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News from a different angle

September, 2010

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Student Voice

What are your goals for the new school year?

Braden S., freshman, says: Okay, if I can just keep myself from getting stuffed into a trash can for the whole year, I think I'll be happy. I mean, the football players here are kind of intimidating. I hear they trashcan a different freshman every time they lose a game. (Are there enough freshmen for that?)

Chao-Feng U., senior, says: My goal for this year is not to bring disgrace upon my elders by failing to be accepted into an Ivy League university. Even though my weighted grade point average is only a meager 4.7, I have compensated for this by joining 16 extra-curricular clubs and organizations. If you will kindly excuse me now, I must campaign for my presidency in Man Club.

Austin C., senior, says: Really, it's my senior year. I'm trying to just relax and, you know, have some fun while I can. My parents tell me I've got no future. But I just got a job at a candy store, and it's not even Halloween yet.

Ashleigh K., junior, says: If there's one thing I want more than anything else, it's to be elected Student Body President next year. Oh my god, am I going to make, like, a huge campaign! My slogan's going to be, "Vote for Ashleigh, or else you are Ash-lame." Isn't it great? I've started making posters already!

Artists' Corner

Romance in the Checkout Aisle
By J. M. Smucker

I once knew a girl made of chocolate;
Her name was Dove.
And from the first moment I saw her,
I was in love.

Most girls wear clothes made of fabric;
Hers were tin foil.
And she had to keep herself wrapped up,
So she wouldn't spoil.

Although I did care for her so,
She'd never be mine;
For there was a smooth boy named Jif,
For whom she pined.

See, Jif was absolutely nuts about her,
And he stole her heart.
They went through the checkout together,
In a grocery cart.

That Jif sure was a real momma's boy.
He was shaped like a jar!
Too bad that, one night, Dove melted,
In the backseat of his car.

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day,” she reminisces fondly. “1993, May 21st. Right around three o’clock, dreamy Johnny Stevens walks in. Oh, what a sweetheart he was! I’ll never forget the way he ordered his double-scoop of chocolate with nuts... and how he even knew my name, although I did happen to be wearing a nametag. Every girl in the junior class wished she could be the one to marry him – and here I was, handing him two heaping scoopfuls of more pleasure than most girls would ever *dream* of giving him. And, when he finished his ice cream, well... let’s just say, he was still hungry afterwards.

“As hot as we got – I mean, as hot as it was that day, it was nothing like what happened Wednesday.” Van der Sleet’s store was packed with rowdy customers, and her staff was straining to keep up with demand. No one noticed that the refrigeration system had blown out – until it was too late. Within minutes, the *Cone Corner* was flooded with ice cream. “Little kids were swimming in it!” exclaims Van der Sleet as I interview her over a sundae.

The chilly calamity may very well have continued to spiral even further out of control, had it not been for Van der Sleet’s competence and quick thinking. “They train you for this sort of thing in the Academy,” she says. “I mean, you could go through your whole career and never see a full meltdown, but you’ve gotta be ready if it comes.” Van der Sleet facilitated a swift evacuation of the premises and then shattered store windows adjacent to the street, so that the sticky deluge of liquefied dessert would drain harmlessly into the sidewalk gutters. Finally, a crate of Africanized sugar ants from the city zoo was released in the building, devouring every trace of the disaster within half an hour.

Though the spill was not nearly as catastrophic as it could have been, the incident nonetheless left many of its victims traumatized, and unwilling to eat any more ice cream. Bart Robbins, 40, comments, “Now, I feel like I’m more of a Popsicle sort of man, you know?”

Van der Sleet notes, “I guess that ever since my parlor got flooded, when it comes to buying ice cream, people kind of have cold feet.”

Worried about getting ice cream yourself? Rest assured that ice cream parlor meltdowns are an extremely rare occurrence, and you are more likely to be eaten whole by a shark than you are to witness one firsthand.

Skin of darkness Will her tan come out on top?

By J. Bouti, staff writer, September 3, 2010

Summer is fading, like a bra line in the wintertime.

But for a dozen Vegas teens, the competition is just starting to heat up.

Enter Keely Deane, 17. A senior at Clark High School, Deane is gearing up to defend her title as reigning champion of the annual Las Vegas Bras of Bronze Tan Off. The competition is fierce; vicious as the trash-talkingest tennis diva, sweaty as the head-pummelingest cage fighter, the Tan Off is not an event for the faint-of-heart – or, indeed, the faint-of-skin.

Deane has dominated the contest for the past three years; one might even say her competitors pale in comparison. “Some people don’t take this stuff seriously. They say I should just lighten up. But really, they have no idea what it’s like, how much work we have to put in. This thing isn’t just some fair-skinned beauty pageant – let me tell you, it’s as much a sport as, say, pro wrestling.”

