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August 2008

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P.O. Box 7953
Lawton, Oklahoma 73506
Phone 580.536.9500
email: info@okiemagazine.com
Web: www.okiemagazine.com

EDITOR

Indie Michaels
editor@okiemagazine.com

COPY EDITOR

Dr. Christopher O. Keller
ckeller@okiemagazine.com

ADVERTISING SALES

sales@okiemagazine.com

GRAPHIC ARTISTS

Holly Neville
Indie Michaels
Kevin Powell

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Anna Roberts
Freeze Frame Photography

STAFF WRITERS

Jeremy Bigelow
Adrienne Crezo
Kim Fraser
Stephen Gilbert
Ginger Hansen
Autumn Lee
Holly Neville
Megan Nickell
Tina Nickell
Levi Pennington
Randy Pennington
Valerie Pennington
David Roberts
Angela Schertle
Charles Schertle
Jennifer Thompson



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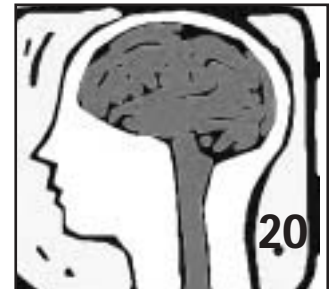
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Tales from the Trip

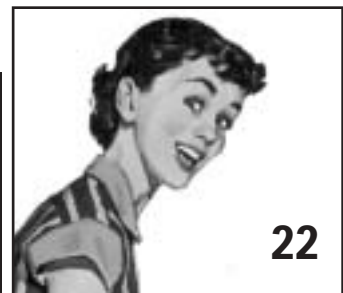
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Mental Upchuck
Summer is done!



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Note from the Editor

Summer's End. Some are breathing a sigh of relief that the kids are heading back to school and some are not quite ready to send the kids packing. The staff at

OKIE Magazine are dedicated to covering what's happening in our schools and in the community. Two of our writers are students in the Lawton Public Schools and have contributed several pieces over the last several months. We are looking forward to more from Levi and Megan, including their monthly school blog. Are you a junior high or high school student that would like an outlet to express yourself through the written word or art? Just get in touch with us via the contact info in the front of the magazine.

Inside this issue of OKIE Magazine you will read several informative articles including the last installment of the homeless series. We had several people in the community contacting us regarding the story about the two men featured - Bob Schwarz and Antony (which is what he prefers to go by). The final piece was delayed due to our inability to confirm some quotes from Antony. Both of these men are wonderful human beings with very different lives and very different views of the world in which they exist. There is so much more we would like to tell you about them but we suggest you take the time to get to know them for yourselves.

There is so much more packed inside these pages so get to it. Don't forget the wacky and sometimes sarcastic takes on life from *Charles Schertle and Dave Roberts*.

So kick back in the cool air and read a copy of OKIE Magazine. Be sure to pass it along to a friend!

Thank you for all your kind letters and comments. The staff of OKIE Magazine welcome your suggestions and comments. We love getting your press releases and story ideas too so keep them coming. We encourage your participation in this community publication by contacting us at 536-9500 or via email at editor@okiemagazine.com.

And remember, the next best thing to being an OKIE is reading about one!

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A Nostalgic Look at Oklahoma

By Angela Schertle
Staff Writer



The last carefree days of summer represent the time when people take a look back over the previous two months (or several years for our adult readers) and reminisce about days gone by, lost and found love, and innocence. These days are often represented in books and movies as the most innocent times in a young person's life. Countless movies and books include plot lines that revolve around a teenaged characters growing up and "coming of age" during the summertime.



In the spirit of nostalgia, we at Okie Magazine would like to invite our readers to look back at some historic Oklahoma gems that inspire patrons to take a look back and reminisce about the past.

What inspires nostalgia more than a fun and classic icon? For many, summertime travel was never easier, more entertaining or more innocent than travels along the classic Route

66. Route 66 was originally designed to be one of the first official highways in the United States and covered 2400 miles between Los Angeles and Chicago. As early as the 1930's people traveled the famous highway for vacation, business and even to find a path to a better life as depicted in John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*. Times were not always easy and the travels were not always fun, but the classic highway that stretches from East to West remains an icon of American history.

