

THE TEEN APPEAL

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Students debate merits, drawbacks of the Capstone Program

Sean Roberts II
Trezevant High School

Many factors contribute seniors' stress levels.

They include, but are not limited to, graduation, homework, jobs, family and social pressures. Some seniors would add the Capstone Project to that list.

The Capstone Project is a project that all seniors must complete. It is comprised of four components: a research paper, an oral presentation with PowerPoint, a product and a portfolio.

The portfolio should include the research paper and documentation, copy of the product and PowerPoint and all the required forms as specified in the Capstone Manual (including parent/teacher approval forms, letter of intent, grading rubrics and any other documentation that is relevant to the student's topic).

The Capstone Manual (2009) states: "The purpose of the Capstone Project is to allow your child the opportunities to demonstrate what he or she knows and is capable of doing in the world after graduation."

Some seniors felt the Capstone was a waste of time, a limited commodity for most high school seniors.

Ebony Stanback, a senior at Trezevant High School, is one of them.

"It is not worth the effort, and it took up most of the seniors' time," Ebony said.

Michael Anderson, a senior at Manassas High

School, agreed.

"We've been in school since kindergarten. I don't think its right for us to do a Capstone in order to graduate," Michael said.

Other students found the Capstone Project extremely helpful as they prepared for college.

Tiara Dilliard, a senior at Raleigh-Egypt High School, was one of them.

"It was worth the effort because it helps you write a research paper especially if you have never written one before," Tiara said.

Correy McClatchie, a senior at Manassas High School, expressed his appreciation for the project also.

"The Capstone helps enhance your abilities, especially if you plan to go to college," Correy said.

Department Chair for Special Education at Trezevant High School, Shameka Blair, emphasized the importance of the final high school learning experience.

"You will be more than likely required to complete a Capstone/research project in college, but the requirements will be much more extensive. So, this is a great idea to expose students to a portion of college curricula," Blair said.

Students expressed ideas about how to change the capstone in order to alleviate some of the senior year stress,

including beginning the capstone program earlier in a student's high school career.

Some seniors suggested the Capstone Projects begin during their junior year, continue throughout the summer, and end in the first semester of senior year.

Although Ebony said she thought the project was a waste of time this year, she felt it could be more effective if done differently.

"It would be best to start junior year so there is more time to prepare for it because it's a lot of work to do in one school year," she said.

"It would be best to give us the

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Photo by Sean Roberts II, Trezevant High School
Trezevant senior Devuntre Edinburg presents his Capstone Project

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Students react to changes in the MCS proposed plan for 2012-2013

By Alexas Arrington, Vanezia Hamilton
Cordova, Middle College High School

Memphis City Schools Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Dr. Linda Kennard, discussed the district's academic plan for the 2012-13 school year with Teen Appeal staff, which includes a number of bold initiatives, including a possible six-day school week.

Kennard said it is difficult to predict which or how many of its proposals will be enacted and funded, especially with the uncertainty of consolidation on the horizon. She said the plan is intended to start a conversation and to begin the process of setting priorities.

The goal of the plan is to improve teaching in MCS and to help the district evolve.

The MCS academic plan features enhanced programs of study for kindergarten through high school. So how is this new academic plan to be different from what MCS is currently doing?

Elementary school students would have a six-day school week and Saturdays would be used for interactive activities and field trips, such as poetry jams and intramural sports.

Middle school students would have an hour and a half added on the each school day, which would equal 10 extra school days at the end of the semester. However, a major change associated with this plan is students would not be assignment homework.

MCS high school students could choose between three different graduation paths, ranging from two to four years. The proposed plan also includes the addition of technology-based tools, such as mobile devices, e-books and digital textbooks.

According to Kennard, the variety of pathways to graduation offer more flexibility for students through a variety of unique, extracurricular resources, such as internships, independent learning and field studies.

Kennard said, "The way we teach has to evolve...education is more than state assessments and test scores."

She continued: "This plan gives the power to the students and makes high school work for learners. Students deserve access to the best."

The overall academic targets of the plan include: attaining a district average ACT score of 19, 90 percent graduation rate, 93 percent attendance rate and ensuring that all students are college or career ready.

However, this plan has more obstacles to cross before it will be implemented into the school system, including the consolidation issue, a lack on funding and many skeptical parents.

Cordova high school parent, Felicia Munn said: "I object to this so called academic plan. It's not fair to the students, parents or teachers. If the children are at school most of the time, who will be raising the children?"

She continued: "Where have we seen this plan actually work? You can't compare the U.S. to Japan. They have a totally different moral system. It will encourage more students to drop out."

Munn said there were many unanswered questions about the academic plan.

Jasmine Norris, a Cordova high school senior, has younger siblings and believes this plan will be very beneficial to them.

Norris said: "I don't think one of my younger sisters would mind going to school longer. As for the other one, she would struggle a little bit. My mother would have more time to work and enjoy her days off.

She continued: "I wish they would have started this when I started school. I could possibly have my own business by now."

How do the younger students feel about this plan? It will affect them the most. The way they have been taught and the system could completely change.

Alyssa Arrington, current MCS sixth Cordova Middle School grader, said: "It's necessary for some students to stay in school six days a week, because some students need more help than others. I don't think as many people would show up for class and behavior would be a lot worse, because they didn't get enough time away from teachers or the break they needed."

The plan is currently in the development stages and would not go into affect until the 2012-2013 school year. The committee will have to attend a board staff conference and meet with the community to convince administrators and parents that the plan is feasible.

