Letter from the Editor

David St. Hubbins (when asked by a reporter if this is the end of his band): *Well, I don't really think that the end can be assessed as of itself as being the end, because what does the end feel like? It's like saying when you try to extrapolate the end of the universe, you say, if the universe is indeed infinite, then how - what does that mean? How far is all the way, and then if it stops, what's stopping it, and what's behind what's stopping it? So, what's the end, you know, is my question to you. – This is Spinal Tap*

The above quotation is muddled and confusing, and anyone who has seen the film understands the ridiculous nature of these words and the character who speaks them. *Spinal Tap* is one of my favorite movies of all time, and I watched it earlier today, during the time that I set aside to write this editorial. To be honest, I've been avoiding the task for days now, and at this point have saved it until the day before I take this issue to print.

Procrastination is part of who I am, and I've done some of my best work under tense circumstances. Still, I'd be making excuses if I said my work habits were the only reason behind my putting off this letter. I simply did not and do not know exactly what to write. I'm finding it difficult to admit to myself that this piece is the last I will ever contribute to ESA. I just keep typing in hopes that I will somehow find the ability to convey, with some amount of eloquence, what I feel and believe right now.

What is the end? The end of the 2005-2006 ESA school year has practically arrived, and for the class of 2006, the end of our high school career has already passed. We are graduates, concluding one chapter of our lives and coming to the start of another. It's a tired expression, I know, but arriving at this crossroads truly does give those words an entirely new meaning. We will never again write an essay for Mr. Tutwiler, taking pains to limit the number of "to be" verbs on each page. We have heard the last of Mr. Berthelot's pleas to clean out our lockers and be cautious on our drives to school. We will not have any further opportunity to participate in or view one of Ms. Dautreil's wonderful productions. Neither will any of you.

Ms. Dautreil is one of eleven members of the ESA faculty and staff who are leaving this year in what my mother continuously refers to as "the great Exodus." It is an honor to graduate with all of them, especially with those who have taken special care to guarantee the happiness, well-being, and integrity of our class. This year, ESA loses Dr. White, whom I consider one of the school's structural pillars. But can a structure still stand strong without a major part of its foundation? At the risk of sounding overly dramatic, this year truly represents the end of an era for ESA. A great number of changes will occur within the next year, but I am not concerned with ESA preserving its reputation. Whether its ideals are preserved is up to you, its students.

Certain words come to mind when I think of the education, friendship, and guidance to which ESA has introduced me. I can describe my experience here as rich, rewarding, trying, sad, invigorating, memorable. Yet words cannot possibly define ESA. What define ESA are the memories it creates and the character it builds within its students. I gained a whole new perspective on my class as a senior, but more than that, I changed my outlook on the entire school.

Here, I have to address the students who will remain at ESA next year. Some of you I never got to know and never will. Some of you annoyed and infuriated me. And some of you have grown so near and dear to me that I get teary-eyed every time I realize that you won't be as big a part of my life next year, nor I of yours. I know that my fellow graduates feel the same. Senior year changes people fundamentally, and I pray that next year's seniors will use the character they have developed at ESA for the betterment of the school. I challenge all of you to do so. We may be young, lacking in perspective and life...
experience, but we have good, strong opinions and a
voice that should not be silenced. This school's history
contributes to its values, and you all inherit them. Never
cease to advocate them. In the face of change, maintain
integrity. Never take for granted the amazing
opportunity that has been given to you as an ESA
student. Never try to assess the end. The possibilities
for your futures are endless, and only a lack of effort and
encouragement can inhibit them. Best of luck next year;
I hope for the success of the school, as well as for your
personal successes.
Have you ever realized how much time the average American spends on the phone, waiting on hold? It’s an insane amount, many moons and passings of the stars. And if one would go further and see the truth, something I have long neglected to do, then one would realize that 90% of this time is spent waiting on the lines of department stores and computer services in Bangladesh.

Come and see what I mean, people. Call Wal-Mart and see what happens. Ask the lady to find something in the hunting and fishing department. If you are lucky, which I rarely am in this sort of situation, she will spend thirty minutes meandering over there and back only to ask if you wanted the Remington or Winchester 300 bullets. Go on; tell her that you wanted the price of the Winchester 300 bullets. Off she goes on another thirty-minute trip to the guns and fishing aisle, returning to say that yes, the Winchester 300 bullets are in stock. If you aren’t lucky, when asked about something in the gun department, she will start over there, only to be stopped by another “valued” customer. She goes to help that person and forgets about you. You wait on indefinitely. There you have it, people. Multiple frustrating hours of your valuable time is wasted because of the problems we experience in today’s massive, disorganized, overrated, corrupted, abusive, monopolizing, small business crushing, imported goods selling, time-consuming, generally bad for the long-term economy, million phone-using corporation, a.k.a. Wal-Mart. Bring it on!

The problems with the computer service calls are slightly different. Deep inside the bowels of your computer, a faulty command line surfaces, the computer crashes and wigs out, and immediate pandemonium and general hullabaloo follows. You call HP in Bangladesh (which costs five dollars a minute) and get a machine. After a maze of punching in numbers for technical support, you finally get a person in the wrong department. He forwards you to the “right” department. Wrong one again. This process repeats itself several times. Finally, you get the right person in the right department, but he can’t help you because you have called the wrong computer service. Thank you and good night.

Some questions are meant to be left unanswered. We may spend our entire lives searching for a reason or meaning for existence, but what would we do with such information anyway? Sure, we could steer ourselves in the direction of what we were originally intended to accomplish on Earth, but isn’t that what faith is for?

