



First Annual Community Service Day

By Erin Hayes

This year Valley Regional has decided to try something new. Following the lead of other local schools, like Morgan High School in Clinton, Valley students and teachers participated in a "Community Service Day." This day, devoid of classes, was devoted to having students and faculty go out and make an impact on the surrounding communities of Chester, Deep River, and Essex. Originally scheduled for Friday, June 7th, it was changed due to inclement weather. Nonetheless, this day has generated a lot buzz around the school from both students and faculty, eager to see what would be in store. An example of a location a CORE group visited is Bushy Hill. All CORE groups went to various locations that were in need of some cleaning up or general assistance around Tri-Town.

The community service day committee was made up of Mrs. Bergman, Mrs. White, Mr. Perreault, Ms. Chapman, Mrs. Galipeau, Mrs. Meehan, Ms. Hwang, and Ms. Donagher. I sat down with Mrs. White, the mathematics department coordinator and also an active member of the aforementioned committee, to talk about Community Service Day.

Question: How did the idea to do a community service day come about this year?

Mrs White: Both Mrs. Bergman and I have connections to the Morgan School in Clinton. We were aware of a

community service day occurring there, and how much they liked it, so last summer we met with the principal of Morgan to find out what they did to plan their day and brought some ideas back to Valley. We presented the ideas to Mrs. Martineau and she liked them. We formed a committee and started planning.

Question: Why did our school do this? What was the goal?

form community service beyond this one day.

Question: What impact do you think this day will have upon the students, faculty, and communities of Essex, Chester, and Deep River?

Mrs.White: It will reinforce in the communities how great our students and faculty are and give our students and faculty community connections that they might not have had before.

Question: Was it hard to schedule? Do you think it will be worth the hard work?

Mrs.White: It was a lot of work contacting and securing the locations for the service projects and organizing all of the CORE groups and faculty, but the committee did a wonderful job. We feel it will be very much worth every minute that we have put into the planning. We hope it becomes an annual event.

Everyone is excited for a change of pace and to give back to the community that gives so much to us. Community service day will hopefully bring us together as a school of students and faculty while uniting us with our local neighborhoods and businesses. Due to the meticulous hours of planning for and dedication to

this venture by the hardworking faculty committee which brought this day about, it is hoped that it will become a permanent event here at Valley.

Mrs. White: Our school did this to show our gratitude to the communities for their continued support for all we do here at Valley. We are also hoping that this will instill in the students the desire to per-



Sophomores Tyler Saunders (L) and Anthony Nucolo work to clean the gazebo at Kirkland Commons in Deep River. Below, Miss Dayton's CORE poses at Essex Elementary while Dustin Meadows snacks on a candy bar.

Shoreline Calculus Champions

By Sam Rosenberg

On June 4th, about 40 of our calculus students went to HK High School for the 2nd Annual Calculus Competition. After weeks of solving tangram puzzles, practicing our calculus symbol Sudoku, and polishing our integration skills, we were ready to compete against every other calc student in the Shoreline Conference -- all 250 of them.

As we divided into teams of six, I joined a group consisting of two other Calc 2 students -- David Ballantyne and Tazmin Corbett- and three Intro to Calc students -- Anna D'Agostino, Maddie Kozlik, and Abbie Stempel. Our first obstacle was to think of a team name. Several were thrown into the air, most full of math jargon, until someone suggested the unusual name Timothy. We agreed that it could help us stand out among the other teams, and we kept the name.

When we arrived at HK, we went to the auditorium to watch the winning calculus music videos from each school. Parodizing popular songs like "Thrift Shop" and "We Are Young," the videos took a comical spin on calc equations and theorems.

Next, we crossed the campus to the gym and split into our teams. The members of Timothy started out at the giant tangram puzzle. After a few shouting matches, we were able to maneuver the seven enormous plywood shapes into five of the many goal designs, including a sleepwalker and a skyscraper.

Our next station was the dress-up. The objective was to dress a teammate up in the correct clothing based on the answers to twelve calculus questions. Dressed in a plaid shirt, a wacky headband, a grass skirt, and holding both a pinwheel and a picture of Gottfried Leibniz (a father of calculus), Anna was ready to be shown to the judges. We received a perfect score. We were ecstatic!

