Fall in love with Fairies p. 12

5 Facebook Smarts for Back to School

Warning! Tanning burns your health

Write and click: Photography plus poetry gives class a new meaning
Editor's Note

That's me, lying on a giant stone in my front yard. It’s probably one of the few photos to be published from my "awkward" years. Please note my bushy eyebrows and my lanky, bone-thin body because my metabolism ran faster than an Olympic gold medalist. Now, let’s leap to August of 2009. In the photo to the right, that’s my younger sister on the left. On the right is a smiling me, a completely different young woman than the one seen above.

For starters, I still have my lanky arms and legs, but I love them now. I still have days where I look in the mirror and pick apart one thing or another, but I am human, just like you. But from before the above picture was taken through this very moment, I always found comfort in reading. Stories about people and places near and far carried me to another world. I just wished that there had been a magazine when I was a young girl that could give me new information that wasn’t focused on fashion, unrealistic models, and superficial topics.

So here’s the first issue of True You Magazine with fun and informative stories that I would have enjoyed reading back then, and still keep my interest now.

Happy reading.

Cover photo by Cheryl Lemanski
Back cover photo by Dario Diament
Contributing Writers

Ashley Christiano is a recent magazine journalism graduate of S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications. She plans to attend graduate school and pursue a career in the publishing industry. Ashley rarely leaves the house without a book. Ashley explored the world of fairies in her article. Flip to page 12 to fly away with her.

Mallory Passuite studies magazine journalism at Syracuse University’s S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications and works as a part-time fashion consultant at Tony Walker & Co in Williamsville, New York. She is originally from Lockport, New York. She enjoys travel, fashion and people. Mallory used her passion in style to find out more in the world of denim. See page 18 to slip into some jean history.

Kaitlyn Pirie is a senior at Syracuse University studying magazine journalism. She interned at Real Simple throughout the summer of 2009 as a member of the research department and spent the previous summer at Vermont Magazine as an editorial intern. Kaitlyn wrote the story about the best ways to ruin your SAT score. Turn to page 26 to find out how.

Jamie Miles is a senior magazine journalism major in S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University. Her passions are writing, reading, racquetball, and music. Currently, Jamie is Jerk Magazine’s Web editor and plans to move to New York City post graduation to pursue a career in journalism. Jamie wrote about a transmedia course in the classroom.

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Simply Said...

“...and above all, watch with glittering eyes the whole world around you because the greatest secrets are always hidden in the most unlikely places. Those who don’t believe in magic will never find it.”

- Roald Dahl

Photo by Andrew Hefter
Want to soak up that summer sun on the beach? Or maybe at the pool? Or maybe you’re not even trying to be in the sun, you’re just outside all day long. Well despite the fact that the sun can turn skin from pale to a dark tan, it doesn’t mean it’s healthy. For some of you the coloring comes naturally, but for others the pastel may go to a lobster red first.

Why? Because the sun’s rays are burning your skin, and even if you’re lucky enough to skip that painful sunburn, you’re still getting that same damage as all of your friends, even if it doesn’t seem that way.

Tanning, whether it’s intentional or not, occurs because the sun’s rays contain ultraviolet radiation: UVA and UVB. The UVB radiation burns the top layers of skin (the epidermis) causing sunburn. UVA radiation goes through the top layers into the lower layers of skin creating that tan you may crave. When the UVA rays reach the lower layers they activate cells called melanocytes to make melanin. Melanin is the brown color that makes you look tan.

Even though melanin is produced to protect your skin from burning, it doesn’t mean that you’re protected from skin cancer and other problems caused by unprotected sun exposure. So when those UVA rays are giving you that great tan, it may be time to learn about how much that great looking tan may really be hurting you.

You’re not alone if you think that you look better with a tan. Some 80 percent of Americans under the age of 25 think they look better with a tan, but even if you think you may look better with a tan, you might be happier to be healthy rather than risk facing some of the following problems.

Those UVA rays that were talked about earlier can travel below the epidermis (top layers of skin) into the dermis (lowest layers of skin) and even beyond that. If the UVA rays go below the dermis, the rays can reach to blood vessels and nerves.

“80% of Americans under 25 think they look better with a tan.” - KidsHealth.org
Blood vessels and nerves are key parts of your body that work with your immune system, helping to keep you healthy and strong, protecting you from disease and illness.