Many people say that faith exists only to comfort the weak; however, I believe that faith has a much greater purpose. Faith allows us to live the questions. It is faith that gives us direction in life without the need for answers. Without faith we would lose all direction in life.
untitled journal
by helen burnett

i do not look for water lines. i look for stairs, the stairs that lead to nowhere. i look for a foundation that once held up my life. i look for that headboard that once held together my place of rest. i find pictures that do not belong to me. i do not keep anything i find, because i know it is irrelevant to my life now. i try to find proof that the last eleven years of my life were not just a dream. i say to myself, "this was my life, i was here, i stood here, and it will never be the same." when it is finally time to leave my old hometown, i never look out the car window. i do not turn around to get that last glimpse of destruction that once was my home, because never again will it be the same. forward, yes, i will move on.

it seems from what i write that i have forgotten mississippi and the people in it. i can't help it if i like my new home and have found new friends. does this mean i do not love and remember all the people that are reminded every day of "what was?" i stayed with my best friend, keelan, and her family from august 28 until some unknown date. those were the most pivotal days of my life. august 28, the day i last looked at the life i had been living for the past fourteen years. august 29, the infamous day katrina struck, a day of anxiety and uncertainty. that was the night i saw downtown bay st. louis on our twelve-inch black and white tv and cried, for i knew it was gone. however, i had hope that my house was still standing. that night, my best friend held me while i cried for the worst that could occur: i could be homeless. august 30, the day i knew for sure i had lost both my house and my grandma. it was the first time i saw my dad cry. the next few days were the days i wondered the most. days of talk of what was going to happen, questions of rebuilding, and whatnot. finally, my family decided to journey to lafayette so we could start school and try to lead a normal life.

one night, i was talking to keelan, who was with me through the experiences mentioned above, about how much i loved lafayette and how everything was wonderful. we got into an argument about me forgetting mississippi and the people there. i said i was so much happier and was glad that i'd left mississippi. she cried, something i had not heard her do because of the storm. she said, "you got to move on and create a new life for yourself, but the rest of us are left here in the destruction, reminded of what was." then i understood why she was so upset. i just left; i left people and did not have to clean up what remained. of course i was able to move on so quickly; i did not have to face reality. i erased all of what i knew of my home because i was afraid to face the fact that all of it was gone. but it is so hard for people down there to move on, because they are reminded every day that in their lifetime, things will never be the same. i have the chance to be happy and heal the wound without feeling the pain. i fear the day that the wound, untreated, will open up again and i will feel its pain.

for now, i will continue to learn through this experience. i will not feel badly for finding happiness in the worst possible scenario. i know now that life is protean and that you should do what makes you happy. this has been an awakening; this is my life. i do not need to be the smartest or the most athletic to succeed at life. if i just make the best of every situation, i will find true serenity in myself. hurricane katrina was the "felix culpa" of my life. i fell, but now i climb until i am knocked a few steps down. no matter how many times i fall down, i will get back up and climb, climb, climb...
Last Laugh
By Kjersti I. Jacobson

Love is blind, nonchalantly hanging from the ceiling.
Anxiety is panicking in the corner.
Sadness is slumped on the floor, gripping a shot glass in one hand.
Terror is whimpering, tears dripping onto the knife by her neck.

Lust is laughing maniacally, ignoring the wounds.
Anger is throwing glasses, shattering them on the kitchen floor.
Unloved is crying in the dark, shadows casting through the empty room.
Guilt is twitching, muttering to himself, "Not my fault... no... no..."
Happiness is stuck in traffic, running late.

Zombies
By Emile Legendre

If you happen to see something meeting the characteristics of a zombie, and it seems to be after you, first try throwing Marilyn Manson CDs at it. If this method is successful, the creature was actually just a Gothic child, not a zombie. Do not feel bad; this is a very common mistake. If you are certain that the creature is a zombie, you need to know how to stop it.

First things first: if it is a zombie, chances are that the police will no longer be able to help you, so you will have to accept being all alone. The police and other services will not be there because they will either be flooded with other zombie calls, or they will all be dead because they were not properly briefed in the art of dispatching the undead.

The easiest way to re-kill a zombie is to destroy the brain; however, that is not the only way. If you destroy the body of the zombie so completely that it can no longer move or be an active threat, you can pretty much relax. The best, most tried and true method to destroy a zombie's brain is to shoot the zombie in the head. Now, before you panic, you must remember that if you, for whatever reason, don't have access to proper firearms, you can look to more common household items to deal with your undead infestation. As long as an object is harder than the human skull and can be wielded effectively in combat, it will serve to destroy the brain, and coincidentally the zombie. Good examples of such objects are baseball bats, golf clubs, axes, or mallets. Even a good lamp will do the trick, as long as you can use it to destroy the brain.

Even if you disconnect it from the rest of the body, the zombie head will still be able to bite you, so be careful. Another problem with removing the head is the fact that it is normally a messy and close-quarters job. The problem with the mess is that if a drop of zombie bodily fluid gets into a scratch on your body, you are done for. The close-quarters part is also dangerous, because the farther away you can stand from your adversary, the better.

The best method, by far, is the use of firearms. However, before you go out to your local gun store and max out the credit card, it is important to remember that if you are not familiar with weapons, you should look into some basic instruction from a professional. If you are interested in purchasing a firearm, go down to your local gun store and talk to some of the people there. They can be very helpful in steering you in the right direction. Still, as a good rule of thumb, do not go into a store and say, "I want a gun with which to shoot zombies in the head." The workers there will probably have you at gunpoint before you finish the sentence.
If you are looking for a firearm, there are a few basic points that you should remember. First, you do not need dual gold-plated .50 cal. Desert Eagles. A shotgun is a good choice for people unfamiliar with firearms, because the multiple projectiles will make it easier to get those key headshots. If you are more advanced with firearms, you certainly do not need me to tell you about this subject.

There are a few key points to remember when dealing with the undead. First off, **Make Sure They Are zombies!** Do not go around running over Goth children with your car. People will start to talk. Next, you will be better off trying to avoid the zombies. Only engage when engaged. If you must fight, remember the old adage: “Head equals dead.” If you stick with these basic rules, you will have a distinct advantage over the rest of the population: knowledge.