According to Kennard: "MCS can either stay with the 50's and 60's or get with the program. In order for the plan to work it will need public will, public funds and public action."

Another major roadblock is the issue of funding due to the increase in transportation and technology costs, and teacher salaries associated with the plan. Kennard believes one solution could be choosing several of the most exciting facets of the plan and focusing on them.

She said: "This plan is intended to start and stimulate conversation about the current school system."

Kennard continued: "The ultimate goal is to give our students a world class education and to make them ready to compete for jobs worldwide."

Munn is still skeptical of the benefits of this plan. She says: "What we need to do is expose our children to more culture so they are prepared to interact with different types of people after completing high school. The academic plan is a list of things

US falls behind world in educational rankings

By Aquira Montgomery
Ridgeway High School

The U.S may be one of the most powerful countries in the world, but according to recent rankings, it may not be the brightest crayon in the box.

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) report, which compares the knowledge and skills of 15-year-olds in 70 countries around the world, ranks the United States 14th out of 34 countries for reading skills, 17th for science and a below-average 25th for mathematics.

According to USATODAY.com, those scores are higher than those from 2003 and 2006, but are still far behind the highest scoring countries, such as South Korea, Finland, China, and Singapore.

"The education system's an absolute mess, but we've got all the time in the world for high gas prices and wars."

"This is an absolute wake-up call for America," U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan said in an interview with The Associated Press. "We have to get much more serious about investing in education."

"When I was in school, we earned our grades. Teachers didn't just hand them out," said Gwendolyn Cunningham, the parent of a Ridgeway senior.

Both parents and lawmakers agree that the key to improving public education in America is hiring skilled and effective teachers in all classrooms. But is that really all it takes?

The future of America's education system still remains to be seen, but the Memphis City School board has been hard at work developing a plan they hope will completely transform the MCS system for the better.

The new academic plan proposed for the 2012-2013 school year may sound really good on paper, but some people are skeptical as to whether it will really help MCS students or how likely it is to be enacted in full.

"For this plan to work, it's important for us to be open to change," said Linda Kennard, the executive director of curriculum and instruction for Memphis City Schools.

Adding an hour and a half to the school day in middle school, implementing a six-day school week in elementary schools, and letting high schools choose between two and four year paths to graduation are just a few things on the agenda.

According to the PISA report, the United States is ranked 24 in instructional hours per year, after Finland, Korea, the Netherlands and Japan.

"All this change sounds really good, but you can't get hyped off talk. That new plan takes money MCS doesn't have," said Ridgeway senior Lauren Smith.

Senior Wills and Testaments

Teen Appeal seniors reflect on senior year, leaving behind the following:

I, Carmen Scruggs, would like to bequeath my attendance to Teen Appeal meetings to Sonia Ajmera. I will, ceiling tiles, toilet seats, paper towels, and rat poison to White Station High School. I will laughter and optimism to those that take life too seriously or lack happiness in their life. The most important lesson I have learned is to do my best in everything I endeavor, because I would never know what I could have accomplished without having tried. I have had many triumphs and just as many downfalls, but without taking the risk of rejection, I never would have experienced the wonderful opportunities I have had. "What would you do if you knew you could not fail?" - Robert H. Schuller; is a quote I keep in mind every day. One of my greatest attempts I made was applying to The Teen Appeal. By writing for such a diverse and large newspaper staff, I have acquired interviewing and writing skills and improved my abilities in regards to research and organization. Joining the Teen Appeal further increased my aspiration to be a broadcast journalist and strengthened my desire to continue a career in journalism. I thank Marcus Matthews for guiding me in my writing and serving as an inspiring role model, The Scripps Howard Foundation for funding the paper, and The Commercial Appeal for printing and distributing The Teen Appeal. Furthermore, I would like to thank all my teachers, especially Ms. Hall, Ms. Wexler, and Ms. Ennis, and my track and field coach, Sergeant Myers. I have been very fortunate to attend such an excellent and accepting school, and I am blessed to have had so many opportunities.

To all future students and underclassmen I would like to will originality. Being yourself is so important. Everyone wants to have friends and be liked but when you are not yourself, you will never feel right. Don't do anything you don't want to do, stay true to who you are, and always uphold your morals and values. Being unique and different is what makes you, you. Instead of wasting time trying to impress others by being just like them spend time getting to know yourself because truly knowing who you are is the best gift you can give yourself. Always remember that we are all victims of our own decision-making so continue to do the right thing because it will always pay off.

Overall, high school has been a great experience for me. I learned a lot and made life long friends. But the best thing I experienced was laughing everyday. That is why I would also like to will a great sense of humor. No matter what happens or how something makes you feel, if you can find a great group of friends you can laugh with and remember old stories, it can make a world of difference.

My favorite part of Teen Appeal goes all the way back to last July, during the camp. I had fun with my friends from Middle College, I met new people, and I got to experience life on the University of Memphis Campus. My favorite part of camp was checking in, I would always say something funny and unexpected.

I will miss my friends from Middle College and at the Teen Appeal after we go our separate ways. I will also miss debating in the Memphis Urban Debate League. I made a lot of friends, and learned many skills as a debtor. I would like to thank the teachers that didn't give up on me, even when I had given up on myself, such as Mrs. Mooney my physics teacher.

The Teen Appeal has taught me so much. I felt like a real journalist. I had to write stories, do research, and meet deadlines, even though I did not always meet them. I really enjoyed the Teen Appeal Journalism Camp. I met so many new and interesting people and realized that there are many different people in the world but when we all come together it can be magical. I would like to thank Marcus Mathews, Kathleen Fox, and all the other great Teen Appeal staffer members that I had the pleasure to work with this year for an amazing experience. To the Class of 2010, I wish you nothing but success, happiness and a little luck.

