass the issue along to one of the less fortunate kids who hasn't gotten one yet! the only way we'll get around is if you go out and spread us. i think that it is 100% impossible for me to write something that doesn't sound lame as a closing, so just be sure to check us out in the future!

via soma.

the birds and the bees.

the other day i was strolling through a toy store looking for a fresh new four square ball, and came to a glaringly obvious, yet apparently overlooked, conclusion. toy stores are the most sexist places on the face of the universe. the two clearly divided sections are as defined as the lines outside of a concentration camp. boys to the left, girls to the right. balls to the left, dolls to the right. blue and red? left. white and pink? right.

while the rest of society has gone pretty much past stereotypical gender roles, toy stores seem to see them as their lifelines, as the reason they exist - the girl section will turn you into a Girl, the boy section into a Boy, no crossing over allowed. neutral territories are few and far between - sure, a good ol' barbie four square ball exists, but you couldn't find it in the normal pink section. oh no, that'd probably encourage girls to play with something other than their e-z bake oven - you've gotta to over to a nonparti-

san basket to get the ball. and the boys section? of COURSE it has its own ball bin - you can't expect to let a boy wander away from the blood and violence of their section to get their goods, they have to be protected from jumpropes and dolls, things that might make them - gasp! - lose some of their pure masculinity. while the adult world puts up a facade of gender equality, toy stores seem to obviously cling to gender roles.

such gender-based hypocrisy is all around us in our duplicitous society. women are praised for their wonderful work, repeatedly told that now sexism is nonexistent, and any of their whining is just residual from the past; yet women only make 78 cents for every dollar a man does. homosexuals and bisexuals are supposedly treated as well as any "normal" citizen, and are imbued with all the regular rights of the "normal" citizen, yet they are forced to flee to another state in order to get mar-

ried, or must stand up against discrimination or "conversion" attempts by narrow-minded members of the religious community. my stepmom preaches to her daughter that she is just as good as a boy, but yells at her when she decides to go out and play in the mud - that's just "icky boy stuff." same thing with her son. he's reamed when he goes around saying cooking is something only girls do, but then again when he picks up a barbie doll. we all like to think nice pretty thoughts on how boys and girls are the same, and everything will be equal when they grow up, but the truth is anything but that. we still expect girls to be Girls, and boys to be Boys, anything deviant is weird and unnatural, some kind of problem that will call for years of psychoanalysis, when in reality nothing is wrong except the bland conformity and stereotypical behavior that what society expects of them.

via kay.

THE BEST YEARS OF OUR LIVES?

continued.

not good, but then what if it's her best friend? That doesn't work either... suddenly the pool of friends/dates seems so limited. John now has no friends... all because he realized that Janey was not the one for him and that was a major no-no.

And relationships! Yes everyone says that true love does not exist in high school but I totally disagree. Many people in the past have married their high school sweethearts and many

more will! And love is not about marriage even, it's about having someone you care about more than yourself. So why can't that exist in high school?! But then what if it does? What if you become so attached to someone, that you lose your own identity?! This is a common problem in high school, and to tell the truth, this one isn't even based on love all the time! Most times it's just a status thing. And maybe you won't lose your identity, but then

you might dedicate too much time and energy to them and maybe all the things you need to have done don't get done. Who suffers? Not the couple, you!

If these are the best years of our lives then why do I, and so many others, find it so hard to get up and come every morning? Then again if these aren't the best years than why do I feel so sad that I'm leaving?

via dick.

JUN FOR SALE!

school ring : \$315
prom : \$300
graduation : \$70
high school : priceless?

If there's one thing that guarantees that you will have fun during high school, it's money. If I was to do an imitation of the school, it would be me hopping up and down threatening you with a crappy life if you didn't shell out enough dough.

Everything in high school, no matter how important, is hyped enough to rival the Apocalypse. "Buy a school ring, or you'll forget EVERYTHING about those horrible years, you'll end up worthless on a street corner" is basically the message of those Jostens posters for rings. They want you to spend hundreds of dollars on a ring that they'll only ask you to trade in for a discount later on for your college ring. Jostens advertises rings like selling memories - they bill the ring as something that is both a must-buy for conformity's sake, as well as a must-have in order to make your high school years memorable. Ever wonder why you never see anything from a company

that isn't Jostens? It's because they've got a vice-grip monopoly on the whole area. They force our school, as well as the students, to go through them. Getting a ring from another vendor is practically impossible. I'm not so sure about you, but my finger is still bare, and I can still remember a lot about the stupidity that was high school.