When the UVA rays reach the blood vessels and nerves, they may damage your immune system, and your body may not be able to fight off a serious illness like melanoma, the most deadly type of skin cancer.

Melanoma leads to death if left undiscovered and untreated. More than one million new cases of skin cancer are diagnosed each year in the United States. Other forms of skin cancer are basal and squamous cell carcinoma. Even though, sun exposure may lead to death if you do get skin cancer, there are other forms of damage caused by sun exposure.

Look at the wrinkles on your parents faces! Chances are that they are from sun exposure. UV rays also are known to lead to an eye problem called cataracts.

Now you’re probably wondering how do I protect my skin from these terrors, but still enjoy outdoor activities, or more importantly look tan? Well there is hope! There are some recommendations for what to do and the number one is to stay out of the sun! Not possible? Don’t worry there are steps to keep your skin protected, safe, young, and healthy.

Sunscreens and sunblocks are the ultimate defense against those damaging UV rays. Wearing sunscreen every day keeps you protected, even during the winter when the sun’s rays are still as strong. On every bottle, there is a SPF number that lets you know what level of protection you’re getting — the higher the better! Make sure that the sunscreen is at least SPF 15, and the longer you’re in the sun, the more you’ll need.

**Broad-spectrum sunscreen** is the best, so look for a bottle that protects against both UVA and UVB rays. Now that you have your bottle of dual-protection, slather it on thickly and often. Reapplying sunscreen every 2 to 3 hours is also key to saving your skin, but also after swimming or sweating.

Sunscreen? Full protection? Well not exactly. Even though you’re going to have healthy skin, you don’t necessarily have to be pale. Tanning lotions, airbrush tans, and spray tanning give you a tan, and you’ll still be safe!

More than one million new cases of skin cancer are diagnosed each year in the United States. - KidsHealth.org

**Favorite Sunscreens!**

Check out some picks for great sunscreen that will keep you protected and not feel like your coated in goopy lotion.

**Neutrogena Sunscreens**

Neutrogena Sunscreens come in both lotion and sprays giving you the option to apply however you like, but both are great because they protect your skin.

**SolBar Sunscreen**

recommended by top dermatologists for people with extra sensitive skin, but still love to be out under the sun’s harmful rays!

**Coppertone Countinuous Sprays**

create an easy-on, no-rub sunscreen that’s great for hours in the sun!

**5 Facebook-Friendly Tips**

Basics to Keeping Your Friends in and Strangers Out

Written by Amanda Romaniello Photo by Jeremy Tarpley

You joined the top online social spot: Facebook. As a new face make sure you follow a few simple rules of Facebook etiquette, in order to be safe and friendly!

**1 Don’t share it all!** Only put up as much information as you would share with a distant acquaintance. Facebook friends only want some information; not all the ins and outs of your life. Keep contact information limited! No phone number! And definitely no address! If a friend wants to contact you, use the wonderful option of Facebook chat or sending a message.

**2 Don’t talk to strangers!** Including Facebook “friends.” If you have never heard of a person, she or he is not your friend. Your parents say you shouldn’t talk to strangers, the same goes for accepting friend requests. A trick to avoid random requests?

Change your privacy settings so that only your existing Facebook friends can search for you. Go into settings and click privacy settings. From there, choose search, and pick from the options that control who can search for you, and what they can see of your profile.

**3 Status updates: Addicted to changing your Facebook habit?** Kick it now. Limit what you share to important moments, not how you spend every waking moment.

**4 Look at me!** Or don’t, but first impressions last. This especially goes for your profile picture. Make sure that your picture shows you. A flattering photo of you and some friends always works.

**5 Lights, camera, action!** Photos and video capture those great moments worth sharing with friends. You can post even more photos per album, but be careful what you post. “For pictures, just remember who you are friends with! If your mom, dad or their friends are one of your friends, then they can see your pictures,” says Samantha Freedman, a junior at Syracuse University. “You are going to want to be careful!”

Photo by Jeremy Tarpley

Written by Amanda Romaniello
Taking control of one’s eating habits is an extremely important and empowering step for many teenagers. Although we are constantly inundated with over-processed and unhealthy fast-food items many young people are opting for more healthful diets.