**Simplicity vs. Passion**

By Amy Meche

One great curse of being an ESA student is that the school and its teachers force you to explore and reevaluate yourself and your world. Reading *Paradise Lost* and *Brave New World* in Jerome's class last year made me question the validity of the phrase "ignorance is bliss." Were Adam and Eve better off living in bland contentment before the Fall, without knowledge of suffering or pain? Or are the burdens man must bear and the stumbling blocks he encounters worth experiencing in return for the ability to feel intense happiness and passion? Would we be more satisfied in Huxley's world, conditioned to monotony and equipped to deal with restlessness and sadness by popping pills? The prospect may seem confining and unappealing, but think about it: none of us would have to deal with frustrating family issues or hurtful episodes with friends. We would never know or even understand true, intense pain. On the other hand, we would be unable to comprehend true joy as well.

Many people would argue that the incredible emotions attached to falling in love or achieving a dream are irreplaceable. They would deem them well worth the price of the extreme difficulties we all eventually encounter in our lives. There is, however, a grand and simple flaw in this argument. Were we to live our entire lives in ignorant and mild comfort, we would be totally unaware of the sensations and experiences absent from them. If, beginning today, I lived out the remainder of my life feeling steadily content, I would be fully aware of the high and low emotions missing from day to day, because I have already known so many of them. Yet at three years old, I could not have been truly pained by the betrayal of a friend, nor could I understand the feeling of real elation. At that point, I was completely oblivious to the existence of these feelings and their effects on people, and so I never longed to feel them.

When I think about the situation this way, it certainly seems better to live placidly, unaware of the possibilities of passion and pain. Am I arguing that I would rather be a part of Huxley's brave new world or Adam and Eve's perfect Eden than the world in which I live today? Not at all. Our intensity defines us; our loves and our losses and the way
we handle them gives us an identity, a reason to be. At this point in my life, if given the choice between Eden and reality, I'd remain in my own flawed and beautiful world. There's no sense in lamenting over the Fall; had we not fallen, we could not lament, nor could we rejoice.

Untitled
By Molly Bates

Cold metal beneath my feet digs into my soles, rubbing them raw, but I keep running. I can't stop, I can't fail. My mother looks on, tears filling her dark eyes. She turns away. She can bear to watch no longer.

The throbbing of my racing blood fills my ears. Even the squeak of steel on steel fades from my awareness. My muscles ache and burn; I long to cry out, but exhaustion has stolen the air from my lungs. Yet I cannot stop. A sudden rush of adrenaline surges through me and renews my strength. My legs keep pumping.

I feel warm blood trickle from the soles of my feet, but I pay no heed. I cannot fail. I will not fail. Pain will not stop me. God Himself could not strike me down now. I will keep running, come Hell or high water.

I can conquer the elements. I can and I will. This relentless steel that rends and tears my flesh like a flock of carrion birds - it will rust and degrade with wind and rain, but I, the immortal Pip, will live on, conquering challenge after challenge, scaling peak after peak. When I return home, tired, broken, and victorious, everyone for miles around will chant my name and crown me with laurels. They will praise me as a hero of heroes, they will name their sons after me, they will honor me with a statue of gold -

"Pip! Will you STOP?"

My sister's cries are faint. I know how much it pains her to see the torture I must endure.

"Fear not, dear sister," I bid her silently. "Be strong."

"PIPSQUEAK!"

Suddenly my world comes crashing down upon me. My usually flawless concentration falters, and my feet slip. In an instant, everything is turned upside-down. Time passes in slow motion until - WHAM! - my face collides with the hard earth. Teary-eyed, I look up and see my sister's sleepy face smirking back at me.

"Thank God," she says. "That squeaking was driving me crazy. Hasn't Mom told you like a million times not to run on the wheel when someone's trying to sleep? I swear, if you keep that up, I'll feed you to the cat."

"I could take him," I mumble.

"Ha. Don't you think Mom named you Pipsqueak for a reason?"

"It's Pip. And just 'cause I'm small -"

"Such a dreamer," whispers a gentle voice behind me. "It's time for bed. Even fierce warrior gerbils need their rest."

An Average Day of Bliss
By Stanford Rosenthal

The bell rings and the school day ends. I close my laptop and place it in my backpack. As I leave the room, Mr. James approaches me. Mr. James instructs Technical Theater at Newman. In eighth grade, I joined the Tech class not only because I love technology, but also because I wanted to involve myself in the Arts program. Now I consider Mr. James a close personal friend and mentor. I work with him often during my free periods and after school, tackling various tasks, such as building a website or assisting him as he films various shots. We plan to meet tomorrow during J block.

On the way to my locker I pass McKennon. Last year, McKennon attempted and succeeded in eating his way through the Tchopitoulas Challenge. This huge bowl from Creole Creamerie consists of eight scoops of eight different flavors of ice cream with eight different toppings. The Creamerie promises to put a plaque with
the challenger’s name on the wall if he can finish the challenge. Not until after McKennon finished did the man behind the counter tell us that throwing up means disqualification, and McKennon had thrown up more than once.

As I pack my bag, Charlie comes up to me. Charlie has a twin brother, Sam, who looks nothing at all like him. Charlie tells me that he and some others are about to take the streetcar to Rose Lea’s. Rose Lea’s sells bubble tea with tapioca balls. The café acts as the primary meeting spot for Uptown high school students.

We manage to push our way through the crowded locker room, finally reaching the front door of the school. There we find Calder, obviously hanging around with no place to go, but not wanting to leave for his house yet. Calder makes life so much more interesting because of his unique sense of humor and his openness to express what he really thinks. I tell Calder of our quest to Rose Lea’s and invite him to come with us. You can get Calder to do anything if you use the word quest.

As we leave the air-conditioned Jefferson Building, the sun beats down on us. Outside, Robert talks on his cell phone to Julia. Robert, a very close friend of mine, enjoys knitting and shopping. Robert’s metrosexuality makes him unique and gives us all a reason to love him. Robert invites us to take the streetcar with him for bubble tea. We respond affirmatively and start in the direction of the streetcar as Sam joins us.

