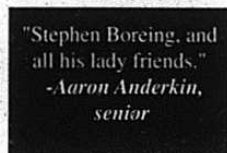


Down the Hall

What's your biggest pet peeve and why?



"People driving in the fast lane, slow, because they're slowing me up and I am always in a hurry."
-Jessie Mahaffey
RCHS staff member



"Stephen Boreing, and all his lady friends."
-Aaron Anderkin,
senior



"FRESHMAN!"
-Jessica F. Riddle,
junior



"Marty, because everything he says and does gets on my nerves."
-Lindsey Thomas,
sophomore



"People chewing loud, like with their mouth open."
-Matthew Bray
freshman



"And you'll be with..."

BY AUDREY BURKE

"Why don't you go with this group," says the teacher. Then you hear the muffled "Yes, all right, we got the smart kid," from the class clowns. It is an ambitious, studious student's worst nightmare.

Group work has reached the point where it actually instills fear into many hard working pupils. In my experience, as a dutiful student I am part of a minority. That minority has often been expected to lead the crowd academically. Part of those expectations is captaining a group during collaborative learning. Many times I have been set in a group of students who aren't interested in their work, sometimes not even their lives. As a leader I have been left to delegate assignments, ensure everyone is working, and do all the jobs no one else wants.

Personally, I am fed up with picking up everyone else's slack and then having them succeed because of the one or two members that worked. On the other hand, the kids who didn't work have brought down everyone's score enough to make the working members dissatisfied with the score.

I realize that teachers have been

trying to cut down on one student having to do everything by giving group members the opportunity to assess each other. As much of a needed step as that is, it doesn't solve the problem. There won't be much of an impact on a negligent member's score if one caring student is the only student of the group who is giving the realistically deserved score based on effort and quality of work. So, as much as I applaud that improvement I believe that there is still room for more.

One teacher stated that sometimes a teacher will place industrious students with apathetic ones in hopes that it will provide a positive influence.

Well, as nice as that sounds in theory, as a student put into such precarious situations myself I can tell you it rarely works out. People aren't going to do what they don't feel motivated to do.

There are many teachers who realize this and take measures to ensure students get fair grades.

"Sometimes I'll put kids together that I know won't work so somebody has to step-up," says history teacher Adam Coleman. Measures such as these are a promising step.

Also, I know that in pairing a weaker student with a strong one isn't the same thing as being forced to work with someone who is completely uncooperative. I am happy to work with anyone who is willing to prove to me that they will pull their own weight in a group and want to learn. I will gladly help those who want to learn and will put forth the effort to do so. In many classroom setups I understand that this is often desirable.

What I want stopped is the intentional pairing of dedicated students with those who are indifferent. It hurts much more than it helps. In the real world if you don't hold your own then you have to pay the consequences, and school should be no different.

The best solution I believe would be to let students choose their own groups. That way those who don't care don't have to drag the rest of us down with them. Teachers should still be able to ensure that students who are willing and need special help get it, but those who are capable and just too lazy to care can either change or accept the consequences of their own actions.

Who do YOU take for granted?

BY PAULA ROWLAND

Taking someone for granted doesn't happen on purpose, it just happens. It's human nature. As I have been told throughout my life. It's not like we mean to do it, we just naturally think that someone is always going to be there. It's a feeling only felt. Ninety-nine percent of the time we don't realize we are taking someone for granted...until it's too late. But in my case, it was just in time.

When I was in seventh grade, it seemed as if everything was changing. I was trying to learn how to deal with all of the new things happening in my life, but it seemed as if the stress just kept piling up on me. I never had time to myself because school and chores began to take up all of my days and I began to pity myself. I truly believed that life could not get any worse. Then it did.

My mom had been going back and forth to the hospital to have different tests run on her to tell us just what was making her so sick. On an early spring evening, my Aunt Linda called and told us that my mom was at my grandmother's house. They had finally received the tests results.

My heart seemed to just lay in my throat during the ten minute ride to Granny's house. All along the way, my brother was reassuring me everything would be okay. Usually, I was the calm one, but on that day, I was different.

When we arrived, Linda met my brother and I at the door to take us inside as my dad sat down on the porch swing beside my mom. The sight of sadness upon Linda's face engulfed me as I walked inside.

She sat my brother and me down on the couch and slowly began telling us what the tests were trying to confirm—that my mom had cancer.

"The doctors didn't say absolutely for sure that she has it, but they said they weren't doubting it either. They want us to be prepared for the worse, but I promise we'll make it through this," Linda said shakingly, but softly.

It began then. The realization that any moment my mom could leave me and that it would last forever. Test after test was performed on her as she was prepared for surgery. I never knew fear until then, the day of the surgery. One wrong

move and I could lose her. My mommy, my comforter, my hero, my all...gone.

We prepared for the worst that was never even there. It was a misdiagnosis, cancer never existed, it was just a cyst.

The relief! After months of sleepless nights and tear-stained pillows, she had always been okay! My mom had never had cancer and even though we are still, to this day, living with the effects of that horrible misdiagnosis, it could have happened. God could have told her that it was time for her to go.

Now, my entire outlook on life is different. Everyday, no matter where I am, I notice people who are taking someone for granted. Whether it be a parent, a girlfriend or boyfriend, a friend, a family member, or even a pet, realize you have no control over how long they are going to be here.

You never know when you're not going to get a second chance and you never know when that second chance will be your last. So say what is on your mind, say what is in your heart. You never know when your privilege of having them in your life...will be taken away.