Middle College students entertain with contemporary version of classic

By Vanezia Hamilton
Middle College High School

The Middle College drama department presented *Antigone Now*, a short drama inspired by Sophocles, written by Melissa Cooper.

Antigone Now was the first play performed at Middle College in two years. Jen Wood-Bowien, the director of the Middle College drama department, directed the play.

Janiece Johnson described the unique process of performing this current spin on this historical work, saying: "Working on *Antigone Now* was an interesting experience for me because reading the story and acting it out gave it a whole new meaning."

After the death of their father, Oedipus's two sons, Polyneices and Eteocles, agreed to share leadership of

Thebes. But Eteocles refused to yield the throne to his brother after his first term.

In *Antigone Now*, this sub plot was cut out and only the three main characters, Antigone, played by Wynter Haley Scott, Ismene, played by Janiece, Creon, played by Marcus Jackson and the chorus remained.

Janiece appreciated the support she got from cast members.

"The cast was great and working with Wynter [Scott] helped my character's role become more realistic because I could easily play off her emotion," she said.

There was a split in the students' opinions of the play. Personally, I enjoyed the play and its unique perspective on this famous tragedy.

Booker T. Washington steps up to The Challenge

Staff Reports

In the midst of all the consolidation drama, MCS has cause to celebrate.

On April 21, the Race to the Top Commencement Challenge kicked off with Booker T. Washington High School in the running to have President Barack Obama as its commencement speaker.

"I can not explain how proud I am of my students and staff for this outstanding accomplishment," said Alisha Kiner, principal at Booker T. Washington. "This announcement is a testament to the wherewithal, hard work and dedication of our students, teachers, support staff, and the BTW community."

On the day of the announcement, Supt. Kriner Cash expressed his excitement, saying:

"Today's announcement is fantastically exciting news for Booker T. Washington High School, the City of Memphis, the state of Tennessee, and the entire Mid-South Region," he said.

"The fact that our students at BTW come to school everyday despite many challenges shows their resilience and desire to be great," Supt. Cash added.

The public voting period began Thursday, April 21, 2011 at 7:00 a.m. CDT, and will end on Friday, April 29, 2011 at 10:59 p.m. CDT.

According to a press release from MCS, the final 3 schools will be announced either Tuesday, May 3rd or Wednesday, May 4th. From there, President Barack Obama will select the winner – which will be

announced later that week or the beginning of the following week.

BTW was among six finalists which also included Bridgeport High School in Bridgeport, Wash., Wayne Early Middle College High School in Goldsboro, N.C., Science Park High School in Newark, N.J., Pittsburgh CAPA 6-12, School for Creative and Performing Arts in Pittsburgh, Penn., and High Tech High International San Diego, Calif.

"I want to congratulate the six finalists for all they've done to prepare

their students for college and careers, and I want to thank all of the schools that applied," said President Barack Obama. "I look forward to meeting the students and teachers of the winning school at their commencement."

MCS is requesting that when people log on to rate Booker T. Washington High School, they use their best judgment by submitting only one vote using the official website: www.whitehouse.gov/commencement.

A spokesperson for MCS expressed the seriousness of enforcing these rules within the community:

"We need to ensure that all of the Booker T. Washington High School ratings count. The students and staff at Booker T. Washington have worked really hard to be selected as one of the six finalists in the Race to the Top Commencement Challenge. Let us help them win the challenge with integrity."



Find your graduation

School	Date	Place	Time
BTW	May 20	Orpheus Theatre	6 p.m.
Carver	May 21	Cannon Center	9 a.m.
Central	May 14	Cook Convention	10 a.m.
City	May 15	Christ the Rock	3 p.m.
Cordova	May 17	Hope Presbyterian	7 p.m.
Craigmont	May 22	Cannon Center	7 p.m.
Douglass	May 14	Cannon Center	1 p.m.
East	May 22	Orpheus Theatre	2 p.m.
Fairley	May 20	Cook Convention	7 p.m.
Frayser	May 18	Orpheus Theater	6 p.m.
Hamilton	May 14	Cook Convention	6 p.m.
Hillcrest	May 22	Canon Center	2 p.m.
Hollis Price	May 15	Lemonye-Owen	2 p.m.
Kingsbury	May 21	Orpheus Theater	11 a.m.
Manassas	May 21	Cannon Center	5 p.m.
Melrose	May 17	Cook Convention	6 pm.
Middle College	May 21	Orpheus Theatre	5 p.m.
Mitchell	May 22	Cannon Center	6 p.m.
Northside	May 14	Cook Convention	2 p.m.
Oakhaven	May 19	Orpheus Theatre	7 p.m.
Overton	May 18	Cannon Center	6 p.m.
Raleigh Egypt	May 21	Cook Convention	10 a.m.
Ridgeway	May 19	Cook Convention	7 p.m.
Sheffield	May 21	Cannon Center	1 p.m.
Trezevant	May 19	Cannon Center	6 p.m.
Westwood	May 21	Mt. Vernon	10 a.m.
Whitehaven	May 21	Cook Convention	6 p.m.
White Station	May 22	Cook Convention	3 p.m.
Wooddale	May 15	Cook Convention	2 p.m.

Teen Appeal seniors talk about their past, future

The Teen Appeal congratulates this year's graduating seniors. A few of our senior staffers shared their thoughts on their high school experiences and plans for the future.