Formal dances are another pet peeve of mine. It'll be the end of the world if you don't go to homecoming or to prom - it's supposedly the best thing EVER in high school. Yes, i know spending a bazillion dollars on uncomfortable clothes and going to a place that bles horrible rap all night long is going to be a memorable experience, but will it be a GOOD one? I mean, you can't beat playing four square until 3 in the morning, but should you have to go through all of the preliminaries? Prom is one event that is decidedly based on money - expensive clothes you just take off so you won't die from the oppressive heat, dinner in a restraunt you wouldn't otherwise be allowed into, perhaps a limo rental to completely decimate your

wallet. People are driven to the brink of insanity wondering what they're going to wear there, who they are going to ask - why can't they realize its just one stupid night out of a billion in your life, only made special by the glitz and glam of money-fueled tradition?

You have quite a few days and nights in your life, and you'll eventually acquire quite a sum of money - why should you listen to tradition and advertisements as to what is important? You should make them be memorable the way YOU see fit, not in the way a monopolistic giant does, or legions of school-goers past. Break the cycle, gain freedom from a high school life of negative cash flow and hyped-up events.

High school is just one gimmick after another. From the 100 must-haves to commemorate the probably-dreaded experience, to the must-do's that plague you through it, you'll be constantly stripped of money for things advertised through tradition as being the best part of an otherwise dull piece of your life. Pshaw.

via soma.

Snap Crackle Pop Culture

In today's society one thing takes precedence over all others: that which is popular. Pop culture spreads like wild fire to each and every person whether he likes it or not. I myself rarely listen to the radio, yet I know most of the words to several of N'Sync's poppiest songs. "So what's the problem?" one might ask.

Simple: how many people think about their real likes and dislikes with all this pop culture telling us what's hip? I recently had a very stimulating conversation with a good friend of mine after she posed the following question: Do we like what we like because we REALLY like it, or because we simply know nothing else and always move with the herd?

I mean, do we really have to decide if we like Brittany Spear's

latest song or not? It's on the radio, it's on the MTV, and its catchy tune is on our head. We can't escape from it, so we suppose that we like it. Actually, some of us don't even bother to suppose. I'm not saying that N'Sync or the Spears sucks or that anyone that listens to them does as well. What I'm saying is take a moment to step back and think about all the things you see on the television and hear on the radio, and then take a moment to think back to the very first music, movies, or clothing that you liked... Are they the same as what you like now? If not, why don't you still like them? If you DO still like them, why aren't you listening to six-year-old albums, checking out the old movie racks in your video store, or wearing clothes that are most likely worn, possibly torn?

How often do you see someone doing something outside the norm of pop culture and think to yourself, "Hey, that doesn't look/sound too bad at all"? Do want you want, what feels natural. If pop culture does feel that way to you, way to rock out. If it doesn't but you're still participating in it, re-examine your interests, for your own sake.

But one quick closing warning for those of you who have actually taken this article seriously and plan to change your pop culture ways: don't go against the norm simply for the sake of being anti-conformist. Anti-conforming is just another form of conforming. The only way to be unique, corny as it may sound, is to be yourself and do what you like, whatever that may be.

via zaben.

True Poverty.

True poverty comes when one does not know where to which he/she will receive his/her next meal and/or cannot decide where he/she will sleep that night. Most would conclude that these people are lazy and completely without motivation. The possibility still remains that one might not have the mental capacity to receive, much less conserve their deserved or may not deserved success. I once saw a TV show where they interviewed a fourteen year old girl who had sank to prostitution, when asked, 'why do you live this way?' and she replied quite profoundly, 'I wouldn't, if I could only

find the doorway out'.

Now to touch base with another concept, people are born, to whom and where is all fate. There will always be "rich" kids and the self-righteous "poor folk". An old teacher of mine shamed me by calling me dumb and lazy and that I won't have a future at any rate. I replied, "shouldn't that depend on your definition of success?" she snapped back with, "that's something only little rich kids say!" But, I'm sure we would all decide for a better life if we could live it again. I have always assumed that the tribal communities of most third-world countries have it

better off than the average hard-working American, only by the fact that those people learn to love their lives and their work, while we struggle for our paychecks and a false sense of satisfaction. I am sure my teacher is right in the sense that people who don't have to worry about where their next meal is coming from have the ability to live life on a whole other plane of appreciation for life. It should be a goal for the community as a whole. So, get rich so your kids can live their lives to the fullest.

via dj.

two twenty three.