Going vegetarian has become an increasingly appealing alternative, however if teens are not careful when switching to a non-meat eating diet, they run the risk of failing to consume an adequate amount of necessary nutrients.

The first step in adopting a vegetarian diet is to determine which food items one no longer wishes to consume. A pure vegetarian does not eat dairy, eggs, or meat—he or she prefers to eat only plant-based food items. This option requires the most legwork in order to find nutrient-rich alternatives. Other vegetarians are not as strict; some choose to eat dairy products or eggs while avoiding others. It is important to choose the option that works the best for you and your lifestyle.

The next step is to become informed, with proper education, it is possible for teenagers to be healthy vegetarians. Teens must be aware that as a vegetarian, certain nutrients will require extra concern. Iron, calcium, vitamin D, vitamin B12, and protein are particularly important and most at-risk for inadequate intake.

According to Dr. Mangels Ph.D and registered dietician, the key to a nutritious vegetarian diet is variety. By including fruits, vegetables, leafy greens, whole grain products, nuts, seeds and legumes teens can avoid falling into a rut of eating only convenient unwholesome non-meat items.

Teenagers should instead look for recipes that include whole-grain breads, cereals, peanut butter, tofu, and other soy-based products. Fortunately, websites like the Vegetarian Resource Group, www.vrg.org and many others can provide teens with simple yet tasty recipes that incorporate nutrient-rich ingredients.

Teenagers choosing to go vegetarian need to be particularly vigilant of their nutrient intake. The years between 13-19 are ones of rapid growth and change, making nutritional needs particularly high, Mangels states. Many teens today also have demanding schedules, between school, sports, and other extra-curricular activities it is critical that their bodies are functioning at optimum levels to be successful in all aspects of their busy lives. Teens should look for convenient options such as dried fruits and nutrient-rich energy bars available at health food stores and increasingly at major grocery stores.

The choice to go vegetarian is not an easy one, but it should be applauded. It shows concern for health, the environment, animals, and signifies a sense of self-accountability.

A successful transition to a vegetarian diet is rarely a rash decision. It is important to seek out information and gain the support of family, friends, and either a doctor or a nutritionist to make the change as smooth and healthy as possible.
On a cold December night in Ann Arbor, Bonnie Fox, Jordy Albert, eight other women, and one lone male sit clustered around a very strange object in an Irish pub. As the waitresses and busboys walk past the table, they give the group strange looks and ask them what that thing is. After explaining that it’s a MacHalo and what it does, Fox convinces one waitress to put it on. It gets passed around and around, as other waitresses try the MacHalo on.

“Machalo: (mac-hay-lo) for the ultimate in Shade protection, take one hot pink bike helmet, secure blazing LED lights to the surface, strap on, and kick Fae a**!” writes author Karen Marie Moning about her fictional invention for her Fever series.

But then the MacHalo jumped out of the series in 2008, when Moning created a real-life prototype. Her fans demanded to see it, touch it, wear it.

The MacHalo World tour sprang to life in January 2009. Every month, “Moning Maniacs” flock to see the nine pound helmet that protects against Shades, a type of ghostly monster that thrives in darkness and feasts on human flesh. And when the MacHalo makes its way to their area, the Maniacs meet up for a night of mayhem.

Fae in the urban fantasy genre. As vampires suck their last necks, werewolves howl their last goodbye, and zombies run out of fresh meat, the Fae have arrived to fill the supernatural void.

Faith, faery, faerie, fay, fae, wee folk, good folk, people of peace, fair folk, Sidhe, Seelie, Unseelie, aos sí… Whatever word comes up they all stand for the same people. The Fae are a race of mythological, supernatural beings. Most appear human, but are often exceptionally beautiful. The sparkly wings did not play a role in the original folk lore, most of which descend from Irish, Scottish, German, and Celtic myths. So think Galadriel and Legolas, not Tinker Bell and the Tooth Fairy.

“I’ve been trying to explain them as a race,” Fox says. “Like the term alien. You have aliens like in the movie Alien, aliens like the little green men, and lots of other kinds. It’s not just one, specific kind of alien, but a word that describes a range of beings.”

According to Amazon.com, about 50 fantasy books came out in 2009 that deal with the fae. Of the 2,722 books that Amazon users have tagged as urban fantasy (think True Blood, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, or Charmed), 138 of those books also deal with the fair folk.