Vanezia Hamilton, Middle College High School

What is the most important skill you have gained from writing with The Teen Appeal?

Writing for the Teen Appeal I have learned the importance of meeting deadlines.

What are you looking forward to most about college?

In college I'm mostly looking forward to freedom. I get to set my own rules, time of bed, class time etc.

Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

In the next 10 year I can see myself with a successful cake baking business, and about to start a family of my own.

What are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?

My greatest strengths are creativity and enthusiasm, my weaknesses is procrastination.

Do you have any advice for underclassmen?

My advice to all underclassmen is, keep going, and don't slack off at the end of your high school career.

Carmen Scruggs, White Station High School

What are you looking forward to most about college?

I am most excited about enjoying the overall college experience. I can't wait to meet new people, join awesome clubs, and attend packed football and basketball games, and other sporting events. Michigan State has a huge campus with a large variety of people and offers many great activities that I cannot wait to participate in.

What are your future career aspirations?

I plan to major in Broadcast Journalism with a minor in Communications in hopes of becoming a sports reporter or eminent television news broadcaster. I know that achieving my goals will take a lot of hard work and dedication, but I am anticipating the challenges in the field and can't wait to overcome them.

Do you have any advice for underclassmen?

My greatest advice for underclassmen is to try your best in everything. Some of the classes taken freshman and sophomore year seem pointless, but don't slack off, because although it doesn't seem like it, those earlier grades do matter. I would also advise not overwork. Taking seven APs may put you at the top of your class, but there should be a balance of work, extracurricular activities, and enjoyment. High school should be a learning experience and developing period, not a harsh memory of crunched time, stress and overexertion.

Do you have a personal motto or quote that you live by?

"Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover." -Mark Twain

Sean Roberts II, Trezevant High School

What is the most important skill you have gained from writing with The Teen Appeal?

Writing articles and reporting the truth.

Tell us about one of your best experiences in high school?

Winning academic all-star.

Do you have a personal motto or quote that you live by?

I say what I mean and mean what I say.

Do you have any advice for underclassmen?

Try out for everything and have fun with it.

Do you plan to contribute to your community after college?

Yes, I plan to come back and help the future debaters of Trezevant High School and come back and help future Teen Appeal staff members.

Briawna Jones, Cordova High School

Do you have a personal motto or quote that you live by?

I live by the motto "to each his own" because I believe it is extremely important to embrace the

unique differences of individuals. Most people make fun of the things in life that they do not understand, so I try my hardest to learn to accept people as they are.

What are your future career aspirations?

I want to be the Oprah Winfrey for my generation. I plan to have my own magazine and a syndicated talk show.

Do you have any advice for underclassmen?

Senior year is way closer than you think, so cherish every moment because when it ends, it end and your life will never be the same again.

What are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?

My greatest strength is also my weakness. I care about everything and everybody all the time. Caring is great but when you start to care too much it becomes a hassle and causes lots of stress and unnecessary worrying. I never do anything without wondering how it might affect the person on the opposite end.

Veronica Virgen, Ridgeway High School

What is the most important skill you have gained from writing with The Teen Appeal?

I've learned how to write an article for a newspaper. I've also realized the challenges that come with writing a successful article. Time management is very important; it is difficult to balance out a busy schedule and writing for the Teen Appeal.

Do you have a personal motto or quote that you live by?

"I know God will not give me anything I can't handle. I just wish that He didn't trust me so much." -- Mother Teresa. I believe that everything happens for a reason.

What are you looking forward to most about college?

I'm looking forward to a new atmosphere and being self-sufficient

Do you have any advice for underclassmen?

Have fun! Focus on school but also make sure you have fun. There's a time and a place for everything.

Iris Mosah, Ridgeway High School

What is the most important skill your have gained from writing with The Teen Appeal?

I'm grateful for my experience with the Teen Appeal because it provided me with so many opportunities to improve not only my writing, but interview and time-management skills.

Do you have a personal motto or quote that you live by?

The art of simplicity simply means making peace with your complexity.

What are you looking forward to most about college?

I'm looking forward to beginning a new chapter of my life and taking advantage of all the opportunities and experiences that come my way.

Do you have any advice for underclassmen?

Believe in yourself. Whether or not anyone believes in you, you ultimately have to have faith in yourself to achieve what you want in life.

Mia Jeffries, Oakhaven High School

What is the most important skill you have gained from writing with The Teen Appeal?

The most important skill I gained is time management. I learned how to complete groups of tasks in a timely manner.

Tell us about one of your best experiences in high school?

One of my best experiences in high school was completing Capstone. I am completely finished with English IV.

What are you looking forward to most about college?

New city, new people, new environment, and a whole new chapter in life.

Do you have any advice for underclassmen?

There is no limit to the things you are capable of doing, so reach for the stars and go for everything.

What are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?

My greatest strength and weakness is both the same; my stubborn ways allows me to stand for everything and fall for nothing. With that it also makes it hard for me to accept differences in my life.

OPINION

Graduation 2011 Cartoon:



Internships open door to professional world for students

By Marcus Matthews
Teen Appeal Coordinator

One of the biggest thrills that I ever experienced was sitting front row for nearly every Memphis Grizzlies basketball game for the 2001 season. I was only 21 years old at that time, and I had one of the most memorable times of my life.

I interned as a media relations associate for the Grizzlies during their first year in Memphis. My job was to make sure the journalists had the things they needed to do their jobs. There was a lot of ripping and running, fetching and following directions involved.

