

Gone in a blaze



Early-morning fire earns photo honor

Student photographer Delaney Bise captured this image of a burning house on Fruitvale Avenue in Vacaville around 4 o'clock in the morning in June 2004. The image won the Vacaville High School senior a second-place honor in the Campus Star Photojournalism competition. Bise is a student in Tom Ray's class at Vacaville High School.



Impasse affected everyone

The following article originally appeared in the Rodriguez High School newspaper, The Stampede. Teachers in the Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District have tentatively agreed to a new contract in April, after this was published.

— Editor
By Peter Fournier
3rd place, News Writing Division: High School



Students may notice fewer cars in the teachers' parking lot after school these days. That is because the Rodriguez High School teachers have voted to enact a Work to Rule or "Back to Basics" policy to protest a lack of a new contract.

Work to Rule means that teachers are to work no more than their contracted time, which is 7:45 a.m. to 3 p.m. Some extra-curricular activities, such as clubs and some tutoring have been canceled.

However, School After School and special tutoring for the upcoming California High School Exit Exam will take place because teachers are paid extra for performing those duties. Winter sports will also continue.

The school district and the teachers union have been squabbling over details of a new contract for about two years.

"The district and the teachers association have pretty much agreed on a salary (increase) which is 3.5 percent for 2005-06 and 6.5 percent for 2006-07," said Mike Oxley, president of the teachers' union.

"The main disagreements are in the area of benefits and language of the staffing of new schools. The teachers are asking that teachers with more seniority have some advantage over newly hired teachers in choosing to go to newly opened schools," said Oxley.

The main benefit teachers are fighting for is vision coverage. Almost every employee group in the Fairfield school district — including administrators — has vision coverage, except the teachers.

Economics teacher Ben Weinberg supports the teachers' move. "It's one of the few activities that we have as teachers to affect change," he said. Will it be effective?

"Right off the bat, but not until parents pressure and contact the school board to resolve the contract. Teachers teach because, generally speaking, we enjoy kids. If not, we'd do something else. Unfortunately, in this business, students are in the middle..."

Anatomy teacher Garnett Rogers says she is not against the Work to Rule policy, but she does have concerns about it. "I participated in the voting, but I think it should have been mandated that everyone vote, so that everyone participates," she said.

Reportedly, 85 teachers out of 94 on campus voted, and an estimated 60 voted to enact the policy. Parent William Lee says he can't blame the teachers for using Work to Rule.

"They haven't had a contract for 19 months. Right now the cost of living goes up... Almost every day you hear about the contract dispute. When the contract's up, they're supposed to negotiate, but they're deadlocked. What's fair is fair, you can't go forward; you can't go backward."

The author is a senior at Rodriguez High School in Fairfield.

Not every student loves Valentine's Day

“Valentine's Day is not only about couples or significant others; it's about people you care about.”

“Ayla Steward junior at Will C. Wood”

This story was originally published on the Wood Post Online prior to Valentine's Day. — Editor

By Sabrina Muerle
3rd Place, News Writing Division: High School

The day quickly approaches that many across the nation either eagerly anticipate or face with horror. Couples plan a romantic night to remember as others ignore, dread, or act apathetic to this commercialized holiday. But what exactly do teenagers plan for this day?

For those of us who have a special someone in our life, the day is about making our significant other feel special and happy. A senior, David Barrie, plans on a quiet, special night. "I'm planning on keeping it simple: dinner, maybe flowers, and then a quiet evening together, nothing too crazy."

It's a day when people plan to woo the person who has their affection. Stefanie Bright, a junior, is also planning a special night. "I'm going to have a picnic, then go to a movie, and then



S. Muerle

something to do with candles." Many teenagers are planning a nice night to spend with their boyfriend or girlfriend.

There are even a few who, although they may have a special person in their lives, do not wish to participate in this commercialized holiday. Doug Salazar doesn't support the idea of buying cards, flowers and candy. He believes it is more of a holiday for the stores and simply a way for them to get more money.

Unfortunately, on the other side of the dating spectrum are the single people, who have grown to call this loving holiday, "Single's Awareness Day."

Many know from past experience how upsetting it can be to see everyone giving their loved one balloons and flowers while the rest must go on acting like it's just another day. Often people are reminded of past relationships, which only makes this holiday more difficult to endure.

A junior, Shelby plans on going about her regular day, spending the evening with her family.

Some teens are optimistic and are thankful for being single. Rahil

Ghiasvand is a junior and she has her own plans for the night.

"I'm probably going to watch some chick flick movies, eat chocolate and say, "Wooh! Being single is awesome!"

Addison Cardozo plans on ignoring the holiday altogether.