We moved on to Connect 4 in 3D, where we had to answer calc problems to place foam tubes on one of twelve posts. In the end, we got as many as six in a row. We were absolutely killing the game.

The helix station was next, and was probably the most fun. We were given 27 boxes that were taped together to look like the shapes in Tetris. Our goal was to assemble them into different 3D shapes based off designs we were given.

Then, we had calculus symbol Sudoku. We arranged the sigmas, integrands, and infinities into the correct places on the 9x9 grid. We finished right when time was called.

After pizza and cookies, it was time for the awards ceremony. Several awards were passed out, including "Most Spirited" and "Best Helix Team." Then came the award for first place overall. I jokingly whispered to the other members of Timothy, "Fingers crossed!" knowing that we couldn't possibly win.

"And the winner is," the MC began with suspense, "Timothy!"

We stood there, mouths gaping in disbelief. We were the 2013 Shoreline Calculus Champions.



CONGRATULATIONS

These Last Ten Days

By Sten Spinella

I would advise my teachers to disregard my last ten days at Valley Regional. Don't read too much into them. I cannot do another equation, and I cannot take another test, and I cannot write another paper. It's not that I have low character, it's just that I've exhausted any character I once had. So maybe you should read into it. Those with true character would be able to last longer. Those are the ones delivering the speeches at graduation.

It's summer. It's hotter outside, the music is louder, the food is better. These are my excuses. Focus instead on my *To Kill a Mockingbird* paper I wrote freshman year, or that comment about Hegel's dialectical view of history you found especially insightful. When you remember me, try not to recall my final paper on Marx. Instead, remember the Cleopatra paper I wrote first semester when I was still passionate and I was still thoughtful. I like to think I've retained my passion, admittedly for all the wrong things. It is not for business, it is for art; it is not for science, it is for politics. At the present moment, it is for everything except the looming word problem, everything except the unconquerable term paper.

So much of these four years have been dedicated to crafting a legacy, creating a perception, solidifying two or three adjectives with which to describe yourself when you are discussed. Instagram, Twitter, Facebook - these all contribute to this effort. If someone does not participate in social media they still form a hard-won reputation. Yet, it is decidedly difficult to maintain a degree of individuality when you go to the same classes, on the same field trips, to the same parties; write the same papers, deliver the same speeches, concoct the same SAT essays and associate yourself with the same music and vernacular and people for six years. The level of work that goes into becoming the athlete, the writer, the artist, the filmmaker, the skateboarder, the car guy, the fashionable one, the smart girl, the cool kid, staggers. Even now I'm subconsciously attempting to affect my complexion to others by writing this article.

This collective, no-child-left-behind mentality has served as both vice and virtue for this year's senior class, a class which has seen shoreline and state championships, celebrated musicals, dominated choral competitions, and outperformed other schools in art, writing, instrumentation, and debate. Yes,

we have reluctantly sacrificed some of our individuality, but most of what we have achieved we've done with each other, and when someone faced a personal obstacle we were there, piling into cars, crowding into living rooms, to help. We will regain our individuality but we will not again have this communal system to support us. Now we have to be individuals. Now we must rely on ourselves. Now we will be tested.

Newspaper columns and graduation speeches don't allow for much other than generalities. The big but vacant quote, the large but empty idea; how much of this can help you? As much as you want it to. I regret that I was unable to put out newspaper issues more frequently. I regret that I stopped pitching in baseball. I regret the times I decided against studying because I could rock with that eighty. Maybe I would have gotten that scholarship and I'd be enrolled in a D.C. school next fall and maybe I'd be delivering this speech at graduation. I've heard it said, or seen it tattooed on lower backs, that one should "live with no regrets." That's stupid. Regret has made me a better person, and more importantly, a better writer. My tenure at Valley was imperfect, and that's because it was real. It was stressful, it was relaxing, it was freeing, it was constricting, it was boring, it was vibrant; there were forgettable times, there were memorable times, but they were tangible times. The Mangeants happened, the dances happened, the games with the lights and the people were won often and lost less so, the conversations were held, the bike rides to Pettipaug were frequent; we laughed a lot, we invented a language, the tests were aced, the tests were failed. It was perfectly flawed.