Although I did not get paid for the internship, I still gained a lot. I met people I might not have met otherwise. I got first-hand experience playing an important role for a multi-million dollar organization. I diversified and improved my resume and marketability, and I got to watch live NBA basketball and meet players whom I use to emulate as a teenager.

Candy Justice, my former teacher and adviser for my college newspaper at The University of Memphis, The Daily Helmsman, referred me to the team when they contacted her to find student workers.

My eyes nearly popped out of my head from excitement when she told me the team contacted her and she told them I would make a great intern. Although the internship was unpaid, I managed to get paid for writing for the team website, grizzlies.com, and its game day publication, Big Time Magazine. Those stories improved my writing portfolio as well.

Some of the interns stayed with the team and moved into professional positions after our internships ended. I decided not to pursue a job with the team, but the experience I gained from that opportunity was priceless.

I probably would not have interned for the Grizzlies had I not written for my college newspaper. I probably would not have written for my college newspaper had I not written for The Teen Appeal when I was in high school.

The Teen Appeal would like, not only to inform you about what is going on with MCS high schools, but also, to open doors to new opportunities for you.

THE TEEN APPEAL

Giving truth to Memphis youth

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Novel portrays Vietnam War in new light

The Things They Carried mixes fact, fiction to enlighten readers

By Natasha Mehra, Emily Billett
White Station High School

The Things They Carried is a war-story based on the Vietnam War in the 1970s by Tim O'Brien about the experience of an average foot soldier.

O'Brien draws upon events he experienced as a soldier in Vietnam to write about a platoon of soldiers. The author uses the emotions he experienced in Vietnam, not actual events, to write the book.

Tim O'Brien (the character in the book and narrator) writes of how he was drafted into Vietnam after being accepted into Harvard University. O'Brien struggles to accept that he must fight in a war that he opposes, posing a challenge to his inner strength.

Although *The Things They Carried*

does not (and does not attempt to) explain the political aspects of the war, I gained a greater emotional and psychological understanding of the war from the soldier's point of view by reading this book.

O'Brien tells his stories of Vietnam to help the reader understand the emotions the soldiers felt, rather than giving the reader empty facts incapable of invoking the desperate feelings of the soldiers.

The Things They Carried would be a nice complement to the study of the Vietnam War in a history class. However, the squeamish reader may be warned that, as it does detail war, this book is not for the faint of heart and some scenes and images have stuck with me.

One of the most memorable stories that O'Brien tells is that of a Viet Cong

soldier that he killed. O'Brien describes in vivid detail the death of this soldier, but later tells the reader that he made this story up to show how he felt when he saw this man die on a trail.

In addition, because the book is a collection of short stories, it lacks a defining narrative (for people who prefer a simple storyline), but I think that the disjointed nature of the book and the complexities of how Tim O'Brien interweaves the stories are powerful and intriguing.

Storytelling is a way for Tim O'Brien to cope with the painful memories left behind by the Vietnam War.

The Things They Carried is ultimately united by its theme of the lasting experience of war through a soldier's perspective. I highly recommend this novel to anyone interested in history or the military.

Book Notes

Title: *The Things They Carried*

Author: Tim O'Brien

Length: 233 pages

Other works by the author: *The Nuclear Age, In the Lake of the Woods, Tomcat in Love*

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Raleigh-Egypt senior Alexis Russell agreed.

What Ebony and Alexis said can be validated by the fact that some college students who submit thesis and dissertation projects begin working on those projects far before it is time to graduate.

Some students, including Correy, would like to see the Capstone used as a helpful tool required for only AP classes instead of as a basic requirement for graduation.

Some school administrators are listening to students and making small changes to the schedule of the Capstone Program, according to Blair.

"There are plans here at Trezevant to start teaching the freshman how to con-

struct and complete research papers. The rationale is that by their senior year they will have been exposed to that form of writing and research, which is ultimately the meat of the Capstone.

While the paper is not the only component of the Capstone, it does seem to be the most difficult for many students," Blair said.

The schedule for the Capstone differs from school to school. At some schools, the Capstone is issued in the beginning of senior year and must be completed before the second semester ThinkShow presentation day.

Some seniors would like to receive the maximum benefit in the college admission process by being

able to declare Capstone status in December of their senior year. Completing the capstone allows students to graduate with a Capstone certification.

According to the Capstone Project Manual for Tennessee, other districts in various cities throughout the country are structured in this way: Orientation sessions led by counselors should be the starting point for all projects. Eighth grade counselors introduce the opportunity of the Capstone project to students and parents. Then freshman and sophomores begin learning writing skills through their English classes and teachers help students organize a Capstone portfolio, which will follow the student

through the project.

Some schools may initiate a portfolio process freshman or sophomore year, accommodating the catch-up needs of transfer students in later grades.

Other schools can begin the Capstone Project process in junior year, continue it over the summer, and end it by the conclusion of the fall semester of the senior year.

The current Capstone program begins with a proposal submitted by August and a finished product by the middle April. For further inquiries regarding the Capstone Project, refer to the Capstone Manual or visit the Memphis City Schools at msck12.net.



Photo by Sean Roberts II, Trezevant High School senior Kiara Brown presents her Capstone Project

MEMPHIS HAPPENINGS

Michael Ingram
Fairley High School

May 2-8: The International Festival is part of the annual Memphis in May celebrations. Each year, the activities focus on a different country and culture. This year Belgium will be saluted.

May 5: Come and see comedian Martin Lawrence at the Desoto County Civic Center at 8 p.m. Tickets start at \$89.