While this doesn’t quite compare with the over 900 urban fantasy books about vampires, this subject has a growing interest in the underground community. “The increase in the fae and their popularity is not quite common knowledge yet,” says Fox. “But people are getting more and more excited about them.”

And, since the fae defy definition, authors have a much greater freedom in creating original characters. Bestselling urban fantasy author Richelle Mead takes the fae to another world.

Fans keeping hoping for films to come from Moning’s Fever series. Twentieth Century Fox/New Regency Productions optioned the rights to the Fever series. “I try not to get too excited about it,” says Jordy Albert, a Moning Maniac. “I’m torn. It
will be cool to see Mac’s world brought to life, but I want the way Karen writes to be translated well to film. If Karen is okay with the end result, I’ll be happy.”

The writing process won’t begin until Moning finishes the fifth, and last, Fever book in 2010. Until then, Moning’s fans will continue to take their devotion to new extremes.

A number of other movies about the fae are set to come out in the next two years as well, including a couple teen-friendly fae movies. In July 2009, Disney announced that Miley Cyrus would star in a film adaptation of Aprilynne Pike’s Wings.

This novel features 15-year-old Laurel (Miley Cyrus) and her journey from normal high-school student to human-sized fairy. The novel has often been compared to Stephanie Myers’ Twilight series, and Pike can only hope her movie creates as big a stir, and brings in as much money.

A darker young adult novel set to be turned into a film is Melissa Marr’s Wicked Lovely. This novel, the first of a currently three-book series published by Harper Collins, follows 17-year-old Aislinn. She can see faeries, but her grandma spent her life teaching her how to hide this ability.

But her grandma spent her life teaching her how to hide this ability. Faeries dislike when mortals see them, and they bring danger and trouble to those that do. But then the Summer King takes human form, enrolls in her high school, and tries to become her friend. He is unaware that she can see his true form, but he has searched for his queen for nine centuries, and is determined to make her his wife.

His mother, the Winter Queen, will lose her crown if her son marries Aislinn, and will do anything in her immense power to keep them apart. Marr sold the rights of her best-selling novel to Universal Pictures and Edward Scissorhands’ writer Caroline Thompson will write the screenplay.

Urban fantasy readers would prefer Hollywood to move away from vampires. They still love them, but feel the undead have been done to death.

“As far as I can tell, many authors are starting to move past vampires and werewolves and into fresher ground,” writes Elly, a moderator on the Patricia Briggs official forum. “Like Druids, fae of all sorts, pucks, tricksters, and Norse and Aztec gods. I read a book where the main character is a Hound of the Wild Hunt.”

And while many people may think that faeries sound pretty lame and really weak, in nearly all of the series in which the fae have a role, they represent the most powerful, secretive, and unpredictable of the supernaturals. Nobody messes with them. “They’re faeries, but they’re not Tinker Bell,” says Albert. Their power has created a very powerful devotion in the Moning Maniacs.

Fox organized the Anne Arbor stop of the MacHalo World tour. Thinking that a few girls from Michigan would show up to see the MacHalo and meet Phil Gigante (the audiobook reader for the Fever series), she picked Anne Arbor as a central point in the state.

The MacHalo will make an appearance in Chicago, Austin, and Houston in early 2010, but after that there’s no telling where it’ll show up next.
5 Famous Fae

Ashely Christiano explains how fae, or fairies, fly around some of our favorite stories from past to present. Starting with Tinkerbell and continuing clockwise, learn about these five faeries.

1. Sassy and sweet, the two best ways to describe the fiery companion to Peter Pan. Tinker Bell, a very recognizable fairy, keeps us on our toes with her quick personality changes.

2. Starting at the top right is the Blue Fairy, in Disney’s 1940 classic Pinocchio. The Blue Fairy brings Pinocchio to life, turning him into a real boy.

3. Not the nicest character in some of our favorite films, Maleficent plays the most powerful Disney villain, defying the adorable-fairy-godmother stereotype. The self-proclaimed “Mistress of Evil” controls a dragon and a horde of other nasty minions.

4. The Brothers Grimm first collected and published the fairy tale about the trickster dwarf, Rumpelstiltskin, in 1812. This clever dwarf can spin straw into gold, but ends up weaving himself into his own sticky trap.