Shortly after we leave the school’s property, Abby runs up from behind us and jumps on Robert’s shoulders. Abby and Rob have been good friends since the sixth grade. Abby is one of the few girls who plays in the percussion band. She lives a few blocks from me and has visited my house many times, but for some reason I have never seen the inside of hers. She lives in a huge St. Charles home with just her mom.

We arrive at the streetcar stop and find Julia and Alex there. They too, of course, are waiting for the streetcar to get bubble tea. While we wait, Mark randomly rides up on his bicycle. He tells us to meet him at Rose Lea’s, and he rides off in the direction of The Riverbend.

As the streetcar arrives, we get seven dollars and fifty cents together, because the streetcar costs a dollar twenty-five per person. We get in, and the streetcar roars down St. Charles on its twentieth-century technology. We soon pass Daneel Park, and then eventually Audubon Park, Tulane, and Loyola. We get off three stops after Tulane and walk three blocks to Rose Lea’s.

Inside, Kelsey and her new McGhee friends enjoy their frozen teas. I have known Kelsey since kindergarten. Always happy, she brings smiles to everyone around her. Everyone enjoys her presence because she always has something nice to say. Unfortunately, she could not keep up with Newman and has found a better learning environment at McGhee.

I order a kiwi strawberry bubble tea with tapioca balls. Nicole, the woman who works behind the counter, writes down our orders and rushes to the back to prepare them. We all sit on the couches, open our laptops, and connect to the free wifi.

Soon Nicole brings out our orders.

I sink into the couch and enjoy the rush of freshness from the bubble tea. The atmosphere soothes me. My friends bring me comfort. Nothing could make me happier.

Now as I write these words, I appreciate each and every person I have ever known in my life. I miss my friends from New Orleans as I will miss my friends at ESA when I leave in December.

Uncle Ray’s Hope
By Mya Hartley

You have a deadly illness
Someone’s given you Pandora’s Box
You’ve opened up the evils
That now run all amok

Chaos has spilled out
And everyone sheds tears
They all want you back
They want you to be here

The bad is prominent
There seems to be no light
Yet hope remains forever
And still it shines so bright

I hope that you get through this
And I pray every day
And because I know there’s hope
I know you’ll be okay

All my love,
Mya
QUOTES!
By Tyler Guthrey

The following are several excerpts from the six-page "QUOTES!" book. If you find any of these quotations offensive, slanderous, or cruel:

1) Lighten up, buddy.
2) Let he who is without Freudian slips cast the first stone.

This text's only purpose is entertainment, and it in no way represents the opinions of Tyler and/or his affiliates. It does, however, represent Tyler's opinion that sometimes intellect sometimes escapes us (like right there).

Julien: I found you a Yiddish Calendar Book.
Rizwan: What's a Yiddish?

Quiz Bowl Announcer: Bonus: What does SWAK stand for?
Tyler: Special weapons and killin'.

Tyler: There WAS a Martin Luther King, Senior...he just didn't have a dream...

Rizwan: Tyler Gunthrey!
Tyler: Where do people get the "n"?
Rizwan: Your mom.

Tyler: I get the three J's confused: Jason, Julien, and Rizwa...wait...

Caroline Gray: Why are guys so much more stupider than girls?

Omar Mysore: Whenever I get depressed, I think of becoming an investment banker.

Dr. Cornwell: Gravity doesn't change because the mass of the Earth doesn't change...so it's a what? It starts with a "k"...
   (the answer is "constant.")

Paige Haggerty: What's your favorite invention?
Tyler: Electricity.

Caroline Gray: I hate how life is like...real.

Tyler: I made garlic crackers.
Ellie Mayley: I ate Greek food. We probably have matching bad breath.

Jason Galewski: She's bringing her nephew? Is her nephew a girl or a guy?

Rizwan: The reason we learn History is so you won't make the same stupidity.
Crash and Burn
Lyrics by Amy Meche

*chorus*
Crash and burn, crash and burn again.
Blown to bits, up in flames, my friend.
How do I . . . how do I begin
When I'm stranded here, here at the end?

Tears on the pillow, sweat on the sheets.
Used up my potion, I'm back on the streets.
Tear me to pieces, humor my greed.
You know what I want, this is just what I need.

Smash me and shatter my foolhardy dreams.
I know what you are, if you know what I mean.
Teach me naiveté, render me blind.
Give me some peace, I am out of my mind.

*chorus*

Glued to the spot, there's red in my eyes.
They're feigning remorse and I'm dumb with surprise.
The lightbulb's burnt out, it's a shot in the dark.
Swimming in blood's just a walk in the park.

Rough, nimble fingers still wake me at night.
It's quiet and dark and you've stolen my sight.
Goodbye and I'll miss you, you camouflaged snake.
Take hold of my daydreams, I can't stay awake.

*chorus*

Farewell and thank you, my serpentine prince.
These vows of redemption are far too intense.
You've been a friend but there's one thing you lack.
Your damned earthly Lucifer won't have you back.

Always so beautiful when you would bleed,
Rivaling demons of passion and speed.
Ignorant angel, you've stolen my fire.
You've used up my fuel and I'm back up for hire.

*chorus X2*

Lines
By Matthew Conques

Throughout my fourteen years on this earth, I have noticed that lines govern our lives. For example, when you drive down the street, you must obey certain rules set by lines on the road. When you begin learning to write, you must write on the lines of the paper. If you ever pay any attention to anything, you will find that everything has its roots in lines. Take football, for example. Lines make up the entire field, and people judge you by which line you can reach.

Paper seems like a simple everyday object, but no other object carries more weight in the world today. Official documents, the movement of millions of dollars, treaties, and the education of the next generation all rely on paper. All paper has lines on it, whether they are printed by the paper mill, or placed there by us in the lines of printed words. From the earliest of years, people have told us to stay between the lines.

I know of no sports in which lines don't play a key role in their anatomies. In baseball, you have to run in the base path, or else the ump will call you out. In basketball, lines determine the amount of points you score per shot. In soccer, as in football, lines dictate your playing field.

