Teacher Feature: Mr. Larry Foulk
by Rohan Kaza

Last quarter, Rohan sat down with Mr. Foulk, one of our new history faculty this year. Here are some highlights from the interview:

Rohan: What are the top three most interesting things you’ve done in your life?

F: Wow, I think that’s a great question. I think that even though I’m going to give you three answers here, if you ask me again tomorrow they might be three different answers. So, let me just go ahead and throw three out there.

(In summation, he chose his education, his historical piece of work published in a peer review journal, and his duty as a husband and a father saying it was “interesting on so many different levels.”)

F: …. Ask me again tomorrow and I might tell you something different.

... 

R: So, uh, approximately how long does it take you to grow your beard?

F: (hefty laughter). Well, I haven’t always had a beard. I’ve had a beard now for probably about three years. And it took me, I don’t know, about four months to grow a full beard—

R: Four months?

F: Maybe five months. Something like that. Maybe not as long as it is right now. I’m just sort of letting it grow out. The days are growing shorter, the air’s getting a little cooler, you know. I need to stay a little warmer.

R: I wish I could use that argument, but they won’t let me!

F: Are they not letting you do that?

R: No, they say I have to go clean shaven, and I have to shave every other day. I hate it.

... 

R: What would be your favorite candy?

F: My favorite candy? Right now I’m very keen on Mary Janes.

R: Mary Janes? I have never heard of Mary Janes… what are they?

F: It’s like a peanut butter-honey-taffy-like candy.

R: That sounds so gunky.

F: Yeah, it is gunky! For me, it has a lot to do with this time of year. When I was trick-or-treating, I remember getting a lot of this candy, and I still, to this day, have some favorites. Mary Janes have always been my favorite—but it HAS to be an original Mary Jane. There are a lot of rip-offs, you know, a lot of imitation Mary Janes. I mean, they’re good, they’re okay, but they’re not the original. So you come by the office, I’ll give you an original Mary Jane. I think I’ve still got some there.

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Mr. Larry Foulk joined The Webb School Faculty this year as an Instructor in History, Music, and WAP. His AP Goverment course is very popular with the senior class. (Photo by Clem Smith)
On Self Harm
by Danielle Brown

I want to turn these muddled thoughts into something interpretable, something that you can feel, something concrete. When you romanticize self-harm, you take away from the severity of it: self-harm is a way that some people cope with depression and high anxiety. It is not okay to romanticize self-harm or mental disorders. They aren’t beautiful. They aren’t romantic. They are scary.

Stop acting like scars are beautiful or like they will make you love yourself more, because they won’t, and the sooner people realize that, the less people will see them as being cool or acceptable. I wish people online didn’t romanticize self harm cuts and scars like they’re something cute or unique. No.

You know what’s cute? Chubby thighs and unstraightened hair and freckles and dimples and when people scrunch up their nose or squint their eyes.

You know what’s not cute? Looking down at your wrist or thighs during or after your recovery, and having all those memories and feelings come crashing back. Or being with someone, whether it’s a friend or any loved one, who doesn’t know about that part of you yet. Having them see those scars, and ask you about it. Having to either come up with an excuse or explain the scars, having to constantly lie to people, or having a permanent reminder of a time in your life that you’d rather not think about— it’s on your body, every day, forcing back memories of things you’d rather forget.

Or having the people who love you see your scars and think about the fact that you were so unhappy at some point in your life and could be again.

That’s not cute. It’s soul crushing.

It’s something I live with every day, a reminder of my darkest moments, the worry that I’ll never find love because I have such a past, and the evidence is right there. On my thigh. I can’t hide it. I can’t pretend it didn’t happen.

I am stuck with scars for the rest of my life, which cause me and my family so much pain, yet there are still people who post pictures of them like they’re a fashion statement. Like they’re an accessory.

Stop turning pain into a trend. It’s not a solution. Please.

People shouldn’t be looking at pictures of people with burns or cuts or bruises and thinking that it’s “tragically beautiful.” People shouldn’t be glorifying any type of mental illness. Anorexia isn’t beautiful; anorexia is wanting to rip your skin off your body. Anorexia is working out for hours at a time and being at constant war with your head, counting up calorie by calorie; it’s not just being “pretty and skinny.”

Mental illnesses aren’t quirky. Depression isn’t special. Anxiety isn’t cute. Eating disorders are not glamorous and beautiful. Suicide isn’t poetic or deep.