It's 2:23 and I find myself staring into the mind numbing glow of my computer screen struggling to keep my eyelids open as my body longs for the sleep that it has been deprived of. Why? you ask, would I do this to myself? Is this some kind of cruel punishment for some unspeakable crime that I've committed?, well if it is a crime to try and excel in school and to separate myself from average students then my punishment is justified. Now I find myself asking the question "is the work really worth the reward?" are all my hours of cramming information into my brain and spewing out essays really worth the B+ I will receive from teachers who will skim through my paper marking off points for frivolous details such as incorrect margins or missed capitalization. Not really taking in the thoughts that were conveyed from my mind onto my paper but the words that came from my fingers. This is when I begin to think that maybe my classes are made hard just for the sake of being hard. Is it possible that teachers give out work not because they believe the work given will enlighten us or help us in some way, but that they give work just for the sole reason of making students do work, just following a pattern of teaching left by older generations with the idea that students+work=knowledge. What this pattern leaves out is good teaching, and it's seems to me now that caring about the actual learning of the student is becoming less of a priority as teachers become

more and more bent on rules set to measure knowledge of the student. So what motivation do I have to endure the more difficult work? It's certainly not the fact that the same credit that I am receiving will be given to someone else in classes that are far easier than my own or that someone can take two periods of gym and a study hall and have a higher gpa than my own. The only reason that I can think of that would keep me off the easy road through high school goes back to an old saying; "knowledge is power" If I learn more in my classes I will be more successful in life, the only problem with that idea is, for that to work I have to be learning. That is not always the case is some classes, not because the teacher did not give out information to the students but because students know what it takes to get by, and if knowledge of material is not required to get high marks in a class why bother wasting time with it. Why read an entire book when the essay required could be written without reading it? Why spend time analyzing chapters when answers are easily accessible with the click of a mouse. Students understand the system that they will be judged by. In fact this system so dominates how they act that many students afraid of not meeting expectations would rather cheat and lie then face the consequences of a zero in the grade book. Is this really what the teachers want their students to be learning in school? How to lie and cheat and to do the bare minimum to get by? Certainly not, but is this what happens due

to their system of judgement? Apparently so. Now for myself to actually learn in my classes I am forced to go beyond what is required of me by my teacher, to do work on my own, and to use my own time educate myself. Now don't get me wrong, not all teachers are this cold hearted and not all students feel and act this way. It is possible to have a good teacher and to learn in the classroom and it is possible that insane amounts of homework could have a positive effect. So this is when we are forced to ask ourselves, are teachers really doing all they can to educate students? and are students really doing what they can to learn in class or are they just taking the easy route to get through high-school? How do you know if you're a good teacher and what you're doing is actually changing peoples lives? Well if you taken the time to read this and actually take time to think about what was written, you don't have to agree, only to open your mind, then maybe it's possible that not all teachers are bad and that there is hope for the education system. If when you saw this extra paper and didn't pay attention to it and didn't read it or take it into mind then this will have no effect on you, and I will not be in any trouble for insulting bad teachers because you didn't think reading this was worth your time.

via peter.

Crouching Teacher, Hidden Magazine.

It has come to the attention of the publishers of the publication that there are certain in-house parties at Courtland High School who disapprove of said publication. In layman's terms, some of the school's staff hates this magazine.

"Gasp!" some of loyal readers may be inclined to sarcastically exclaim. Yes, "Gasp!" indeed. Certainly all of us here at the Catalyst offices knew that there would be a stir caused among some teachers and staff concerning our magazine, but then, a stir is what we're all about.

Now, don't get me wrong here. We didn't hatch this egg to make teachers and other readers angry, but rather to get the word out on what's up with stuff we like and our reactions to current events, be they real or fictional. After all, the very definition of a catalyst is something that starts a reaction, gets things moving. We didn't merely write this thing to bleed out compressed teenage angst. What we wanted among our peers and mentors was not a disturbance. What we wanted was a reaction.