If you look at manmade objects, you will see many lines, but if you look inward, you will see very few straight lines. All of your bones have a certain curve to them, and all of your muscles run in curves through your body. The same pattern holds true in other forms of nature. I have never seen a tree that stands perfectly straight and whose branches don't curve. I have never seen a square animal (and I hope I never do).

God has never created something with perfectly straight lines, but man has. Human nature tells us that everything must line up perfectly, and any unbalance makes us uncomfortable. Man made lines for other men. A few people can control millions with a few cents' worth of paint on the road. People sometimes act more like sheep with no free will than like the humans that they are, with the ability to make decisions.
After having read Freud’s *Moses and Monotheism*, I have had conflicting views about the relevance of History in religion and faith. What Freud says about the “real” Moses defies all the stories I’ve learned growing up. Religion is such a huge part of my life, whether it was my choice or not, and Freud really made me wonder how much of my religion is based on fact, how much is merely distorted, and how much is pure political propaganda. If, in fact, one or more of the cornerstones of my Christian faith is historically incorrect, where does that leave me? Will my whole tower crumble?

For instance, if Moses really wasn’t a Jew whom God sent to lead the Jews out of Egypt and into the Promised Land, but was in fact merely a messenger of a defunct religion who, much like televangelists today, sought a way to make his people superior to all others, does that make my faith worthless or a lie? If God never gave Moses the Ten Commandments, does that make them void and useless? Does that make it okay to kill and steal and commit adultery? I can’t imagine that if any concrete proof confirming the nonexistence of Moses and the Ten Commandments ever did surface, any sensible person would completely abandon the laws that govern our society and kill without remorse.

Even if there was never a Jesus, I would find it hard to deny that his teachings are worth reading, if not worth adhering to. His main message throughout the New Testament is one of love for each other, mercy, and generosity, ideas of which the world can never seem to have enough. In the last century, our world has seen genocide, terrorism, war, torture, famine, and poverty, just as it has since the beginning of recorded History, despite our technological and social advances. Maybe the increased presence of those three qualities wouldn’t create world peace, but it would make the world a better place. If the greatest scholar in the world were to tell me that everything in the Bible was myth, I wouldn’t throw it away and reinvent myself. I believe in love and mercy and generosity, whether or not Jesus was the Son of God. Even if the facts are distorted, the basis of faith is unshakable.

I don’t like to refer to my beliefs as religion; it makes me feel like I’m saying my parents spoon-fed me Bible verses and values and I merely accepted them. If there’s one thing I can boast about my faith, it’s that I’ve thoroughly questioned it and still found it to shine through in my life, as I believe it does in every life in one way or another. Faith is to believe without needing proof, without seeing. Faith is to hope even when times are desperate. My cousin has broken her back twice in the last six years because of seizures, experienced terrible pain and fear, but the thing I admire most about her is that she always smiles and reminds herself that God is looking out for her. Faith is to feel a connection with the world and know that there is something greater that binds us all together in love and fellowship, even if it works in subtle ways that we cannot always identify. To need to see to believe is to be blind.
The Great Anticlimax
By Julien Gradnigo

I remember, in my last year of elementary school, spending hours upon hours reading just about anything I could find online. Fast forward six years. Here I stand, quite a bit older and perhaps a bit wiser, but essentially with the same core characteristics I had six years ago. I still consume reading material at a scary pace, I still like learning about advances in medicine and technology, and I even still have a mostly unchanged core circle of friends. Yet I’ve also changed a great deal. I think it is for this reason that I struggled mightily with this article, even putting it off several weeks past the Eclectic staff submission deadline. I suppose that, being a senior, I’m in some way expected to pass on words of experience and wisdom that may prove useful during the rest of your high school career. That was certainly the impression that I got during my sophomore and junior years, listening to the administration talk about each year’s senior class. The realization I came to, of course, is the one that I had been repeatedly warned I would reach: there are no such words. Sure, we may occasionally remember some particularly inspirational or insightful words we once heard spoken, but most of us simply live the vast majority of our lives “in the moment,” guided by our own instincts, principles, and the intangible combination of life experiences that makes us who we are.

One of the most resounding life lessons I’ve learned is that attempting to be anyone other than who you are is one of the worst experiences imaginable. So to all of you reading this, you don’t need me or anyone else telling you how to live your life – but you should live it. That’s it, really. No grandiose ending, no sweeping generalization about life, love, or happiness. Just live, preferably to a ripe old age, maybe getting married and having kids in the process, in the hopes that someday, this life thing will all make sense. In the end, that’s all anyone can ask of anybody else.

Awesomely Bad: excerpts from Paradise Lost essay
By Amy Meche

As members of the human race, we all possess an inherent sense of good and evil. Unlike other animals, we cannot harm, cheat, or attack another of our kind unjustifiably without feeling some measure of guilt, self-loathing, or at the very least, a hint of uneasiness. Why then do we often find the darker, more sinister side of an argument the more beautiful and appealing one? Those who do evil often defend themselves by insisting that they were seduced into doing so, but what gives bad its seductive dominance over good? With Milton’s Eve, as with other literary characters and with all of us, the root of evil’s alluring power lies within narcissism. Eve turns toward Satan and away from God because of self-absorption heavily indulged by the serpent.

Vampires, whether the beautifully enchanting type described by Anne Rice, or the vile, disturbing bloodsuckers portrayed by the likes of Max Schreck, often hold a powerful ability to seduce their victims into following a darker path before even sinking their teeth into them. These victims sometimes fancy themselves worthy, intelligent, and beautiful enough to challenge the mortality ordained for them. J.R.R. Tolkien wrote of a ring desired by almost all who learned of it because they had enough confidence to believe themselves capable of overcoming the ring’s evil nature in order to spread good. Eve experiences the same reaction with Satan; all of her serpentine qualities are coaxed out by his flattery, and she gives in to the option of disobedience and self-indulgence.