There’s a difference between being sad and having a mental illness, being clinically diagnosed and claiming to have one for attention. People talking about how they are “so OCD” or “so ADHD” is horrendously offensive to people who actually struggle with it.

Depression is not cool. Self harm is not cool. Anxiety is not cool. Anorexia is not cool. OCD is not cool. ADHD/ADD is not cool. Faking a mental illness for looks is like someone bragging about having lung cancer. It’s a lot like romanticizing alcoholism or domestic abuse. It’s harmful and unhealthy and even deadly.

I feel I face a double-edged sword. I am very sensitive to others romanticizing it, but often wonder if I do it myself. Romanticizing self-harm is normalizing it, and it’s inconceivably damaging. We’re saying it’s okay. No one addresses the fact that it is an addiction. It’s encouraging a behavior that could kill.

The next time that you read a post on social media about people who cut their legs, or hear about the person who wrote the most “beautiful” suicide note, don’t think about how cool or fun that is. Remember that it is steel against flesh. Remember that when someone has a scar on his or her wrist or thigh, that it’s not some painting for you to admire, not some “Melancholy in Red” for you to gawk over. It’s something to acknowledge. When people hurt themselves, it’s not to make an art piece: it’s to break apart the intricate puzzle that we call life. We can’t berate the people who self harm, but we can show them other ways to cope and be there for them.
Why Can’t We Be Friends?
by Lucas C. Wiesemann

Somewhere two newborns lie in a nursery. Their futures are a mystery. There is no way to predict their personalities, their passions, or their friends. However, these two newborns entered the world with different genitalia, and therefore many seem to believe that this innate feature provides justification for a barrier to be placed between the two infants. They could grow up and become best friends, but they will have to persist through the restrictions their society sets between them—a society that assumes they are fated to be romantically involved for no reason other than their contrasting sexes.

Many people surmise that if you leave a boy and a girl alone together, a copious quantity of crazy copulation is absolutely unavoidable. Because of this inaccurate notion, members of different genders are subjected to countless restrictions, even within the Webb community. Webb students have limited access to dorms of the opposite gender, and in some dorms, none at all. Members of opposite genders are never allowed to be in each other’s rooms. And all in all, we have access to unisex spaces for far shorter amounts of time than to same-gendered areas. All of this is based on the belief that for a boy and a girl to share the same space, there must be constant direct adult supervision.

These restrictions, placed against this inevitable intimacy, are ineffective. Those who wish to fornicate are not inhibited by these obstacles. Instead, they settle to get comfortable in different spaces. One must also consider the spectrum of people who are not attracted to the specific gender that society expects them to be. Any two girls could lock themselves up in a bedroom, and most adults would think nothing of it.

All in all, people who want to have sex are going to have sex. There’s little getting in the way of that. These restrictions that society places between boys and girls are doing nothing but restraining friends from spending time together and forcing intimate friends to come up with more creative ways to get their freak on. Take it from a boy who has grown up with predominantly female friends, someone who has watched his friends go to parties, attend sleepovers, or just hang out in each other’s rooms. Someone who has been separated from his friends because his genitalia differ from theirs.

When we look at a pair of friends, the only assumption that should be made is that they are friends. Now if a couple is found canoodling on the art room couch, then it becomes perfectly justified to grow skeptical of leaving them alone together. However, conjectures cannot be made about two people’s feelings for one another simply because of the relation of their genitals. Nor can you presume that someone will have lustful desire for every member of a gender just because you know that is the gender he or she prefers. Every person contains a bunch of crazy, unexpected, and completely individual secrets. Within two newborns lie boundless possibilities. No assumptions necessary.

Downfall of the Prodigy
by Doobee Tarhule

There it is, the end of your entire life’s existence—your first B+. Never in your life have you experienced such humiliation, such utter shame than this failure. This has become the initiating spark that you may not be a genius. That the world may not fall into your hands as easily as you first thought. That you might, in fact, be average (or rather slightly above average but not exceptionally above average).

