

# THE OGRA

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RUTGERS PREPARATORY SCHOOL

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## Age Old Question

Garvin Jesdanun

A security guard stopped me as I was entering a local arcade. He informed me that I had to be at least sixteen years old, which I am; however, I had no identification, so the guard chased me away. I would have snuck myself in, but he had a gun. What is so wrong with the arcade that minors should be barred from it? If the conditions were that bad, why do they let in those little kids who are accompanied by adults at all? And why is it so hard for me to enter the arcade, when it is so easy to bypass other minimum age restrictions?

Cigarettes, for instance, are easily accessible to minors; easier than getting past a man

with a gun at the arcade. They are available in abundant supply from vending machines located in restaurants, hotels, and other commercial institutions. These machines are strategically placed by the owners so that illegal purchases are not known to them. Why should they care? All they are interested in is taking your two dollars and twenty-five cents worth of quarters. Why don't they post security guards near those machines, like they do at the arcade? Are they trying to say that video games are more harmful than tobacco?

Convenience stores are also places where the minimum age restrictions are hardly enforced. From a convenience store clerk, I can get a supply of cigarettes

and pornographic magazines with little resistance. By saying I am eighteen but just forgot my identification at home, I can bypass the age requirements and easily contribute to my moral decline. "It's a free country," justified a store clerk.

America puts the wrong emphasis on what is correct and what is not. By putting an age requirement on arcades and ignoring one on condoms, the government is saying that it is acceptable to have premarital sex as long as you don't have it in an arcade. Now don't get me wrong: I don't think that there should be an age restriction on condoms, but I do not believe there should be one to get into an arcade. Hey, I just want to play Bad Dudes.

## Summer Reading: New, But Not Improved

Adam Lore

It has become an accepted theory among students and faculty alike that the summer reading program is one that needs changes in some way. I have spoken to fellow students as well as English teachers about the format of the program, and almost all have expressed a desire to change the system, agreeing that it was a good concept gone bad. When I heard that changes were going to be made, it was music to my ears.

When I received

the summer reading packet in the mail, however, I became confused, and then dismayed. The impossible had actually happened: the summer reading program had become worse. In the past, I had a wide variety of books to choose from and could always find three that interested me. Now, I have to choose two books out of a list of only seven. My freedom of choice has been greatly diminished.

Also, there are many books on this list that, frankly, do not have much appeal for the students. For instance, how many entering ninth graders are going to see *Einstein's Universe* on the list and rush to their local library? I also do not see much demand for foreign language selections that are not required for the course.

Taken away from the students this year was the very popular option of choosing one longer selection such as *Moby Dick* or *War and Peace* in lieu of reading three different selections. This option made it possible for a student to look at all the angles of what he or she was reading to

understand all of the aspects of the book. Many students took advantage of this opportunity and benefited from it. But for some reason, they have now eliminated this alternative.

The teachers that I have spoken to suggested that the selections be chosen by the students a month before the end of school. These choices must be cleared by the faculty to insure that the choices are of proper difficulty for the reader. A list of authors would be given to help guide them, but it would not be steadfast.

You may argue that the list is not cast in stone now, and technically, you would be right, but I object to the difficulty of the process of clearing a book that is not on the list. First of all, we get the list after school closes, taking away the obvious time in which we see our teachers. Once summer starts, it is very hard to find them to get the necessary approval. Teachers and students alike go off to college, take a vacation or do other work. To find the time to prioritize summer reading in our lives is rather difficult, if not impossible, during the hectic months away from Prep.

If these changes are made, it would save a lot of headaches for both teachers and students. Summer reading is still a good idea that does not have all the bugs worked out of it yet. Changes were made, but not all of them were for the better. Until we get an improved program, let us go back to the old system where we, at least, have some sort of selection that is somewhat appealing to the average Argonaut.

## Bookstore: Little Space, Big Problem

Amar Makht

It is the second week of school and I have already lost one book. If anyone has seen my *The Mayor of Casterbridge* book, please return it to me. If no one does, I will probably have to go back to the Rutgers Prep Bookstore and suffer great inconvenience again.