Due to the lack of homework I've completed of late, my outlook has crystallized. I do not care about this rat race towards characterization. I know which friends will last past Valley and the ones who will not. I know which lessons and classes matter and which ones do not. I know that I would trade my soul to leave this school and escape these insufferable final ten days, but, I also know with the utmost confidence that I will long to relive these four years again when I contemplate my next graduation, or my first child, or the death of a loved one.

So again, please, do not judge my character by my academic work these last ten days. True character is not a 96 on a test, and it is not how late you stay up to understand Spanish. True character is staying true to your character.

Senior Reflections

By Phoebe Petrovic and Emily Roise

The brick bones of Valley Regional High School give it structure as an educational institution, but the students are its lifeblood. Hailing from the three surrounding towns of Essex, Chester, and Deep River, they each contribute their unique talents, interests, passions, and personalities. They make Valley more than just a school; they make it a hub of academic, athletic, and extracurricular enrichment.

Two such students are Geoff Vincelette and Joan Wyeth, seniors who, like many of their peers, are staring directly at the fast approaching end of their VRHS careers. At Valley, athletics and

hard, because: "when you want to take your education further, you realize you could have done better in your first two years." High school is a critical transition from childhood to adulthood -- one that culminates in the all-important Contemporary Issues senior portfolio. Geoff, who researched the treatment of United States war veterans, cautions students to fight senioritis and "put a lot of effort into it... [because] it pays off." Joan's advice was succinct: "Do your homework. Just... do it."

The graduates also expressed a few of their experiences and preferences at VRHS. Geoff's favorite cafeteria meal



academics were where Geoff found his niche. His lasting memory is of the sports he played: football and golf. He remarks on the teams and the fun they had. Regarding golf, he notes how the team has been "so fortunate to play on such a nice golf course." Because of his dedication to the sport, Geoff was the 2013 recipient of the Quarry Ridge Golf Course Young Golfers' Scholarship at this year's Senior Awards Night. His passion for sports was evident in his most poignant recollections of his Valley experience. In retrospect, his least favorite memory was not of a social problem or poor grade, but in "pre-season warmups for football" when he "saw Mitchell King tear his ACL right in front of" him. "Down he went and that was it," Geoff reflected, saying it was "one of the most devastating moments at Valley I've seen involving anything."

While "science wasn't [her] forte," Joan found her place in the arts department. Her success at Valley has encouraged her to pursue a career in the art field past high school. Next year, she will be attending the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, to major in photography and "maybe minor in creative writing."

Upon reflection, Geoff and Joan also had some advice for those still moving towards graduation. Geoff notes simply that "high school is important," and advises underclassmen to work

is nachos. Joan's is "mashed potatoes. I don't care what with, just mashed potatoes." Their favorite gym game was mutually team handball, "hands down."

Next year, Geoff will attend Central Connecticut State University, entering the Class of 2017 for physical education. After his time at Valley, he feels "prepared to take on the challenging world," and credits his ability to handle workloads specifically to block scheduling. "You get more work with four blocks than seven periods," which primes students "for the college load," he notes.

Although they move on, their years at Valley will not be forgotten. In response to what they would miss most, both answered the teachers, teachers which Joan called "fantastic." Geoff added, "They're just nice people, and you don't find many nice people in the world." In his final days, Geoff has realized the truth to the cliché that 'time flies.' When asked about his favorite Valley memory, he initially struggled to sift through, saying "so much has gone on that I don't even really realize." Finally, he settled upon this: "walking onto that field under those lights, with everyone up on that hill [during football season]... Playing out in front of everybody, and the cheering."



Left-right: Maya Moen, Curtis Turner, David Ballantyne and Lindsay Grote take a break from the dance floor at Senior Reception.