May 5: Tricks Movie Screening at Malco Studio on the Square. Tricks tells the story of five Memphis prostitutes, their enterprising madam and the struggles of each to not only survive, but also thrive in a business that is judged as bad and unacceptable. The cost is \$8 and the event is from 7 p.m. thru 11 p.m.

May 6-14: Remington College is hosting prom night makeovers. This is for all high school students heading to prom. Services include haircuts, manicures, pedicures and makeup. Appointments are recommended and can be made by calling 901-396-8625.

May 9-10: The Celtic Woman: Songs from the Heart returns to the Orpheus for a two show appearance. Tickets start at \$30. Start time for both dates is 7:30 pm.

May 12-14: Memphis in May's World Championship Barbecue Cooking Contest at Tom Lee Park.

May 13: The Soul of Summer Tour is a two ballroom concert and after party event at The Memphis Peabody Hotel Grand Ballroom with Eric Benet, Jonathan Butler, saxophonist Eric Darius and songstress Maysa. Start time is 8 p.m. Tickets range in price from \$45-\$63.

May 19: Bon Jovi and Billy Falcon will be performing live at the FedEx Forum. Tickets start at \$52 and the start time is 7 p.m.

May 28: The Memphis in May International Festival ends on a musical note with an outside concert given by the Memphis Symphony Orchestra. The Memphis Symphony Orchestra will be joined by Memphis legends, The Bar-Kays for a tribute to the timeless music of Stax Records. As the sun goes down, the skies light up with a spectacular fireworks show.

Plan a day to come see your Memphis Redbirds at the AutoZone Park:

May 10: Redbirds vs. Sacramento: 7:05 p.m.

May 11: Redbirds vs. Sacramento: 7:05 p.m.

May 12: Redbirds vs. Sacramento: 7:05 p.m.

May 13: Redbirds vs. Sacramento: 7:05 p.m.



Michael Ingram, Jeremy Williams, Fairley High School, Central High School

What's hot

Waka Flocka feat. Wooh Da Kid "Watch my Power Spread"

This song is crunk. Waka is always putting out something that you can jam and dance to.

Mac Miller "Put it On"

Mac is a new kid on the block. But, he is stepping into the game with lyrics that flow, and a calm and laid back swagger. Hailing from Pittsburgh, this is one artist on the rise you should definitely look out for.

Soulja Boy "1Up"

Soulja Boy's new mixtape has dropped, and it is blazing the way for the rest of the album is his single 1Up! With crazy bass, this song will definitely have everyone jamming.

What's not

Rick Ross "Ashton Martin Music"

This was bumping, and still is. But, the radio plays this too much.

LMFAO "Smack the Paparazzi"

So shots were good, but this one is just plain ignorant. Come on guys, this one just does not bring it.

Lupe Fiasco feat. B.O.B "Who are you Now"

This song is alright, but Lupe and B.O.B just are not bringing the heat on this one. Step it up guys.

Mike Posner "Cooler than Me"

Mike's a cool artist, but, this song has been played too much, and after awhile, the loony lyrics make you want to go loony.

What's hot

Lady Gaga "Born this Way"

In this song Lady Gaga expresses her feelings toward the folks that are mistreated her and tells listeners to always be themselves.

Chris Brown "Look at Me Now"

Chris Brown is basically saying, although the media tried to destroy my name, I am still able to put out quality music.

Various artists including Eminem, Lady Gaga, Bruno Mars and Beyonce "Songs for Japan"

This song is designed to raise money for aid to send to Japan. When people buy the song for \$9.99 the money goes to the relief effort in Japan.

What's not

Green Day "Awesome as F**k"

There was another word you could have used besides that one. The title just dragged the song down the drain along with many of their other songs.

Nicki Minaj "Pink Friday"

Nicki's voice is great but the lyrics of the song are detrimental. It sounds like she is trying to change, but when she dresses the way she does listeners will either love or hate her. Plus radio stations keep playing it over and over again.

Gucci Mane "The Return of Mr. Zone 6"

First of all, that title lets listeners know the song has no purpose. Plus Gucci Mane raps about the same thing all the time. Your songs sound like a kindergartner wrote them, please find a new style.

Insidious terrifies viewers with unique suspense

By Vanezia Hamilton
Middle College High School

The word “insidious” means to be slowly and subtly harmful or destructive, according to the MSN Encarta dictionary, and the movie lives up to the definition. From the creators of Saw and Paranormal Activity, this horror film is the terrifying story of a family who, shortly after moving, discover that dark spirits have possessed their home and that their son has inexplicably fallen into a coma.

Trying to escape the haunting and save their son, they move again only to discover that it was not their house that was haunted.

The son, Dalton, played by Ty Simpkins, was excellent and he helped make the movie sincere and believable. I felt happy for Daltons at the end of the movie.

I enjoyed how the set designers placed certain objects, like an image of a jig saw made

famous in the Saw movies.

Some might say the movie was not that scary, and they laughed throughout the whole thing. I wanted to keep my eyes covered throughout the entire movie. The movie is not scary in the sense of dead bodies and buckets of blood, but it is scary because it makes you feel insecure.

Insidious makes you truly believe that there could possibly be malicious spirits stalking the living, plotting to take over anyone’s body. The movie is so good that I have resorted to a night-light.

If you do not believe me, go check it out, and ask yourself at night...what really made that creaking sound down the hallway?

Vanezia’s take:



Title:

Insidious

Rating:

PG-13

Running time:

1 hours and 43 minutes

Web site:

<http://www.insidious-movie.com/>

STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

Bring the real world into your classroom with the e-Appeal digital edition!

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Students, share this ad with your teachers so they can sign up today and enliven your classroom.