5. Big, scary, and quite ugly, Shrek plays the role of an ogre, which is another type of fae. He doesn’t sport wings, long blonde hair, or a wand, but his race has been a part of fairy tales and folklore for centuries.

JEAN-OLOGY

Denim Evolution: Workingman’s jean to American Unifier

Not eat square piles of denim in various shades blanket most of the floor of a small walk-in closet. Meet Joe Cubiotti, a senior at Syracuse University who happens to love jeans. He currently owns at least 70 pairs, he said.

“Freshman year, everyone used to make fun of me,” said Cubiotti, a 20-year old policy-studies and management major. He filled his closet and kept extra storage under the bed. His friends thought he was obsessed and had too many pairs of jeans.

So they snuck into his dorm room and took 15 pairs. And with a closet still full, Joe had no idea. For two months. His friends left pairs of his jeans scattered around the dormitory. He would find his pants lying around, and wonder how his friends got them each time. “I’d leave the room locked and they’d still turn up.” After two months, Joe’s friends finally revealed their prank. “I guess they proved me wrong, maybe I have too many [pairs of jeans],” he said.

But that has yet to stop him. Joe shared that story at Lord & Taylor in the Carousel Mall, in Syracuse, New York, just before he bought a new pair of Calvin Klein Jeans. His style: dark, simple and on sale. He wears them every day, every season. “They’re just comfortable and easy to wear,” he said. Though the extent of Joe’s jean collection may be unusual, his denim obsession seems less so.

Apple pie and Levi’s: quintessential Americana. From the original Levi’s jeans made sturdy for miners in the late 1800s, denim has become the great American unifier, the
common thread across diverse closets. Everyone wears jeans: whether an $1,850 pair of Dolce & Gabbana Jeans, covered in holes, or the Gap jeans Joe once bought on clearance for $11.99.

Step into J. Michaels Shoes, a fashion retail store on the Syracuse University campus. It carries premium-denim brands like 7 for all Mankind, J. Brand and True Religion, ranging in price from $150 to $250, said Kathryn Graves, a sales clerk. The store attracts SU students of upper-middle class families who have the means to spend that much on jeans, she said.

Step out of J. Michaels and the man asking for spare change on the corner wears jeans too. “I got jeans up the yin yang,” said Gertis McDowell, 64. He sits back in his wheelchair in a medium-dark pair of blue jeans, as he rattles the few coins in his tin can. Shocked to learn that people spend $200 on jeans, called it “ridiculous.” He prefers the more affordable Wrangler jeans and wears them every day. “Every day that God let me be here I wear jeans,” he said.

High-end or low-end, jeans sell. While overall consumer spending has decreased in the economic recession, jean sales increased. A market research company, NPD group Inc. recently named jeans one of the few “bright spots” in bad times, according to the company’s April 2009 report. Even as Americans budget their spending, they still buy jeans.

Denim has become a staple in everyone’s wardrobes, which has helped make jeans somewhat recession-proof, said Jessica Harris, senior account executive at 7 for all Mankind, a Los Angeles-based premium-denim brand launched in 2000 that claims to be “the first company to truly bring premium denim to scale.” It offers denim for men, women, pregnant women, and boys and girls as young as four. “It’s a thing everyone feels comfortable with… if you find a pair of jeans that fits you well, it makes you feel good. And when things are so down, you want to feel good about yourself,” Harris said.

She credits the brand’s ability to remain successful in the recession to consumers’ brand identification and loyalty. “We are known for our fit… We’ve been around a long time in the premium world so the consumer trusts us and trusts our fit,” Harris said. As denim evolved over the years, it secured its spot in American wardrobes. Whatever the price point, jeans today have a universal appeal with flattering fits, versatile fashions and a practical durability.

Joe, the SU senior with 70 jeans, steps out of the Lord & Taylor dressing room in mismatched socks (one grey-toed, the other plain), a black button-up dress shirt and the Calvin Klein jeans he ended up buying. “They’re not too loose, real comfortable,” he said. They happened to be on sale. “Whatever is on sale, if it fits good, I’ll buy it,” he said. Simple enough. He buys the first pair he tried on.