Even that being said and our intent explained, I've still got beef with teachers being upset. From this point on, I write as a submitter to the

Catalyst, not a speaker for it. Personally, I don't see what the deal is. Look at the Cat's Eye, our school's literary magazine. Now, this is a publication I high respect, admire, and look forward to, just as many of you probably do. All teachers, especially English teachers, encourage student submissions. And why is that? Because teachers like it when the pupils become creative outside of a classroom setting and are proud to show it. So why not the same with Catalyst? Everything is obviously student-submitted, even if some students do go to other schools. Everything is original and creative. If anything we should be applauded, as we put out the effort, and it does take an effort, to gather and write articles, typeset everything, choose a layout, gather pictures and ads, print, copy, staple, and distribute this magazine. But back to the question: why doesn't Catalyst get respect from the same number of teachers as the Cat's Eye? Is it slanderous? No. Is it disrespectful? No. Is it intentionally offensive or malicious? No. Do the teachers and staff have control over its contents? Certainly not. And therein lies the answer. Teachers don't hold the leash on what does and doesn't go into Catalyst, and while some

of them are okay with that, there seem to be others that simply can't stand the lack of control.

Once again I'm going to have to ask my reader not to run away with what I'm saying here. I'm not accusing the teacher's behind the Cat's Eye of anything at all; I was simply using it as an example. The Courtland Chronicle could've been used the same way, but I just got my hands on this year's Cat's Eye, so it's been in my head.

So, final thoughts. 1) Some teachers dig Catalyst, some don't. 2) Either way, both teachers and students are reading and responding to what we have to say, and we dig that. 3) Teachers that don't dig Catalyst because it doesn't float their boat are fine by us, as we realize there are readers of that type for every publication on the planet, but teachers that don't dig Catalyst simply because they can't control the free thought running rampant need to chill out.

All that being said, don't forget: catalystmag@bolt.com is hungry for your responses and individual and unique submissions to the magazine. Also don't forget: we respect anonymity, so don't be shy about submitting.

via zaben.

With Amber Waves of Grain.

What the hell is wrong with this country that we live in? How insecure are we as a nation? And where the fuck is our freedom going?

Reading the paper today I found a bill which forces kids to recite the pledge of allegiance every morning. May I ask why the hell this is an issue? In my opinion, this bill isn't worth the paper they used to print it on. Why can't a kid decide on his own as to whether he wants to recite it or not? Why can't the legislature understand that the respect for our country doesn't come from the saying of the pledge, but from meaning what you say?

You can't force someone to love this country by making him say a bunch of patriotic words. No one gains anything from this bill. So many people walk around from day to day, not thinking of what they say or what they mean. And lately, we just want to support these acts more and more. First the moment of silence, and now this. Like the saying goes, you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink. Well, you make a kid say the pledge, but you can't make him mean it.

But as long as we're going to increase the amount of mindless, empty jargon that takes place each day, why stop with the pledge? I think we need to enter schools at least a half-hour earlier and fulfill a healthy regimen of patriotic songs and chants. We could start with the pledge, then move to patriotic songs and poetry, followed by "This Land is My Land," and "America, the Beautiful." Next we could go around the room and each share our favorite piece of Uncle Sam propaganda or slogan. Mine would have to be "Buy US Savings Bonds." And to finish off the morning we could sing the "Star-Spangled Banner" three times, both in English and sign language, or maybe just sing it twice in a round.

What's the next bill that's going to be proposed meant solely to infringe on the few liberties we have left? Maybe it could be that all Americans wear a badge sporting our country's emblem. How about an armband with the bald eagle? Slowly we could move towards the picking of our countries finest with the purpose of setting up the

master race. All the rest could be forgotten or killed, or just sent away to prison-like communities, where no one would ever need to see them. Disgusting spics and niggers could finally be eliminated. Thank God.

We shudder at the thought of Hitler and his Nazi followers, and take a step closer to them. We hate what he did, and try to imitate him. And who better to start our ethnic cleansing, then with the most impressionable people in our nation... the children. All and all, this is a pretty well thought out plan. I salute the author of the bill for his courage and forethought.

So just three quick questions:

1) Do we have to use the same old dorky hand motion, or can we come up with our own?

2) Who exactly do we hail?

3) How do you say "With Liberty and Justice For All" in Newspeak?

In my opinion, this bill is doubleplusungood.

via acv.