The major problems with the Bookstore result from its size. You see, the bookstore is located in a closet. Okay, maybe I'm exaggerating, but it really does seem like it. During the two weeks before school opens, the bookstore is always cramped with both books and buyers. Combined with the excessive heat in the room, it hardly seems worth it to buy your books at all.

Because the Bookstore is so small, the line seems longer than it really is (if that is possible). This long line originates from the lack of manpower that exists in managing the store. Why doesn't the Bookstore hire more people to tend to these customers? Perhaps with more help, things can go much faster and more smoothly. Or better yet, why don't they move all the books to the cafeteria during those two weeks so that we can go in and pick out the books we need ourselves? If we all bought our books by self-service, we would not have to wait ten minutes per person for the bookseller to gather the books we

need.

Another time-consuming aspect of the Bookstore is the amount of paperwork required for each customer's order. Although we individually fill out our own order forms for books, we do not have an accurate price list, so we are forced to wait while the bookseller calculates the amount of our order on a practically ancient calculator. An electronic cash register would help speed things up immensely and could quickly create receipts of our orders, as opposed to depending on the bookseller's slower tactic of writing out each price book by book.

The line jams up even more when the bookseller allows certain people to cut to the front of the line. I went in to the bookstore last week to buy nine English books, but I was forced to wait forty minutes when three people came in after me and jumped to the head of the line with their petty problems ("Oh, I forgot to get one book! Silly me!") or with their pre-packed orders. The bookseller should reorganize the system of pre-packed ordering so that these people don't have to interrupt the line that the regular customers use. If the bookseller opts to have a pre-packed ordering system, she should hire another person to handle these orders. Otherwise, no one should get the privilege of cutting the line.

Another major problem of

the bookstore is the high prices of textbooks. A hardcover book runs from about thirty to sixty dollars, while a normal-sized paperback English book can go as high as nine dollars. While I agree that high-quality textbooks are more important than those of low cost, there are some books which are unusually high in price. A specific example is *Preparing the Research Paper*, a really thin paperback booklet. The last time I checked, the book sold for four dollars. Four years ago, this book cost one dollar. At this rate, the Class of 2000 will be paying fourteen dollars for this tiny booklet. Is this any way to encourage our youth to read?

Besides these books that we have no choice but buying, there are other products in the bookstore. These products' prices are inflated so that people who are desperate for a pen before their seventh period Physics test have no alternative but to spend an extremely exorbitant amount. And have you noticed those snazzy Prep-identified garments that are hanging up in the Bookstore? Does anyone actually buy these clothes? Of course they do: Prep-identified gymwear is required in the Lower School. And how many people need a student assignment book? Why is it required of the freshmen? It makes you think: how many other ways does the school have of making us buy from them?

*THE OGRA... A radical but conservative, stubborn but charming group of individuals who live on the edge.*

### Selected Poetry

#### endangered

long, slender and mottled brown snake  
restricted to his muddy dwelling  
no place to go but  
down  
enclosed by man's evil doings  
his home, his warm home  
turns to nothing more than  
an urban center:  
highways & wastedumps  
his once beautiful rivulet is now a void  
man's void  
man will bury him  
flush him  
into a part of the landfill  
the bottomless hole

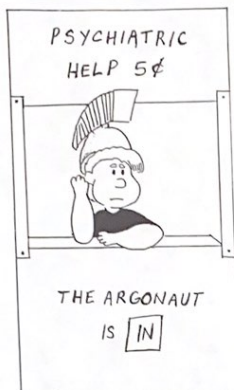
—anonymous



# The Back Page

## Ask the Argonaut...

## It Came From The Cafeteria



By Garvin Jesdanun

DEAR SIR:

Hey, I've never seen this column before. What is this all about?

BEFUDDLED IN EDISON

DEAR BEFUDDLED:

This is a new, ongoing column called "Ask the Argonaut," a monthly attempt to answer students' questions with cheap humor. We will be accepting real questions from real people, to be resolved by the Argonaut, so you can be sure of getting accurate information and sound advice.

THE ARGONAUT

DEAR SIR:

Who is this Argonaut and what makes him so qualified to answer my questions?