This junior has an already packed schedule with school, tennis, taekwon-do, and more that he won't have much of a hard time making it through this holiday without a girlfriend.

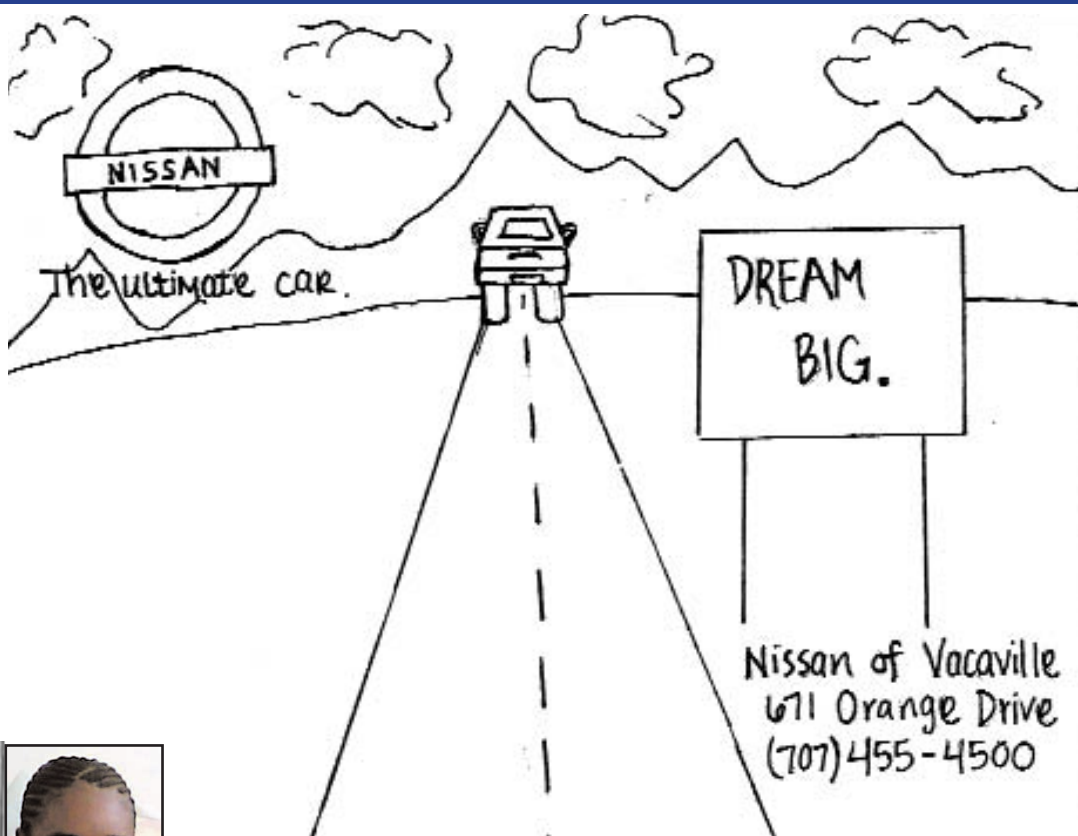
Junior Ayla Steward offers a unique perspective. "Valentine's Day is not only about couples or significant others; it's about people you care about." She plans on doing something to make her friends feel happy and special.

This is a thought that many don't even think of. This is a holiday of love, but it doesn't have to be strictly romantic love.

This holiday can be about making everyone in your life, family, friends, and boyfriends/girlfriends, feel special and appreciated.

The author is a junior at Will C. Wood High School in Vacaville.

Design-an-ad winner



This advertisement for Nissan of Vacaville, designed by Erica Roberson, earned the Buckingham Charter Magnet High School student a second-place honor in the Campus Star Design-an-Ad competition. Roberson is a sophomore in Stephanie Oates' classroom.

Puzzles, games, comics winner

Word Jumble- People in Vacaville's History

Unscramble the names of people who have made a difference in the life of Vacaville. Fill in the blank lines with the letters of the correctly spelled names.

swilil noespj

baabrra nojsc

lilw stphochierr dowo

caav ncpa

Answer Key

Willis Jepson

Barbara Jones

Will Christopher Wood

Vaca Pena

I n d e p e n d e n t

Take the letters above the numbers and place them on the lines below to find out the word that describes all of the people above.

1 2 3 4 5 4 2 3 4 2 6

This word puzzle, which focuses on people in Vacaville's history, was designed by Emily Javan of Buckingham Charter Magnet High School. It earned the student a second-place honor in the Games, Puzzles and Comics category of The Reporter's annual Campus Star competition. Javan is a sophomore in Stephanie Oates' classroom.