Many children live their life in middle school never being challenged by their educational system and breezing through school without even attempting to study or glance over notes before major tests. All they have to do is show up, and there slide in the glorious straight A’s. Then, suddenly, they smash into a wall. The concept of actually working for the reward comes to them—usually in their high school days—and their life breaks down for real. Suddenly that horrific B is a blessing when compared to the recent trench of C’s and even F’s. The way most schools are structured in society, there are inadequate provisions for children who are above their peers. People assume that children understand what they’re doing, when they can grasp classroom concepts, and that they know how to work the school system to get the grades they want. Being able to

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Change: The Final Frontier  
by Grace Archibald

The scariest truth I know is this: Change is constant, and I’ll inevitably have to adapt. Experience along with my knowledge of history has taught me that the quicker I accept change, the more I’ll learn and grow. We often tell stories of heroines that overcome a change in their lives in order to make a difference. Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat for a white man. Disney’s princess Mulan overcame a sexist stereotype to save her family along with her empire. Ellen DeGeneres fell in love with another woman and proudly let it be known. All of these circumstances presented a change from the norms. These people had to fight against those who were afraid. It’s ironic how widely accepted change is as a means of self-growth, yet it is still so terrifying. Without change, would we ever be able to embrace people of different beliefs and ideals? Would war ever be resolved? We change, and we learn. It is how we progress. Still, accepting change and the possibility that some things will never change remain some of the hardest obstacles we ever encounter.

I remember attending a rally defending a Gay/Straight Alliance club at a local high school. Mike Quinn, my thoughtful, goofy, and crazy art teacher held the door for the crowds of excited people attending. Not far away, an elderly man approached Quinn bearing a Christian Rights flag and a determined sneer. Grabbing the rainbow flag from Quinn’s hands, the elderly man instructed my art teacher to read the Bible while he proceeded to rip up the gay pride flag. The man tossed the pieces to the ground and as he walked away, Quinn chased him down to inform him that the part of the Bible that instructed that we love everyone was his favorite part. In this instance, Quinn had encountered an individual who could not accept that people cannot change themselves in order to fit neatly inside someone else’s standards.

I feel sorry for that man and those like him who are so scared of a change that does not fit into their notion of “normal” that they allow their fear to control them. They’ll let their fear grab flags out of the hands of their neighbors and tear them up. I cannot imagine how terrifying that man’s life must have been if something as simple as Gay Rights could scare him so. I am heartbroken that after all the change which led us to such success and prosperity, fear still remains the biggest enemy of change. Change is crucial for growth. With no change, life becomes stagnate and shriveled. Something as simple as two people of the same sex loving each other should be embraced, not despised. If one cannot accept gay rights, I have to wonder how limited his or her life must be.

My point is this: We must be brave and champion the change in our lives. Being intimidated by something different is natural, but learning to embrace the difference opens more doors than it could ever close. So let yourself adapt, learn, and grow. Be fearless, and welcome the change.

Downfall of the Prodigy -  
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regurgitate information onto a test and genuinely being informed on a subject are vastly different. When students get to high school and the pressure of college falls onto their shoulders, students have to show what makes them different. The dissonance of being able to vomit up information and forming your own ideas on a subject becomes blatantly apparent.

The child once hailed as a young genius, the next Einstein, is now revealed to be a kid who happened to be good at remembering some basic information at a middle school level. It seems to be that there is actually an advantage for those who had to struggle earlier on because they have hit those blocks and know what to do. These prodigies go from flying to crawling with the change of one subject, one teacher. Knowing how school and your teacher work and being educated are incredibly different, and the blur of these two concepts in our society only bloats then obliterates young egos.
Webb Ratifies Mandatory Drug Use Bill

by Andrew Cooper

Recently, The Webb School passed a bill that allows it to dispense drugs and other controlled substances to the student body. Although the bill was extremely controversial and underwent countless hours of filibustering, it passed through a supermajority vote.

“We were really tired of hearing parents complain about the work load and stress levels of their children, so we figured that drugs would be our best bet,” claimed a leading administrator. “One line of cocaine will give students energy to finish their homework, and the crash afterwards will likely put them to sleep. I only wish this program had been implemented earlier.”

The new course of action has positive effects that go beyond the classroom. “We have recently signed a contract with a new company—Grass-Fed Dining Services—that specializes in drug-infused foods and other edible items,” quoted a lunch lady who came up with the idea of the new lunches. “By combining pharmacology and nutrition, we are killing two birds with one stone. The students will start liking the meals more and will even become dependent on them. This will also tackle the problem of boarders skipping meals.” New meals include Ecstasy Flakes®, cocaine-laced salt, marijuana garnish, and stuffed mushrooms.

