

# Commentary/Op-Ed Column

Robby Letzler

The Oracle, North Springs High School

## If your parents won't drive you, I will

ROBBY LETZLER

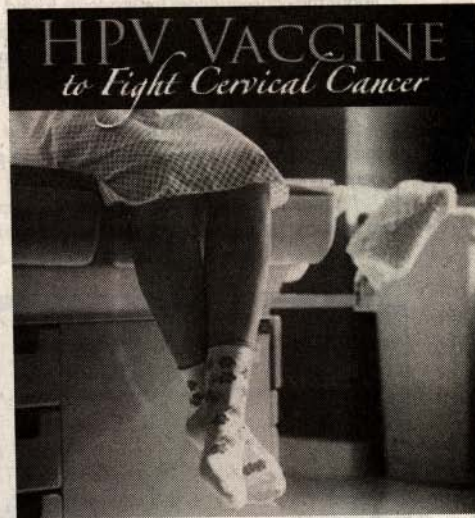
Opinion/Copy Editor

A year ago, when the HPV (human papillomavirus) vaccine was first approved for girls and women between the ages of nine and 26, a potentially life-saving breakthrough had been made. HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection in the United States and is known to cause many diseases, including deadly cervical cancer in women. According to the American Cancer Society, about 3,670 women will die of cervical cancer in the year 2007. Given that HPV infection is most common in women between the ages of 14 and 24, it is most practical to administer the vaccine to girls before they are sexually active.

Nonetheless, many right-wing Christian fundamentalist groups have been hesitant to fully endorse the vaccine, as they fear it may go against the "abstinence only" message. Bridget Maher of the Family Research Council said that "giving the HPV vaccine to young women could be potentially harmful, as they may see it as a license to engage in premarital sex." Most of these groups say that they do not oppose the vaccine itself, they just want to leave the choice to the parents. This may seem innocuous enough, but why on earth would parents elect not to protect their children from cancer? Most parents who choose not to have their daughters vaccinated say that they fear it would encourage their daughters to be sexually promiscuous.

This logic is both flawed and irresponsible. Teenagers, like most people, do not respond well to ultimatums. Giving someone a choice between either no sex or unsafe sex is selfish and cruel—not to mention ineffective. In addition, it is extremely difficult to protect oneself against HPV with traditional means, as it can even be contracted from skin not covered by a condom. It should be criminal to deny anyone—especially one's own children—the right to protect themselves from deadly diseases.

Under all of the opposition to HPV vaccinations lies a deep-seated social stigma. Many parents will do anything to pretend that their children are not having sex. Consequently, parents neglect to educate their children about responsible sexuality,



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hoping that they will just forget about it—at least until they get married.

And even then, they'll only do it in one position, right?

Wrong.

Sex is built into teenagers just like it is built into their parents. It is an intrinsic part of all people's personalities, and consequently, it must be addressed as such. Though it may be easier to write it off as dirty or dangerous, the truth is, sex is a natural, normal human trait that is indeed accompanied with some risk.

If you have the sort of parents who would rather have a dead child than a sexually active child, it is your responsibility to disobey them and take whatever steps necessary to protect yourself. Do not feel bad about lying to your parents in order to make your own decisions about your sexual health. It is your body, and therefore inevitably your responsibility to get tested every year for STDs if you are sexually active, get vaccinated for HPV, even if you are not sexually active and take all precautions possible to keep yourself safe.

If your parents won't drive you, I will.

### Judge's Comments:

\* Letzler's entry, particularly his column on the HPV vaccine, is the epitome of engaging and effective opinion writing. He takes bold, uncompromising stands, backs them with obvious knowledge of his subjects, and present them in a clear and readable fashion.

# Double-truck layout/design

Melissa Katzin

The Northview Messenger, Northview High School

## 100 YEARS OF ADAPTATIONS

In 1908, the first adapted movie debuted, a silent version of "Romeo and Juliet." Now, 100 years later, the movie business has been conquered by such films. From box office blowouts to flicks that crash and burn, some of everyone's favorite movies are based on books, plays, and even amusement park rides.

### Between the lines

Box office Blockbusters take a page from bestselling novels

**Tiara Hines**  
Editor in Chief

Upon entering Regal Cinemas, paying \$9 for an adult ticket and another \$6 for popcorn and soda, a familiarity consumes filmgoers, the sense that they have seen the movie before.

Gone are the days when movies exemplified originality, the curtain is opening to allow another type of movie to take stage: the "book-to-movie" movie. This trend has been waiting for screen time for quite awhile.

Says Christopher Null, avid film critic, founder of FilmCritic.com, "The origins of the trend are hard to pin down but 'The Wizard of Oz' and 'Gone with the Wind' were two of the biggest early examples. Both were huge successes, obviously."

According to both Null and the box office, this film trend has not shown signs of stopping. Says Null, "Of the top ten grossing movies of all time in the U.S., two were adapted from a book, one a children's book, and two from comic books." Accordingly, the highest grossing film of 2007 was "Spiderman 3," adapted from a comic book. The film webbed a whopping \$336,530,303. The fifth highest grossing film of 2007,

"Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix," enthralled fans of the popular series and snagged \$392,004,738.