Many maintain a love-hate relationship with jeans, as something they hate to hunt for, but love to wear when they find the right fit. And women buy the most jeans: Sales of women’s jeans make up more than half of the $13 billion jean industry.

Cubiotti lays comfortably on the floor among some of the 70 pairs of jeans that he owns.
An alternative course gives children a voice through journaling and photography

Written by Jamie Miles
Photos provided by Stephen Mahan

One raised hand started the class talking. As the children’s journals sat open on the desks in front of them, one brave volunteer shared her personal entry: “My room is very pretty, but it hardly gets a visit. The thing is, I’m afraid to sleep alone.” Applause followed, and another student’s hand flew up in the air. “I took a picture of my room because I like my room. I like being alone half the time.”

Supportive feedback filled the room again, then the original answer: “Because I like my room. I like it alone.” Applause followed, and another student’s elbow, and a plaid newsboy cap, Mahan stood at the front of the classroom and spoke over the distractions forged by 31 high-school students. “We are going to write an American Pop,” Mahan says. Jack Kerouac invented American Pop as an alternative form of haiku that supports expression in three lines without a syllable limit, he explains.

From the side of the classroom, a camera flashes as one student plays with the point-and-shoot Nikon used for the photography portion of the class. Uninterrupted, Mahan bounces through the room, scripting his own colorful three-liner and encourages the children to think creatively and start writing. “If you feel more comfortable writing in a language other than English, do it,” he announces over the noise. Journal entries, verbal expression, photography, and open dialogue serve as tools for the Literacy, Community, and Photography (LCP) course, teaching students that their voice matters.

“The photo/literacy residency in Mahan’s class builds on approaches modeled after Wilma Ewald’s “Literacy through Photography” program, developed at the Center for Documentary Studies of Duke University,” Mahan explains. “Photographer and teacher Ewald works with children from various communities across the world, encouraging them to turn their dreams and experiences into poetic images. Like Ewald, Mahan challenges every student to use the camera to express themselves creatively and “look at things sideways,” a principle Mahan stressed since he began teaching LCP at Syracuse University in 2005.

Mahan teaches photography in the Department of Transmedia in the College of Visual and Performing Arts (VPA) at SU. VPA offers two sections of the Literacy, Community, and Photography course, open to all majors. Entrants choose the portion of the course, college students join Mahan and serve as mentors for children across the community, including at Henninger High School, Nottingham High School, Franklin Magnet School, Peace Inc, Early Head Start, Hutchings Psychiatric Center, and at Fowler High School and Edwards Smith Elementary School, where the program currently resides for the fall semester.

The LCP program uses photography as a starting point for students to tell their story. Mahan believes the camera creates a level playing field and an instinct sense of self-esteem. “I’m not out to play Mother Teresa, but it’s good that it allows kids that learn differently and think differently to see that they can achieve a high level of praise and worthiness,” Mahan says.

The student photography projects center around thematic questions including; Who am I? Where am I from? What are my dreams? The photographs then serve as prompts for self-expression through writing. Answers to these questions may include a few simple lines, or more compelling poetry.

At Fowler High School, 10th grade English teacher, Adam Lutwin, directs the writing component of the course. Lutwin believes infusing photography into an English course provides an alternative to a regular, structured class that can become hamstringed by the inflexible curriculum and imposed guidelines.

Lutwin notices student improvement in self-expression as the program progresses. The photographs grow in depth, the writing becomes more personal, and the students become more comfortable sharing their work. “They tell me things that I don’t think they would ever say if we weren’t doing things like this—if they hadn’t written it. If they hadn’t taken photos of it,” Lutwin says.

SU mentors also cite improvement in the students’ work and their overall school performance. Stephanie Appleby, junior at SU, believes that before being exposed to the LCP class and its alternative teaching approach, the children viewed education with a very limited perspective. According to Appleby, this course encourages the students to move forward, attend class, contribute, and consider pursuing higher education. Weekly prior, Appleby overheard one of the more outspoken boys in class announce, “This is the kind of a*** that makes me want to come to school!”

As Mahan assigns the next writing project to his full classroom, his energy commands attention as the children look on with confirmed admiration. “That’s my dude!” sophomore London Odistor says of Mahan, “He’s not like other teachers. He takes teaching to another level.”