Do you have a great idea for an article? What would you like to see in the school newspaper? Do you wish to join the school newspaper? Email us at: voveditors@yahoo.com New members and ideas are always welcome!

CLASS OF 2013

Runway to Dance Floor By Nile Otte

What were the best dresses at reception? You know, that perfect dress that took your special someone's breath away. Finding the perfect outfit for any occasion can be stressful, but the pressure to look flawless at events like senior reception makes it even harder. This is why when it comes to selecting your dress, one should take a look at the recent spring runways and grab as much inspiration as possible.

After reviewing the spring 2013 runways I've narrowed it down to four common trends endorsed by many designers: ruffles, black and white, sheer, and pastels. Understandably, the sound of ruffles may take you back to the 80's, but they are certainly making a statement this year, adding a simple yet elegant movement to a rather plain dress. Frills work best if they are asymmetrical, so look for ruffled one-shoulder dresses or dresses featuring the high-low skirt. Selecting a structured dress with a simple ruffle detail will prevent you from an 80's prom dress disaster. For ruffled advice take a look at the Spring 2013 collections from Chloe, Balenciaga and Gucci.

One can never go wrong with the classic combination of black and white (it is a personal favorite of mine). I was delighted to see it come back in the spring collections of Marc Jacobs, Givenchy and Oscar de la Renta. Black is flattering and slimming but with added accents of bright white you can take the whole look to another level, adding edge and attitude to your prom dress. The strong contrast between a dark black and a bright white will not only make you stand out on the dance floor, but it looks great in pictures. Another plus is that you

will match your date no matter what they choose to wear. There is nothing more intimidating than a power duo dressed to the tens in black and white. Mr. and Mrs. Smith, anyone?

The sheer trend seen all over the runways this spring is one that is hard to achieve without breaking dress code, but when done right, it looks incredible. Designers that pulled it off correctly this spring were Dior, Valentino and Akris. I would suggest not to be afraid to select dresses that have sections of sheer fabric such as the neckline or sleeves. The sheer trend can also go hand in hand with the popular cutout trend, and by choosing a dress that covers the cutouts with a fancy sheer fabric, you make it more school appropriate and trendy at the same time.

The last trend I decided to choose from the spring runways was pastels, a trend that seems to come back every spring but always in different ways. The pastel colors this spring are pale pink, lavender and mint green. All three shades are perfect for a sweet and feminine prom dress. It would be smart to embrace this season's candy colors with sleek shapes and strong metallic accessories. Try to stick with one pastel when choosing your dress to avoid looking like an Easter egg on your special night. To get an idea of how to put your best pastel foot forward, take a look at the collections Prada, Chloe and Donna Karan sent walking down the runways this spring.

When it comes to the final decision, make sure to choose a dress that reflects your personality and is comfortable as well as flattering. The dresses at prom and reception were gorgeous this year... you all must have been listening to me!



VOV Opinions

The Test By Sten Spinella

I was sitting at a desk in a room with no furniture. I had a number two pencil in my hand. There was a test laying in the center of the desk. At least I thought it was a test. On the cover was a blank page. I picked it up and flipped through it. It was not heavy. It was three pages. The second page had three questions. The third page was another blank page. I turned to the second page.

Question 1: Why do you matter?

- A. Well, I was born for a reason.
- B. I don't.
- C. Because I will improve the society I live in.

I bubbled in "C".

Question 2: What do you want to do with your life?

- A. Survive and advance.
- B. Travel the world.

I answered "B".

Question 3(A): Are you truly passionate about something?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. I don't know.

I filled in the "A" bubble.

Question 3(B): Have you been taught to cultivate your passion?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. I don't know.

I filled in the "B" bubble.

That was easy enough. I think I aced it. My life compacted into three multiple choice questions. Whoever makes these standardized tests are quite talented at boiling down a complicated subject into a few vague inquiries.