Deane makes a good point; like any demanding sport, competitive tanning presents its athletes with a range of challenges, particularly the risk of injury. “That’s the number-one problem – sunburns like crazy. I’ve seen girls have their entire tanning careers wrecked just by not choosing the right SPF sunblock before a workout. The whole nature of the sport has changed ever since we started losing the ozone layer.”

The athlete’s regimen is rigorous and relentless, with training taking place literally from sunup to sundown. Deane points out the importance of strategy: “The first thing that’ll knock you down in competition, right off the bat, is the tan lines. You know, whale-tails, raccoon tans, figure-eights, racing stripes – you get the picture. See, to avoid this problem, my coach and I have calculated all the sunlight geometry, based on the time of day. Four o’clock is the best time for me to hit the inner thighs, for instance. And noon is when I get the best lower back coverage.”

Why not just use a tanning bed? An indignant Deane retorts that she is above such tactics, as I interview her poolside. “Geez, who do you take me for, Barry Bonds? Look, don’t get me into a scandal here. I train fair.”

Fair or not, Deane’s darkness will soon be put to the test, with the Tan Off taking place in less than two weeks. Contestants are scored based on three factors, known as the “three Cs”: Consistency, Color, and Coverage. Each is measured to the utmost exactness by a panel of expert judges; often, fractions of a point separate competitors in the final standings, and the judging is rarely without controversy. “You can never be sure what you’re gonna get from the judges,” remarks Deane’s longtime coach, Mike Sorrentino. “Got perfect Consistency? Well, they’ll hammer you on Color. Spend all season working on Coverage? They’ll knock off points for technicalities, like not having the correct width of bra strap! This sport is very complex. It’s much more than just laying around in the sun all day.”

Even Deane has dealt with her share of competitive drama, as I gather from speaking with some of her former opponents. Alyssa Bright, 18, who was runner-up to Deane in last year’s Tan Off, calls Deane a “no good, spray-on tanning, sun-lamp soaking cheater! I swear,” she comments, “there’s *no way* that Keely could have gotten that rich, robust shade that she had when she beat me last year, without cheating somehow. Not to mention, she was awfully friendly with some of those judges... and, let’s just say, I don’t know if it was really her own sunblock that she was wearing that morning.”

All gossip aside, there is one thing that almost every competitive tanner can agree on: the utmost seriousness of the sport. “Every day I walk around and see people with every kind of weak, uneven, splotchy tan imaginable,” says Deane with an air of exasperation. “They all think it’s, like, Jersey Shore or something, and we are all just a bunch of bimbos parading ourselves around on the beach. Okay, seriously? This is Vegas. We don’t even have a beach!”

Intrigued by the prospect of competitive tanning? Bras of Bronze will take place Saturday, September 18, at the Lou’s Las Vegas Hotel and Casino. Seating is limited, but the event will also be broadcast on FSN, following the Women’s Competitive Laundering League playoffs.

A sticky situation

Why one ice cream parlor couldn’t beat the heat

By J. Bouti, editor-in-chief, August 29, 2010

To most scientists in the world, there is one mathematical constant whose value is more hotly (or coldly, rather) debated than any other: the melting point of ice cream.

American physicists have contended for many years that ice cream melts at precisely 268.15 Kelvin, or 23 degrees Fahrenheit, basing their research on countless rigorous studies. The British, however, argue that the frozen treat will melt at no less than 268.7 K, or 24 °F. The confusion is further churned by the Ukrainian Physics Association’s Commission of Ice Cream Melting, which asserts adamantly that ice cream will begin to melt at exactly 267 K, going so far as to denounce and discredit all scientists who claim otherwise.

Perhaps the only nation in the world that does not participate in the debate is Jamaica, where it is much too hot to have ice cream to begin with. Says Jamaican physicist Reginald Baskin of the ongoing controversy: “They are a bunch of coneheads, mon!”

But even amongst the most argumentative scientists, there is no question over what happens when ice cream does melt. And no amount of peer-reviewed investigation on the topic could prepare a person for what ice cream purveyor Jeanie van der Sleet experienced four days ago, on the sweltering afternoon of Wednesday, August 25.

“It was hot – too hot,” remarks Van der Sleet of that fateful day. “And in all my years of running the *Cone Corner*, I’d never seen so much business. People were standing in a line that went all the way around the block. They were all so anxious to get their fill of my delicious ice cream.”

Van der Sleet is a hardened veteran of the ice cream industry, having climbed through the ranks until finally opening her own store in 2001. She served her very first cone 17 years ago, at the age of sixteen. “I still remember it to this