With easy navigational tools, you can flip through pages and skim headlines, just as you would with the traditional newspaper. Also, try out a fun, weekly multiple-choice quiz with articles from The Commercial Appeal, updated cartoon activities and a weekly geography quiz.

The e-Appeal is a great resource for all students, including student journalists with the Teen Appeal. You can read stories as models for your own writing. Also, you can use the word search to find articles on topics of interest in past issues.

How does a teacher sign up for the e-Appeal?

If your teacher hasn't registered for the e-Appeal this year, he or she can go to the NIE web page, www.nieonline.com/memphis and click on the "Register for the eAppeal at no charge" link at the top of the page, left of the log-in area. The teacher will fill out the form and submit. There is no charge to the teacher or school, thanks to the support of sponsors and your school district.

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Students use the teacher's e-mail address and a generic password that we provide. Students and teachers can access the e-Appeal any place where there is Internet access. So students can log in at home, public libraries, the computer lab, the school library, etc.

For further information, contact Bill Bailey at baileybill@commercialappeal.com



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SPORTS

Grizzlies reach playoffs for first time in four years, shock NBA world

By Natasha Mehra
White Station High School

On April 17, 2011, the Memphis Grizzlies made history in their tenth season in Memphis. Led by Zach Randolph and Marc Gasol, the Grizzlies defeated the San Antonio Spurs, winning their first playoff game ever as a franchise and upsetting the top seed in the Western Conference.

This season marks the first Grizzlies playoff appearance without Pau Gasol, the Grizzly who led Memphis to three previous playoffs appearances, but failed to gain a victory.

Until their first win against the Spurs, the Grizzlies had a winless playoff record of 0-12. As of April 28, the Grizzlies are up 3-1 in their series versus the Spurs and are one win away from winning the series and advancing to the second round.

The Grizzlies were so pleased with their first playoff victory, they resigned power-forward Zach Randolph for a four-year, \$71 million contract.

The team has worked to make it back into the playoffs since 2008, when they sent Pau Gasol to the Los Angeles Lakers, in return for Kwame

Brown, Javaris Crittenton, Aaron McKie, the draft rights to Marc Gasol, two future first round draft picks and cash considerations.

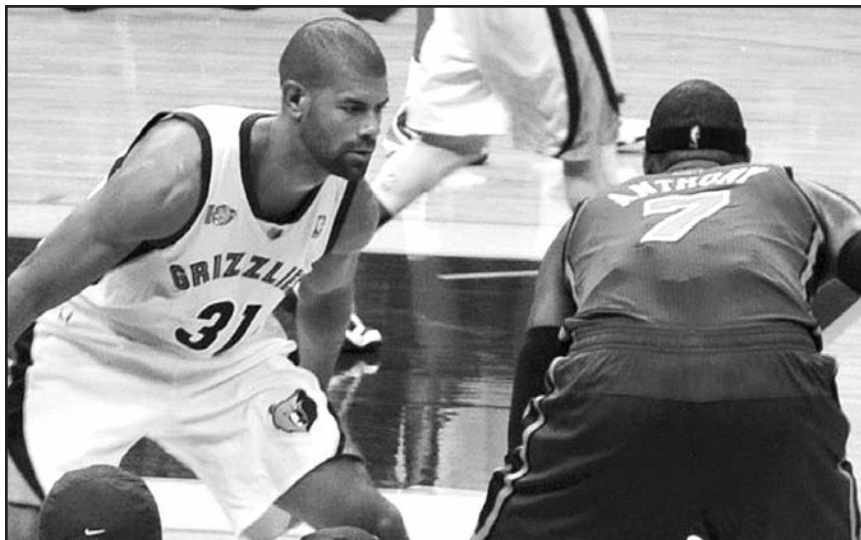
Grizzlies' General Manager Chris Wallace said this to The Commercial Appeal about the trade: "We got picks, we got his (Gasol's) brother -- a starting center -- and we got cap room that we could use in free agency or in doing trades. We got over half our roster in the deal."

The Grizzlies quest to rebuild their team began in the 2007-2008 season. Since then, the Grizzlies have only two of the same players on their roster: Rudy Gay and Shane Battier, who returned to Memphis this season in a trade with the Houston Rockets.

The changes made over the past few seasons have shown results this season, with Memphis having a record of 46-36. Now, the entire NBA world is cognizant of the Grizzlies, who have roared their way into the 2011 post-season, demanding respect from all.

The only thing remaining to be seen is if the Grizzlies can keep their team strong heading into next season. Center Marc Gasol's contract is also set to expire, and many teams around the NBA are looking to lure the 265-pounder.

If the Grizzlies keep up their high-quality play, they may be on their way



Photos by Anneliese Sloves, White Station High School
Memphis Grizzlies faced the New York Knicks on March 9, 2011



Photos by Anneliese Sloves, White Station High School
Memphis Grizzlies faced the New York Knicks on March 9, 2011

TECHNOLOGY

Fairley student develops MCS iPhone app

By Michael Ingram
Fairley High School

Devin Snipes has accomplished many goals in life, but none of them has been talked about like the iPhone application that he created for Memphis City Schools.

Devin, a junior at Fairley High School, has been developing applications for nearly two years now.

The reason he made the app was simple.

“I was inspired to create the application when I couldn’t find the number to Fairley High School,” Devin said.

“I created the application after I couldn’t find the number to the school to check for the registration times and because there was no application of its kind.”

On August 10, 2010, after an eight month process to complete the application, Devin released

an iPhone app that has gotten him recognition from news stations and the superintendent of Memphis City Schools, Dr. Kriner Cash.