A teacher of mine always wants to read us interesting stories from non-curriculum related history books or relay to us a morsel of information in the news regarding some simple historical pleasure like the recent unearthing of King Edward's body. And a student always asks if we should take notes. "No, just listen." This response works as an excuse for everyone to fiddle with their iPods or mentally plan the rest of their day or stare, unresponsive, at the wall while he wist-

fully recounts just how terrible Ivan really was. Why learn for the sake of learning? Us mutated, grade-obsessed students, who are constantly drilled with tests, are at a loss when questions like this are posed, questions which require critical thinking and will not affect their GPA.

I'm writing this while he talks about a recent Rembrandt art theft, or something like that. We don't have to take notes yet. I'm guilty of it too. There is no thirst for knowledge any longer. I justify it by saying I'll learn later, once I have the means to travel and have life educate me. Not only is there no incentive to succeed and learn beyond the quantified grade system, but trying to do so could be harmful. If you spend time writing poems or short stories or newspaper columns which question what is happening around you, you lose time studying, you get worse grades, and you can't get past high school. Elementary math.

So yes, I am against CAPT testing. I am against AP testing. I'm against midterms and finals and pop quizzes. I'm against tests. I hate studying, and I hate facing the anxiety of the ordeal. I know, I'm every student. But I hate it because successfully memorizing information like dates and formulas do not benefit the student in any area aside from their GPA. I hate it because it reduces a student to a number. A teacher to a number. Months of learning and years of experience to one final grade.

I understand the value of hard work, but the current grading system does not reward intelligence. Is there nothing else to discover? Are dogmatic quadratic formulas the only equations left to be known? Is there no other philosophy to be created? Was Voltaire the last freedom fighter? Locke the last idealist? Newton the last theorist? That's how it feels when I'm sitting at a desk filling out a test or taking the mandatory notes we need to memorize for the test. When an entire lesson plan is based around being ready for the test. Life becomes a test rather than a journey of self discovery. Creativity is being slowly exterminated. We are young people with old ideas.



Left: Henry Alberto, Justin Morano and Jerry Ansokelam strutt their stuff at Senior Reception. Above, Top row L-R: Chris Myers and date, Chris Connor, Devin Bakoleadis, Maggie Calamari. Bottom row L-R: Kyle Peterson, Jenna Armenia, Mary Kelly Beaudoin, and....oh, yeah....Sten Spinella.

Ask Harry

GREAT ADVICE AND KNOW-HOW: HARRY TAYLOR'S WISDOM FOR YOUR WORRIES

Dear V.O.V.,

I would like to ask a girl to reception, but I'm not sure my proposal will be special enough to be worthy of her. What can I do to get her attention?
- Romeo

Dear Romeo:

Have you considered renting the Good Year blimp? Nothing says "Date me!" like spending your college savings on a gigantic bag of flammable gas that could blow up at any moment. When she hears those engines roar, her heart will make a similar noise. She'll run out into the yard, turn around and see her name illuminated by 1500 incandescent bulbs. The taut hydrogen balloon will make her swoon into your arms. Remember, the only way you can truly prove you care about someone is the flashy public gesture. Ain't nothin' bigger than a blimp. Of course, if this doesn't work, maybe you should think about waiting until next year's prom. You could stay home and watch a movie. I recommend "Prom Night" or "Carrie."

- Harry Taylor, Doctor of Love

Dear Harry,

I want to purchase my mother a gift for her birthday, but I can't think of anything to buy her. What can I give her for this special day?
- Clueless Kid

Dear Clueless:

Get your mother a gift she will never put down: a laptop. Your mother will no longer have time to scold you when she's caught up in the newest political Facebook fight with her friend Andy from high school. No longer will she hassle you to "take out the trash" or "spend some time with her", and it will distract her from any personal behavioral problems of yours. Of course, if she's anything like my mom, she'll incessantly check your grades on Powerschool and you'll have no choice but to destroy the computer.