The mentors attest that the children respond well to Mahan as a teacher. “He’s real to them,” says SU junior Stephanie Hart. Mahan began teaching expression through photography in Buffalo, N.Y. in 1993. Mahan’s experience proves useful in his ability to connect with the students, allowing for an open relationship based more on friendship than the division imposed by the hierarchical position of teacher.

Mahan, who once struggled with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), relates to the challenges that learning poses for many children. “Those kids, the worst kids in school, those were me,” Mahan says. “I was the one thrown out of schools all the time just because I learned differently.”

Principal of Fowler High School, Jim Palumbo, recognizes Mahan as a unique asset to the school district. “We have this strong connection with this one gentleman who, in a year and a half’s time, basically transformed an English class and expanded it into this English, literacy, art class format,” Palumbo says. “You don’t see growth like that right away.”
Briannia Rice wrote:

I am me. Whatever I say or speak, whoever I think or do, I am me. I am me. There is only one of me. I am African American. I am tall. I am me. I will stand up on my own two feet. Don't need no one to tell me I can't I am me.

Nyquian Brown wrote the following poem:

My favorite colors are red and black.
Red is for hatred, and black is for darkness.
All my life I've ben locked in dark,
But my family loves me with all their heart.

When I'm mad, I feel like my blood is flowing,
But the love of my family keeps me going.
My favorite super hero used to be Batman because of the way he can camouflage in the darkness.
Love is more powerful than anger.
That's why I love my family with all my heart.

Briannia Rice wrote:

I am me. Whatever I say or speak, whoever I think or do, I am me. I am me. There is only one of me. I am African American. I am tall.
I am me. I will stand up on my two feet.
I am me. Don't need no one to tell me I can't I am me.
And when I finish college I will live my dreams
And no one will stop me
I am me only me.
Rhanya Shannon wrote "Knots:

Sometimes you get yourself in a knot,
I'm in one right now.
Sometimes they are easy to get out of,
Not like the one I'm in right now.
My knot is my life.
I still live on,
As happy as can be,
I still live on,
Just being me
Even though it blocks my face
And sometimes my feelings too,
My knot is my life,
And there is nothing I can do.

Rycarre Campbell wrote this poem for one of his assignments:

In this picture
I look smart and
Intelligent.
My dream is when
I get older
I'll be smart
and Intelligent.
One day I will
give a speech in
front of a crowd.
Maybe I will.
You'll never know.
I may be able to
give a speech one
day.
8 Easy Ways to Ruin Your SAT Score

Written by Kaitlyn Pirie
Photo by Brittnéy B. Bollay

Whether you’re in the midst of completing college applications or putting on a school play, there’s a lot on your mind right now. Read over the following list to make sure you’re not stuck in a rut on test day.

1. Stay up late studying the night before.
   You may be tempted to do a bit of last minute review before your exam but studies show that sleep is more valuable the night before. You’re better off relaxing and thinking about something other than the impending test.

2. Go out partying the night before.
   This sounds self-explanatory, but when people say to relax before your test they don’t mean throw back a few drinks with friends. The last thing you need is to wake up with a pounding headache and little sleep the morning of your test.

3. Forget to set your alarm.
   You know the feeling of panic that overtakes you when you oversleep for something important. If you need to, set several alarms the night before or have a friend call you so you’re sure to wake up on time for your test.

4. Skip breakfast.
   The SAT is several hours long, and if your stomach begins on empty you’re going to quickly lose the energy you need to get through the test. On top of a healthy breakfast, studies also show that chewing gum can also help stimulate your brain.

5. Get lost on your way to the testing site.
   If the SAT isn’t being held at your high school make sure you give yourself extra time to get there. Also, print directions and know your way around ahead of time. This will save you time and stress the morning of your exam.

6. Forget your photo ID or calculator.
   Pack your bag the night before. Make sure you have an acceptable form of identification with a photo, your SAT admission ticket, several number two pencils, and a calculator with extra batteries.

7. Don’t wear a watch.
   There is no guarantee that there will be a working clock on the wall in the room where your test will take place and you won’t be allowed to check your cell phone. Wear a watch so that you can keep track of your progress throughout the test.

8. Forget to fill in a necessary bubble.
   Scantron sheets can be tricky. Be careful to fill in the correct bubbles. If one of your answers is off, every answer to follow will also be off.