PUZZLED IN PISCATAWAY

DEAR PUZZLED:

The name "Argonaut" is given to any of a bunch of Greek

guys who sailed on the Argo with Jason on his legendary search for the Golden Fleas. During the fifth month of the Argo's voyage, one sailor was thrown overboard during a drunken chess match and was left for dead by the crew. However, this man survived because he was frozen in a block of ice.

In the mid-1700's, a French-Canadian explorer by the name of Pierre Le Foot found the frozen Argonaut while exploring the Quebec Sea and melted him from his icy tomb. Although the Argonaut was 2000 years older than Le Foot, Le Foot treated him as a son.

Unfortunately, Le Foot died 12 years later when his canoe was eaten by a ferocious tuna. In his last will and testament, Le Foot left all of his belongings - a parka and a lottery ticket - to his foster son.

No one was more surprised than the Argonaut when the lottery ticket won him 14 million dollars. At first he considered purchasing Louisiana, but instead he spent his money on tuition for a few years at Prep.

It was his third year at Prep that the school basketball team played against the undefeated Ranney. To bolster team spirit, the Argonaut wore a chicken suit and pranced around the gymnasium. The team won and the Argonaut became the school's permanent mascot.

As to what makes him qualified to give advice, no one else wanted the job.

THE ARGONAUT

DEAR SIR:

I'm a new student at this

school. What clubs should I join? FRESHMAN IN FREEHOLD

DEAR FRESHMAN:

There is no doubt about it: Argo, Forensics, RPSEA, and Video Club.

THE ARGONAUT

DEAR SIR:

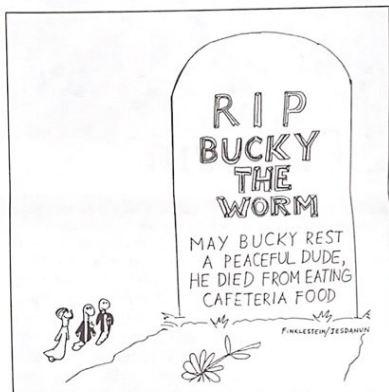
I am confused. Every time I go to the cafeteria to get my lunch, the lunch ladies call me "Hon" and "Sweetie." I think they like me, but they don't seem to show it. They keep giving me all this crap to eat. What should I do?

NEW KID

DEAR NEW KID:

Be afraid... be very afraid. And watch out for worms in your soup. Well, we seem to have run out of space! See you next month!

THE ARGONAUT



Arthur Brostrom

During sixth period on September 12, 1990, sophomore Robert Gonzalez, age fifteen, entered the cafeteria to feast on the consistently splendid cuisine offered. Little did he realize that he was in for a shock of horrendous proportions. After considering the dining options, Rob determined that some nice, warm soup would go down really well. He made his purchase, then proceeded to sit down with friends Samer Boraie, Matt Maccia, and Brian Schaeffer to enjoy his lunch. Rob stirred his soup as usual, but soon discovered an unusual mass.

"At first I thought it was an onion," Rob later commented. "I didn't realize just what it was in my soup." It was not until Rob reached the bottom of the cup of

soup that he understood fully the situation. For it was then that Rob discovered that the mysterious object in question was not in fact an onion: it was a dead meal worm.

Needless to say, Rob was quite upset by his discovery. He orally displayed his feelings to all nearby. Mr. Ralph Avella was the faculty member on cafeteria duty at the time, along with Dr. Dorothy Lange. After the incident, Avella remarked that such a reaction must have been genuine, for Rob and his friends were quite disgusted by what Rob had found.

"It was brown, and was about half an inch long," remarked Matt Maccia, fellow food connoisseur, following the incident. "It might have been a maggot. It was definitely pretty rude." Matt was one of the few who caught a glimpse of the worm before its prompt disposal. "I was able to get my money back," Rob stated, "but I will definitely never eat the soup again."

Well, what can we say about it? People have always complained about the cafeteria food, but this really scares me. I suppose that this incident is isolated, but you never know. The next time you order soup, you could be the victim. Funny, but I always thought that flies were to be found in soup and that worms were to be found in apples. Well, at least I'm a senior, so that I can now sign out to eat lunch elsewhere.