The "book-to-movie" trend proved popular not only because of the solid fan base. Says Null, "Writing original stories is hard. It's much easier in general to adapt a work that's already been created, especially if it's been proven on the market that it is, as a bestseller."

But sometimes the solid fan base proves to be more of a curse than a miracle. Says Null, "I wouldn't say I have a preference for a certain type of movie. I like good stories. I don't really care where they come from. That being said, many movies made from books tend to be 'quickie affairs' that attempt to cater to the audience for that book. I guess if pressed, I prefer original stories."

This "quickie affair" does not come at a cheaper price than original movies. Says Null, "The costs [to make any movie] are comparable. The rights for an original script versus a book are comparable in price and minimal in comparison to the cost of making a film."

That being said the writers of original novels as well as films adapted from novels and comic books are always influenced by other works. Says Null, "The Oscars never had a 'best original screenplay' category until 1940."

**PETER PARK, 11**

A long time ago, they actually made original scripts. Now it seems like they're getting lazy.



**DONNA MCCARTHY,**  
PARENT VOLUNTEER

I think Hollywood brings older movies to the new generation. You can take them and modernize them.



**KELSEY ANDERSON, 11**

I think that they're fine as long as they match up. If they make movies that aren't compatible with the book or show, then they should give them a different title.



**SYED HUSAIN, 9**

I like the movie because I don't like to read. Watching the movies takes less time and it is more entertaining.



**CAITLIN FALCONE, 12**

The books are always better because you can use your imagination.



### Charm of classic Hollywood gone with the wind

**Jane Diener**  
Editor in Chief

Lights, camera, action! It used to transform ordinary people into complex and beautiful stars idolized by thousands. Hollywood was once filled with truly gifted individuals whose passions were captured on film and replayed in front of audiences who dreamed of being featured on the Silver Screen.

Back when people knew what film reels and record players were, and when "Tinset Town" was a commonly used term, Hollywood still existed in its pure and true form. Though Hollywood still produces some entertaining films with diverse characters and interesting plots, the authenticity and integrity of the industry has been compromised, if not obliterated entirely.

Forty-five years ago, most directors and producers would gasp at the thought of using special effects to deceive the viewer. Hollywood may be all about showing the viewers something that is entirely fake, but special effects, film editing and over-the-top costume design distract viewers from the overall meaning of the film. If there were less bells and whistles, audiences would see the meaning and depth in movies,

rather than the talents of the special effects team.

Old Hollywood produced simple, yet captivating films that relied mostly on the actor's skill and the crew's ability to capture true beauty on film. Now, it would not be far from the truth to say that the director had to dangle a hundred-dollar bill behind the camera to get an actor to do his job with feeling. If movies were still made with the same passion instead of passion for money, Hollywood could regain its authenticity.

Films like "Singin' in the Rain," "The Wizard of Oz," "West Side Story," "The Graduate," "Casablanca" and "Gone With the Wind" accurately portray the plot and reflect the time period. Movies will all ultimately be entertainment, not a statement of reality, but when a movie is more than just pretty faces and a nice story, it becomes a piece of history. Old Hollywood produced movies starring the beautiful people of the decade, but also including incredible depth and value.

Classic movies have been embedded in America's history, but what modern films will be remembered for the same thing? "Forest Gump," "E.T. - The Extraterrestrial," and "Goodfellas" have a chance, but movies such as

these are a small percentage of what comes out of New Hollywood. Fun one-liners like "My Mama always s 'Life was like a box of chocolates; never know what you're gonna get" and "I.T. phone home" are mementos but barely compared to "Here's look at you, kid" and "Frankly, my dear, don't give a damn!"

When the cast and crews of motion picture studios start producing films of true value instead of focusing the monetary value, we will get a taste of what Hollywood truly was before sound effects and green screens.

But, once in a while, we get a taste of Old Hollywood, reminding us of the importance of great movies. Once while, people walk out of the film inspired and influenced by the message. "Life is Beautiful," "The Poets Society," "Mr. Holland's Op and "Saving Private Ryan" will

down in history as films that captivate a generation of film-making and hearts of all their viewers. When movie-making became more than just "lights, camera, act" Hollywood lost the reflect that made it special. Though Hollywood will always be entertain classic Hollywood will remain in American culture forever.

### Judge's Comments:

- \* creative use of space with large amount of information
- \* easy to read
- \* type flow is nicely done on the page
- \* clean and simple

# Editorial Cartoon

Frederick Brown

BrookSpeak, Pebblebrook High School

Rude the Fox

By Fred Brown



## Judge's Comments:

\* Excellent artwork with real attention to detail. Easy-to-follow storyline with a humorous angle.

# Feature Photograph

Chrismon Hinsch

Odyssey newsmagazine, Clarke Central High School



## Judge's Comments:

\* Very well composed - good leading lines, well framed and a good moment. The photojournalist could have easily made a boring image here, but he pushed himself to bring her and her work together in a graphically pleasing and easy-to-read image.