- Harry Taylor, The Man

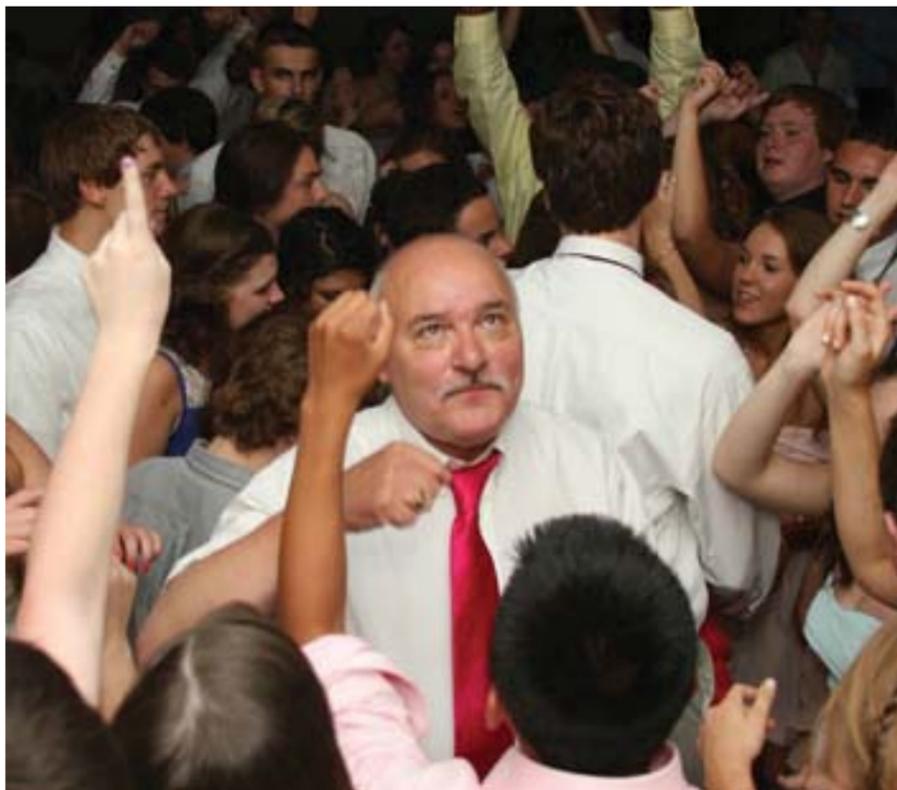
Dear Harry:

I have been asked to participate in the Mangleant, a male beauty pageant to raise money for the school. But I worry people will make fun of me. What should I do?
- Reluctant Hunk

Dear Reluctant,

You should do the noble thing and participate in the Mangleant. It's a fundraiser for a good cause. Don't worry about whether or not we will make fun of you. I promise we will. Constantly.

- Harry Taylor, Leader of Men



Does it surprise anyone that Mr. Lefevre had a spot in the center of the dance floor at Senior Reception? We spotted Lefevre two weeks later as he whizzed by on the Bizarro rollercoaster at Six Flags.

Movie Reviews

This Is 40: A Cure Better Than Chicken Soup

By Sena Spinella

As I was home sick on a rainy and dismal day in March, my outlook while reclining on the couch was bleak. I had resorted to scrolling through Movies On Demand, and I had little hope for what I might find. After reading the description of *This is 40*, I expected a lame and predictable rom-com, sufficient enough to waste \$4.99. I took my chances.

My day was considerably brightened. The movie was a product of exceptional directing and casting. *This is 40* was written and directed by the quirky and prolific Judd Apatow and bolstered by performances from Leslie Mann, Paul Rudd, Melissa McCarthy, Jason Segel, and Megan Fox. If you enjoyed *Step Brothers*, *Funny People*, or *Bridesmaids*, I have no doubt you will adore this film.

The plot is centered around Debbie (Leslie Mann) and Pete (Paul Rudd), a married couple who are both turning 40 and experiencing tension in their marriage. Pete's record business is having a rough time, the couple's teenage daughter Sadie and eight-year-old daughter Charlotte are constantly bickering and getting into trouble in school, and Debbie has a dishonest

employee. Debbie believes their problems would be solved if she became closer with her parents and Pete did the same with his. The family is quite dysfunctional, and this clearly stems from Debbie's previous isolation from her father and Pete's awkward relationship with his freeloading dad. The film is essentially Apatow's humorous take on middle to upper-middle class life and the seeming emptiness and purposelessness that goes along with it. Pete and Debbie are fighting their mid-life crises simultaneously, and they must face a separate conflict as well: their relationship.