Devin, also a snare drum player, is not new to making apps.

The application that he created was not his first, but actually his third. The name of the app is MCS for iPhone.

“The application is mainly an index of the Memphis City Schools website. MCS for iPhone provides up-to the minute news about Memphis City Schools, gives contact information for all schools, gives you navigational directions to and from any school within Memphis City Schools and the app is absolutely free,” Devin added.

Getting the app accepted wasn’t easy.

“The first time that I submitted the application, in July, it

was rejected because I was using a push notification feature that wasn’t ready to be public yet,” he said

“Push notifications are notifications provided by Apple, but implemented by the developer that sends immediate information to your phone. Basically it was creating problems connecting to their server. It was creating a problem because Apple has to verify the data that’s going to and from the device,” he added.

Although Devin said the overall process of making the app was not difficult, he did have a few problems.

“The hardest part about making the application was integrating a smooth and user-friendly way to browse through each school,” he said.

Devin has also made two additional apps that are available in the App Store, Am I Ugly and UChat.

“Am I Ugly is a toy applica-

tion that allows users to choose an image from their photo library or take one using the camera and it’ll generate a random response,” Devin said.

His second app was uChat.

“(uChat) is an application that uses Bluetooth to chat, it also is the first Bluetooth app to support walkie-talkie,” he explained.

Devin also has plans for future apps.

“Once I get MCS for iPhone prepared for the next update, I’ll consider creating an application for Shelby County Schools because I’ve gotten numerous emails from Shelby County teachers and administrators asking for one,” he said.

“Every day I look back and say, I’m thankful to have made this application. MCS for iPhone has changed many people’s

day-to-day lives. To me, this app has changed peoples’ lives by keeping them connecting with Memphis City Schools activities. More than 7,000 people use the app monthly, so it benefits someone.”

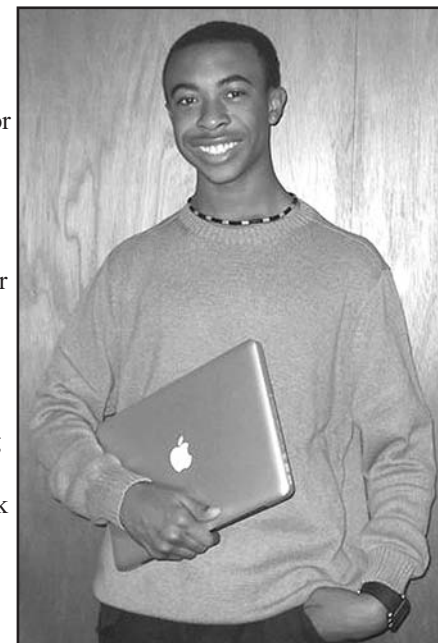


Photo courtesy of Devin Snipes

Colleges admissions find new use for social media websites

By Jeremy Williams
Central High School

High school students should be careful what they put on their Facebook, MySpace or Twitter pages because it might affect where they attend college.

Katheryn Nick, a Central High School senior said, “I

don’t put that much on my Facebook.”

Nick has the right idea, according to a Kaplan University survey of college admissions officers cited in the Huffington Post.

According to the survey, 80 percent of college admissions officers consider social media sites.

Possible harmful things

include photos of rude gestures, illegal activity and sexual suggestiveness.

These things could really hurt your chances into getting into a good college.

Rikishal Meeks, a sophomore at Central High School, said, “I only have my name, number, facts about me, and my IM user name.”

About.com suggests that the more info someone posts online, the higher their chances are of getting their identity stolen.

In an informal, unscientific survey of MCS students, only 44 percent cared about their identity being stolen.

Phuong Nguyen, a senior at Central High School said: “Its amazing how people

that care about their identity being stolen but don’t even take the steps to prevent their identity from being stolen.”

Colleges want responsible students to attend their college.

Nguyen said: “Facebook’s security settings don’t protect anyone.”

Summer is the season for flashy colors and bright hues!

STYLE

Feather earrings, cropped jackets and wedges are in for summer



By Briawwna Jones
Cordova High School

As the anticipation of the weekend dies down due to the coming of summer vacation, it is time to hit the stores and stock up on the latest fashions for the season.

Girls: Nothing screams summer more than a cute little sundress. Summer is a great season to play with color, florals and tribal patterns. It is also important to always have that one piece that pops. As far as accessories are concerned feather earrings are the new trend and a funky solid colored or floral printed scarf will bring fun to any dull ensemble.

Distressed jeans, cropped jackets and breezy maxi dresses are a few items that will be popular this summer. Sorry ladies, it is time to put away the boots, I know UGGs keep your feet room temperature, but there is a time and a place for everything, so instead, wear gladiator sandals or cute wedges.

Boys: Even though you do not have as many options as the girls, you can be just as fashionable by adding a little flavor to your wardrobe with a simple and ultra cute bowtie or layering with a light cardigan.

Try something new instead of the usual cargos and black dress pants. Instead, opt for cropped jeans and khaki chinos. Color applies for the boys as much as it does for the girls. A bright color will go a long way and give you a little more distinction from the rest of they guys around.

Remember, color is everything this season. It is the difference between you and everyone else.



Photos by Briawwna Jones, Cordova High School
Top Right: Briawwna Jones, Cordova High School
Top Left: Tiandra Austin, Tre' Daze, White Station
Bottom Right: Paul Anthony Holmes Jr., White Station
Bottom Left: Allen Moore, Joi Herod, White Station