The traditional view of Satan finds him behaving as a pure villain, an angel unworthy of God’s presence who disobeyed his master and maker out of pride and selfishness. Yet Homer’s great hero Achilles commits an act similar to the one performed by Satan. A clearly proud and vain man, Achilles rebels against a man with higher authority than his own. Achilles’ narcissistic nature drives him to turn away from Agamemnon, though he is fully aware that the High King holds command over him militarily. Satan’s initial narcissism consumes him with such ferocity that he does not realize his error in judgment until after failing in his rebellion and receiving his punishment. Only then does he see his inferiority to God and the true injustice that he committed against his creator. However, before his
legions he must wear a brave face, and at least put up the appearance that he truly stands behind the belief that it is, in his words, “better to rein in Hell, than serve in Heav’n.” After all, he truly did believe so until his revelation. This self-centered state of mind gives darkness its often irresistible appeal: it relieves us from our honor and our duties, and allows us to serve, above anything else, our primary, narcissistic loves: ourselves.

Sadie Hawkins
By Olivia Daigle

The whole idea of the Sadie Hawkins dance is for the girls to ask the guys. I assume the point of this opposite asking is for the girls to be in the guys’ asking shoes. This asking isn’t a big deal for some people, but other people are too afraid to get rejected to even ask someone. In turn, most of these people don’t go to the dance. Sadie Hawkins is the only casual dance for which anyone really has a date. The guys don’t ask the girls to the other casual dances. Why can’t the point of the dance be for everyone to go instead of the girls to be put on the spot to ask the guys? There should be a little side note telling everyone without a date to go together in one massive party of dateless fun.

There are people who go without dates, but they still feel left out because the girls with dates are planning where to eat and what to wear and where to go to the after party. I feel sorry for the people who are saddened by this situation, because I want them to be happy if they’re going to the dance in the first place.

The people that don’t go to the dance at all are mainly the guys that don’t get asked. In the ninth grade, I think there were fewer than five boys at the dance who weren’t asked. More girls who don’t ask someone go to the dance than guys that don’t get asked. The girls feel more secure going because they weren’t ignored; they just didn’t ask anyone. There were more girls in comparison to boys at the dance because of this situation.

For the people who had dates, the dance was like any other, except that in most cases one person paid for both people. Most of the freshman class doesn’t really dance at dances. To tell you the truth, I don’t know why most of us go to the dances. I guess we like having a place for all of us to hang out with music and people to laugh with all around us.

I guess insecurity is what makes Sadie Hawkins complicated. People don’t want to get rejected, boys want girls to ask them, and the girls are afraid to ask the boys. If everyone said what he or she were thinking, everyone would know that they have the same fears, and people would try to fix the problems. The chances of fears being openly known are slim to none, so for now Sadie Hawkins will be the dance that causes fear and insecurity until Winter Formal, when the girls will be in the boys’ shoes and the boys in the girls’ shoes.

Life in New Orleans
By Alexis Richmond

I never thought I would be going to a school in the middle of a sugarcane field. I have lived in New Orleans all my life, and I never thought I would have to leave it for this long of a time. Everyone from New Orleans thought this hurricane evacuation was going to be a three day break, but when the storm destroyed my city, it changed my everyday life. My friends were and still are spread out all over the South. It was hard to keep in touch with everyone at first, especially since the phones were not working during that time. I was scared for my home, my city, my school, my friends, my family, and all the enjoyable places where I loved to go in New Orleans. For two weeks, there was no way to contact anyone by phone except through text messaging. This problem was especially hard on my dad, who had his business, customers, and shop to take care of. My family and I were glued to the television for a while, just waiting to see our neighborhood and how it had held up through the hurricane.
Last year, for Hurricane Ivan, we came to Opelousas, too. We decided to come here for both hurricanes because my parents' best friends live here. We stayed with them last year, but this year they gave us their home and they moved into their other small home in Lafayette. My parents' best friends are very kind and understanding people for giving up their beautiful house in Opelousas for us. Next thing I knew, my mom was making plans for my brother, sister, and me to go to a school around here. My mom found a highly rated school in the city of Cade, called the Episcopal School of Acadia. My brother, sister, and I were upset at first, because we didn't want to do anything but go home. We didn't understand how truly devastating the hurricane had been. After attending ESA for a while, we gained friends, started adjusting to the school, and started getting our daily schedules back.

Living in the city of New Orleans was always fun. There were many new and interesting things to do each day. My friends and I could go to the French Market in the French Quarter and look at the cool jewelry and neat gifts. We could shop at the downtown shops, view the beautiful Uptown homes, run in Audubon Park, shop on the famous Magazine Street, eat at all the great restaurants all over the city, go to the Six Flags Theme Park, and have a great time on the Uptown street parades during Mardi Gras. I never thought I would be living in the "country," riding my bike down the dirt roads and listening to the sounds of nature. Although this evacuation has been a bit of a culture shock for me, I'm beginning to love this relaxing country life.

The Life of a Clone Trooper
By Hugh Arceneaux

Lucas Arts, the Star Wars game company, is making another game. It's called Star Wars: Battlefront II, and I believe it will have one of the greatest story modes ever to grace the video game. You are a member of the 502nd Storm Trooper Unit, Darth Vader's personal guard. What could be better? Spartans – cool. Vikings – cool. Romans, Assyrians, Macedonians, and Ninjas – all cool. Storm Troopers? Awesome.

What would it be like to be a clone, a soldier in the Emperor's army that was trained from birth? Apparently it's not very great, since a lifetime of training did not do the clones much good against the weenie Luke, who barely knew his way around, yet killed them with some blaster.

However, the clone trooper is a noble sort. He recognizes his little role in the galaxy and accepts it, doing his best to get his job done. Even when Leia fires at the troopers and kills one, the rest maintain their composure and use stun shots, which are less effective than regular blaster shots, in spite of their own peril. Why? For the greater good of the Empire – hoo-ah!