“The only tangible effect that this new system could have on students themselves is an increase in tuition,” stated the school’s chief paint mixer. “After my calculations, I estimate that the average tuition will be $97,761.55 (p<.05) per student. While this is a large price to pay, it is actually a very economical option for obtaining a year’s supply of hardcore drugs in a bad economy while simultaneously receiving a top-notch education.”

While there may be some negative effects of this program, such as cost and dispensing difficulties, the plan is otherwise rock solid. The Webb School is projected to reclaim its title of the best preparatory school in the South by April 20, 2018.

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Webb Creates Zzz Class

by Kelty Shroyer

This year, the Webb School is pleased to announce a new class to be introduced in the 2016-2017 school year: Sleeping. This class, headed by the Webb faculty rookie Mr. Heath Leepin, promises to provide a welcome respite from the school day for students. The idea for this revolutionary new class originated at a faculty meeting not long ago, where a number of faculty lamented about inattentiveness, and in fact sleepiness, of students in class. After a lengthy discussion where such solutions as cold-water-dumping, ear-boxing, and desk-flipping were proposed and rejected, one faculty member came up with a genius idea: “If they’re going to sleep anyway, we may as well make sure they do it while supervised, and that they don’t miss anything while sleeping.” And so the idea for Sleeping was conceived.

The class will most likely take place in the Junior Room, where the soft, melodic tones of Mr. Smith’s lectures will lull students to sleep. Many have pointed out that the hard benches in the Junior Room may hamper efforts to get a good block period’s sleep, but it has also been pointed out that hard benches in the Junior room have never stopped students from sleeping in the past.

The class will be fairly simple, with students getting grades on duration of sleep during the period, how quickly they fall asleep, how hard it is to wake them, and snoring, which may earn extra credit points depending on whether or not Mr. Leepin is awake to hear you. Rumors have already started circulating about what Mr. Leepin will give as his book award, with most people betting on the popular story Good Night Moon.

In addition, considering the extremely high levels of interest that the class has already garnered, the school is considering having an AP Sleeping course, which is very similar to the normal Sleeping course, except that students must complete a dream journal and interpret their dreams after waking up. The AP exam is held in a large room full of beanbag chairs and soft flute music, which makes this course particularly enticing to those with a proclivity for lethargy.

Finally, we at the Oracle wish for the Webb body to welcome Mr. Leepin to the campus, and we hope that everyone will be respectful of his speech impediment and his unusual hairiness for, after all, he is a sloth.

So come, insomniacs and narcoleptics alike, and sleep!
Mr. Foulk - Continued from page 1

R: Are you aware that Mary Jane is street lingo for marijuana?
F: Uhhh, no. No, I wasn’t aware of that.

R: That’s the first thing that popped into my head.
F: Hmm. Yeah, when I think of the Mary Jane candies, I’m certainly not thinking of the marijuana, but I don’t think it tastes the same.

R: No no no. Completely different results. But I mean, they both make you feel good.
F: (haughty chuckle) There you go!

R: Hmm. How do you feel about bacon-flavored candy?
F: I don’t care for it, myself. Bacon has its place on a biscuit, maybe between some cheese and eggs…

R: Chewy or crunchy?
F: Ummmm, well actually I’ll eat it both ways. Like, if you’re using bacon to wrap around a piece of steak, a filet mignon or something that you grill. Maybe it doesn’t quite get crispy and it’s kind of a little more chewy. But I also like it crunchy. One of the ways I don’t like it is burnt.

R: What would be your favorite outrageous pizza combination?
F: There’s a pizza place in LaFayette, Louisiana that served up something called the Marie Laveau Special. You see, Marie Laveau was a voodoo queen who lived in New Orleans. This pizza, basically a normal pizza, was topped with cooked crawfish.

R: W-Was it good?
F: Oh, it was something.

R: Oh! I’ve heard, from certain sources, that you were in a commercial when you were a kid.
F: Heh heh heh! True.

R: True? Do you happen to remember what the deal was with that?
F: Oh, of course, man! I mean, this was my fifteen seconds of fame! How will I ever forget it?

R: SO what was it a commercial for?
F: Actually, it was a commercial for a car dealership that sold Lincoln Mercurys. And there were some children who were asked to be a part of the commercial and the whole commercial centered around kids, I guess. I was around seven or eight at the time. So the kids were told “Ok, we’re going to start filming. And we’re going to open up one side of the car. And you all are going to pile in (there were twenty-or-so of us) and we’ll close the door!” The whole premise was that the car was spacious.