Though the movie wanders at certain points (typical of Apatow's sprawling scripts), the impeccable accuracy of the family dynamic makes up for it. For those of you with a Netflix addiction (particularly the TV show *Lost*) or a sibling, you will come to find that Judd Apatow has an uncanny understanding of your life. This movie was the answer to my prayers on that dreary March afternoon. For those of you still feeling under the weather with lingering symptoms, I have a word of advice: laughter is your best friend, and *This is 40* is sure to be the quickest cure.

The Great Gatsby: A Great Movie?

By Dustin Meadows

I was never a huge fan of *The Great Gatsby* novel. The plot bored me and it just wasn't my taste. However, Fitzgerald's writing truly does make it a classic. His ability to create imagery and symbols is godlike. I had a very similar opinion of the new *Gatsby* movie produced and directed by Baz Luhrmann. The plot, the same as the book, did not hold my attention, but the directing, production, and cast did. In fact, the movie is worth paying ten dollars to see it on the big screen.

There is no comparison to the 1970's Robert Redford version of *The Great Gatsby*. The movie depicted the plot from the book just as it was, but there was nothing special about the movie to make it interesting, exciting, or even watchable. Luhrmann definitely felt the same way and wanted something that can replace Fitzgerald's irresistible writing. He portrayed New York City as a place where anything can happen, a place unique from the world that surrounds it. Luhrmann made it clear that the twenties were in fact "roaring." While driving to the city, Gatsby and Nick pass a car full of African-Americans drinking and dancing while being driven by a white driver. The passing of these folks in the car really shows the energy and lust for partying in the twenties. Tom Buchanan, Gatsby's rival, makes it clear that segregation is still very real in the North when he worries about "Blacks" and "Whites" getting married. However, it seems that Luhrmann consciously gives a nod to the Harlem Renaissance throughout the film.

Although I've always been a die hard Robert Redford fan after watching "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid" and "Jeremiah Johnson", Leonardo DiCaprio fits the role of Gatsby a hundred times better. He is more charming, adds his own thought-out accent, and looks a lot more like the Jay Gatsby I have always pictured. One of his best parts of the movie is his explosion in the hotel room when he loses his temper with Tom. The part is one of the few not mentioned in the book, but his anger seemed real, and it hit most of the viewers hard. Some others I have talked to have cast this scene aside claim-

ing it is "cheesy" or "lame," but I thought it added to the tension of the scene beautifully. DiCaprio also made Gatsby's catch phrase "Old Sport" believable and even convinces the audience of becoming his pal, whereas Redford never put too much emotion or charisma into the phrase. In fact, Redford's dialogue in general was rather boring, something I definitely did not find Gatsby-esque. DiCaprio was absolutely the best improvement in characters from the 70's version to the new release, though I do believe all the characters improved. Daisy was obviously a big improvement. If it had gotten any worse than the 70's version, it truly would have been unwatchable. Tom was less flamboyant and more sleazy, much more fitting to his character. Tobey Maguire played a good Nick. It was most definitely a good step forward from Spiderman. I thought his narration was excellent and he nailed playing the hospital patient throughout the movie.

The music was my least favorite aspect of the movie. In fact, it forces me to drop my rating from four stars, to three stars. It simply took away the authenticity of the twenties vibe. The camera shots flying over New York City backed by Beyonce singing her heart out I found cheesy, but I could stand it. However, the party scene was horrendous. I'm sorry, but no one dances the Charleston to electronic music. And this may sting too, but electronic music did not exist in the twenties! If the party was modern it would have worked (though it still would have been quite painful). Aside from the music it seemed the movie stuck to the stereotypical and historically accurate twenties in NYC. The music was just too much.

The end of the movie was excellent, concluded with Nick's narration, the famous last lines of the book, "So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past." Maguire made it heartfelt and emotional; the ending could not have been played out better. Overall, the movie stood out to me as a product of great direction and production and exceeded my initial expectations for the movie.