To follow Vader from his beginnings as a young part man, part machine to his final state as the Emperor's chosen go-to guy, would be quite an experience. It would certainly be something to tell the grandkids.

As a trooper, you would undertake all sorts of dangerous missions with objectives that in all likelihood would affect you in no way. Putting down a Wookie rebellion, cleaning up some Jawas who thought they could cheat the Emperor, hunting down Rebels – these probably aren't things you'd think about doing on your own. But you do them, because you are told to and you are faithful. You are given some phony plastic armor in white, the color that you would want least for combat situations (unless in snow) and a cheap blaster that Wal-Mart could easily replicate and sell for twenty bucks. You don't mind, you do the job. Your life is the job, the Empire, the will of your lord, the Emperor. You probably gain none of the human pleasures others strive for, such as money, fame, and women. It's you and your brothers, fighting a blind fight, and you give no second thought to the subject. You selflessly protect the Empire from the anarchy brought on by the Rebels. The Rebels have no idea what they're fighting for – they only know what they're fighting against. But you know your purpose: to serve the Emperor unwaveringly.
Farewell
By Claire Noell

Well, here I am, at my computer again. Even though finals have ended and graduation is upon us, work still remains to be done. However, I don’t mind, since in another couple of months it will begin again. Today, I went to chapel to watch the wonderful senior slideshow created by Nisha and Courtney, who did a fantastic job. Looking at all of those pictures brought back so many memories of my years here. It seems like high school went by quickly, but we really did spend four solid years here, snuggling in the fields, tripping on the walkways, and scurrying to the library to finish homework. Although the work is sometimes tough and frustrating, you learn to appreciate this place because of the wonderful opportunities it presents you. You learn so much from amazing teachers who become more your friends than authority figures.

Although I hardly feel old enough, in August I will move into a dorm at Vanderbilt and begin college. A few nights ago, I was on Facebook, the clever website that quickly grows into a powerful addiction, and I was looking at some of my future classmates. I soon became distressed, realizing that I would be practically alone, fending for myself to meet new people and make new friends. One thing that comforts me is the fact that I will always have my high school friends, even though we will be apart.

High school has been a blast, and I’m going to miss it. It turned out as a farewell to the school. I have loved my time here, and I will miss each and every one of you. It’s going to be weird waking up and realizing that I don’t have to drive to the cane fields to go to school, but I think I’ll get used to it. We can always come back to visit.

Thank you to all of my teachers, who have taught me more than I’ll ever know, and for being friends as well as mentors. Thank you, Mr. Chrysler, for your abounding patience, and for helping me get into college; it all worked out for the best in the end. Thanks for four wonderful years, and I will miss all of you.

Movie Review: Date Movie
By Rizwan Merchant

Enter Julia Jones, one of the most hideous women in existence, who goes through a major makeover to find the man of her dreams, the British Grant. Throughout the course of the film, the couple must Meet the Parents, find The Wedding Planner, prevent Grant’s best friend, Andy, from destroying her Best Friend’s Wedding, then attend their Big Fat Greek Wedding. I know what you’re thinking: sounds like another one of those horribly done movies that people see because it’s just that bad. However, I did not anticipate having my mind blown to pieces from the immense pain of seeing the movie.

The plot of the movie is pretty typical: girl meets boy, girl falls for boy, and girl must defeat boy’s ex-girlfriend for his heart. Most of the attention to plot is lost as soon as the movie introduces some of the most uncreative jokes ever to be conceived. I’m pretty sure I could have rewritten at least a dozen jokes and made them ten times as funny, if I hadn’t been doubling over in pain from seeing the world’s vast collection of cliché jokes all in one full-length movie. The sad part is that someone out there was crazy enough to let this pathetic excuse for a comedy escape his grasp and become a major theatrical release.

Bottom line is, if you are bored on a Friday night and need something to do, I highly discourage you from Date Movie, unless of course you love piling all your favorite movies, such as Star Wars, Lord of the Rings, Wedding Crashers, Napoleon Dynamite, and a few truckloads more into a blender and watching the result. There are definitely many better ways to waste 80 minutes of your life: go bowling, go to the mall, play video games, or hey—see something else in theaters...something that won’t cost you as many brain cells as this movie will.
Thine Play Shall Sucketh  
By Blair Foster

We thespians have problems
which we can't profess.
To voice our humble opinions
would seem mediocre at best.

Our play may suck, our lines we'll fault,
though thespians we'll remain,
until the curtain falls on us,
and in our minds it rains.

For neither tragedy nor life nor death
shall keep us from the show.
Our embarrassment shall remain,
our red cheeks forever glow.

For when that tretful performance comes,
laughter shall parade.
The crowd breaks out,
and stupid actors prance and cavalcade.

It dances in our minds
and rings within our ears,
the image burned forever,
'til our dying years.

Neither tricks nor repression
shall keep it from our minds;
that sad, sad day when
we all forgot our lines.

You might be from ESA if...  
By Alex Melton

You might be from ESA if:

you know when it's Friday by the color of Mr. Tut's socks.

you eat lunch with 400 caterpillars on your plate
and think nothing of it.

the word "Tripod" evokes images of a dog and/or

wrench.

you think Super Mario has nothing to do with a video game.

you gauge how tall something is by saying, "Man, that's taller
than Coach Rhoades."

you use the word "free" as a noun, as in "I have a free."

people say "Manchild" and you know about whom they are
talking.

you consider birthdays emergency announcements.

State championships seem commonplace.

the phrase "Buc-Buc" gets your blood pumping.

you pay $2 to wear a t-shirt and shorts.

you know the difference between regular water and Cade water.

you've ever asked the assistance of 350 people in the quest to
find your calculator.

The Dickens/Mecho Experience  
By Amy Meche

This piece was written for Ms. Gray's course when our class received
an assignment to create a character in the style that Charles Dickens would
have. It is told from the point of view of Great Expectations' Pip, and takes
place directly after he meets the Lord Chief Justice's proprietor, on the way
back to Jaggers' office.