R: To me, this sounds like a clown car.
F: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah! I’m sure it was pretty hilarious. All these young kids jumping over seats and through the car. But yeah, it was aired and I’m STILL waiting on the royalties! But because that car is probably an antique now, I don’t know what the chances are.

R: What’s one place you’d want to go if all expenses were paid? If you could just go, and stay for half a month?
F: Well, hmph. Goodness. Ummm, I’ve said for some time now that I’ve wanted to take a riverboat cruise down the Mississippi River. I think that it would be a great experience to witness the Americana.

R: The whole Mississippi or just a part of it?
F: Well, the whole thing would be great, right? Starting up above St. Louis and making it all the way down to New Orleans. You know, maybe that. I’d really like to do that, but there are so many places that would be unique to experience.

Continued on next page
R: Are you a waffle person or a pancake person?
F: Can I put something in the pancakes? Or are you asking me plain?
R: Let’s say both.
F: Hands down, pecan pancakes. I’ve had some wonderful pecan pancakes.
R: Oh, so what about plain?
F: (stressful sigh of thought) Gosh, I think I’d stick with the pancakes. I would go with the thick and fluffy pancakes. You know, I like a good waffle if it gets a little crunchy.
... 
R: Do you cook?
F: Occasionally. I really do enjoy cooking if the cooking bug bites me and if I have the time. One thing my grandmother taught me about cooking is that the most important ingredient is time. So, I think I fix a pretty mean chicken sausage gumbo. I like cooking beans and rice. I grew up in South Louisiana and my grandparents were Cajun French. Oh, um, fried shrimp po boys with real French bread.
R: Hmm. That sounds splendid! I need to try some.
... 
R: Do you find farts humorous?
F: Uhhhhhh, not particularly. You know, maybe like those whoopee cushion ones. They’re sort of exaggerated to be funny. But the whole “potty humor” thing doesn’t really—
R: It doesn’t really get to you huh?
F: Nah, nah, no. Not particularly.
R: Are you the person, say, in a classroom of thirty students to “let one rip?” And if the teacher asked who it was and no one around you knew it was you, would you own up to it?
F: I would definitely apologize. So, I guess I would just fess up, you know, because I think it’s the polite thing to do. It seems like the natural thing to do. You know, I’m teaching a class (especially middle school students) and someone might pass wind. Then the class starts to giggle saying “Ugh! Who did that? Who was it?” And I like to chime in and say “Whoever smelt it dealt it!”
R: (I start laughing)
F: Well, ultimately, better out than in!
R: Ah, that’s a Shrek quote.
F: Oh, is it really? I didn’t know that. I guess I just don’t know a lot about Shrek.
----We talk about Shrek for two minutes----
R: Well, I think we’re good!
F: Oh, well thank you for chatting with me!
R: Oh, no, dude, it was a blast! I learned a lot and had some laughs!
F: Really, well thanks for letting me relive my life a bit!
On the Usage of Comrade as a Gender-Neutral Title
by Clem Smith

As society learns to examine itself critically, we have discovered that many of our earlier preconceptions of identity have been incorrect. While the majority of people tend to identify themselves as either male or female, many people do not conform to this binary. Naturally, our language needs to expand beyond this binary as well. As we look for alternatives for he, she, Ms., and Mr., I propose that Comrade be adopted as a universal title.

The first line of the Wikipedia article for the word Comrade indicates that “the term comrade is used to mean ‘friend, mate, colleague, or ally.’” If Comrade is used as a title by and for all people, it will indicate the common link uniting all of humanity.

Of course, it is important to note that the bourgeois exploiters do not count as members of humanity because they enrich themselves through the surplus labor of the working class. By selling the products of the workers’ labor higher than the wages the workers receive, the bosses exist as leeches on society as a whole. Although it would exclude the nonproductive classes, Comrade would unite all other people in a common bond.

Comrade signifies that we should cease to fight imperialist wars and should instead turn our weapons toward the bosses who command us to do their bidding. Comrade signifies the hope of a better world, and the knowledge that one day the workers will live freely in that world. Comrade signifies justice, justice for those oppressed by their social class or their gender identity.

So therefore, Comrades, let us cease participating in oppression and adopt the language of liberation instead.

-Comrade Sawney