I walked briskly away from the man and his mildewed
clothing, and a shudder wracked my body as I pictured his image
in my mind. I thought of the mad grimace that had played upon
his face when he had leaned in towards me to shake my hand,
which I now wiped vigorously against my trousers in an attempt
to rid it of the residue I was certain I felt from his wrinkled and
greasy palm. I raised my hand to my face, turning it this way and
that in hopes that a rebel ray of sunlight would pierce the
menacing gray haze all about me and illuminate the lines of my
stained palm. I became so preoccupied in studying the recently
acquired faults of my own flesh that I took a tumble over
something that felt like a rock somehow softened by time. I
plunged forwards, recovering my wits quickly enough to extend my arms, almost as if in protest of my fall. My hands hit the wet cobblestones with a muffled slap, and I pushed myself upright again with so much momentum that I stumbled backwards in doing so.

"Ye’ve got to watch yer balance when the ground’s wet like this, sir," came a voice from below me, small and trembling. I looked down to discover that the something I had tripped over was actually two somethings – two dainty little feet clothed in dainty little slippers masked by so much dirt and soot that I could not discern their original color. My eyes traveled upwards, scanning the figure of a girl scarcely younger than myself, leaning her back against the alley wall. Her arms were wrapped around her knees, which she’d drawn in towards her chest, and her hands clasped together so tightly that I could see her knuckles turning white even through the thin layer of brown that seemed to cover her entire person.

I stood in silence for a few moments before it washed over me that I had disturbed her...disturbed her from doing whatever she had been doing before I had tripped over her. "I’m awfully sorry, miss," I said. "I hope I didn’t hurt you."

"Oh, there’s no need for you to be apologizin’ to me, sir," she said sweetly, the tremor still present in her words as she bowed her head. Her face was curtained by limp brown curls that had obviously lost their sheen. I stood in awkward silence before her, some magnetic force pulling me towards that area and away from bidding her farewell just yet. I gazed at her for a few seconds, and noticed that she was struggling to keep her shoulders from shaking. I took a step towards her and lowered myself into a crouch beside her. I was moved by pity, but my sympathy was not enough to overpower my disgust at the thought of contacting the surface of that London ground again.

"Did I hurt you?" I asked, slightly puzzled. She looked up at me immediately, an expression of alarm in her face.

"Oh, no, sir!" she assured me.

"What’s the matter, then?"

She stayed silent, shaking her head back and forth ruefully, before bursting out, "Some gentleman ‘as made off with me basket of flowers!’ She sighed emphatically. "‘E just wrapped ‘is ‘and ‘round me arm and then pulled- just pulled ‘em right outta my ‘and!" She shook her head mournfully once more, looking away from me.

"He doesn’t sound like much of a gentleman to me," I offered. "Did he hurt you?"

She turned her face towards me again and laughed a little flute-like laugh. "Yer awfully worried about me gettin’ hurt, sir," she said slowly, and I suddenly felt foolish.

"I’m new to London, and not used to its ways. It seems very dangerous to me," I said, more indignantly than I had intended.

She smiled at me gently, and I noticed for the first time the sheen in her eyes that was lacking in her tresses. I was suddenly ashamed at my own insecurities in the presence of the bravery and assurance I saw twinkling almost nobly at me from those two silver-blue orbs situated in that tarnished visage. "Well, to tell ye the truth, I ‘ave been hurt afore, but it ain’t nothin’ my brothers an’ sisters ‘aven’t taught me to ‘andle," she said brightly, then leaned in towards me as if about to divulge a secret. "I’m the youngest," she said.

I nodded once, curtly, then asked her whether we shouldn’t contact the police and attempt to find her thief. She smiled gently at me again. "The police ain’t very concerned with us flower girls," she said.

"But surely if I were to talk to someone..." I began, and her sweet smile hardened into a knowing smirk before she interrupted me. "Oh, I’ll be fine, sir," she said. "It ain’t...it ain’t your place to go about helpin’ a girl like me." My mouth snapped shut at her comment, which had some strange intention of comfort hidden behind a mask of scorn. I felt the shame creeping up into my cheeks, manifested in a burning red that I could actually feel in my face. My blush was violent, ugly, and I couldn’t help but notice against her own hollowed cheeks a hint of healthy blush, rosy and refined though barely detectable through its brownish overcoat.

"Well, I really ‘ave to be goin’," she said, rising slowly. I followed suit, and she began brushing her dress off frivolously with her hands. "Thankee kindly for yer offer, sir. I’d advise ye to watch yer step more closely from now on." She tilted her head at me, then turned her back and began to walk off. I took a single step towards her, my mouth already open, prepared to offer her my services again, not hesitant for her to see my eager desire to help her. However, the same force that had kept me near her only minutes ago bade me keep silent, and I stared after her retreating figure, suddenly aware of a sickening discontent with myself bubbling up from the pit of my stomach.
Polls by Marc Fernandez

**WHO WOULD WIN IN A FIGHT?**

- Indiana Jones
- Vin Diesel
- Mr. T
- Chuck Norris
- Godzilla
- Aaron Carter

**WHAT'S THE BEST MOVIE EVER MADE BY HUMANS?**

- Casablanca
- The Wall
- Terminator 2: Judgment Day
- The Notebook
- The Passion of the Christ
- Plan 9 from Outer Space
- Harold & Maude
- Fight Club
- The Octagon
- "All of these suck"

**WHO SHOT KENNEDY?**

- Lee Harvey Oswald
- Gunmen on the Grassy Knoll
- The Government
- Michael Moore
- Chuck Norris
- Not dead, living w/ Evis, Tupac, Biggie, Lee & Bridge display
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Special Thanks To:
George Arceneauxs, for providing all of the artwork for this issue
Mrs. Lynn Blevins, for the time and effort you contributed in order to make publishing this issue possible
Mr. Cabell Tutwiler, for your ceaseless love for and support of The Eclectic