Today Route 66 is less of a travel route and more of a tourist attraction. Edmond, OK and other towns along the famous

highway show pride in their rich history by displaying classic signs, restoring original buildings, and even using the symbolic 66 for everything. In Edmond, you can get your hair done at the **Root 66 Salon**, buy furniture at the **Route 66 Galleria** and even spend a fun-filled day swimming, boating and fishing at the Route 66 park.

About ten miles east of Edmond on Route 66 is the **Pops** landmark and restaurant. The iconic restaurant can be recognized by the *66 foot-tall soda pop bottle* illuminated with LED lights. The store offers over *400 types of soda* ranging in color from green to red and in flavor from root beer to strawberry rhubarb.

Customers are invited to help themselves to the soda selection. Once the perfect flavor is found, customers can enjoy the atmosphere at the 50's inspired diner for dinner or a hand-dipped classic shake. When they're finished with their meal, customers can browse the store for pops merchandise and Route 66 memorabilia.



Even businesses a little closer to home try to foster the same feelings of nostalgia. In Meers, **the Meers Store and Restaurant** provides guests a glimpse into the town's mining past. The building, dating back to 1901, features pictures of Southwest Oklahoma over the past century. Visitors can enjoy a Meersburger or homemade peach cobbler ala mode while taking a look back. The Meer's Restaurant is open Sunday through Thursday from 10:30-8:30 and Friday and Saturday from 10:30-9. For more information please call 580-429-8051.

In Lawton, **Blake's Restaurant** located inside Blake's Concrete Creations on SE Interstate Drive, offers customers a taste of the past with their old fashioned soda bar. Customers can order a customized soda with their meals while enjoying the ambience created by the 1950's inspired décor. Only minutes from downtown Lawton, Blakes is open Monday through Friday from 8:30-5:30 and on Saturdays from 11:00-2:00. For more information please call (580) 250-1948



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Homeless by Choice?

Two views on the homeless community

By Valerie Pennington
Staff Writer



Many people experience highs and lows throughout their lives like they were riding a roller coaster. One moment there's an excitement that takes hold of the soul and life is incredibly great and the next moment the bottom drops out and one becomes sick with despair.

Homelessness is one of the ultimate pitfalls and often makes the person who is experiencing it unable to climb back up the hill. Life is full of choices and one has to choose rather to turn experi-

ences into stepping-stones or to allow them to stay stumbling blocks.

In the June issue, we had the opportunity to speak with two men about their experiences with being homeless and the opportunities offered to change their lives. Bob Schwarz and Antony have two completely different views on their situations and shared their stories with Okie magazine.

Bob Schwarz is a kind, soft spoken man with a genuine love for his life and God. He has been in Lawton for nearly 6 years and is currently working at the Salvation Army. "I had no where to go and nothing on me so I sat down on the side of the street," Schwarz said. "A car full of kids picked me up and brought me to the Salvation Army."

One of the requirements of the Salvation Army was attendance of church service on Sunday morning. It was preferred that they attend the services at the Salvation Army church but not required as long as they brought a program back from a service that they attended. Schwarz took advantage of that and found a church that he felt spoke to him.

"I got involved in Bible Study and church and felt like God was talking to me and that I was here for a reason," Schwarz said. "I was saved here."

Schwarz was offered a job at the Salvation Army and he accepted the position. He took the opportunity to change his life and get stabilized with the help of the resources that were available. He hopes to never end up in that situation again.

"I will continue to work at the Salvation Army and continue to remind myself of where I have been and where I want to go," said Schwarz.

Schwarz has taken advantage of the programs at the Salvation Army and believes he is where God wants him to be. Schwarz has made his home at the Salvation Army and continues to give back by ministering and working to assist the homeless but hopeful that grace its doors.

However, there are some people who don't believe that the Salvation Army or other shelter facilities are the way to go.

In fact, some people feel as if it is more like a prison sentence.

When we first went looking for homeless community members to interview, several locals referred to the "guy with the broom" or the "man with the dreadlocks". We were told that he could usually be found walking Sheridan Road or Fort Sill Boulevard. Some warned us to be careful because he could be "tempermental". The man we met was much different than described or expected.

He shielded his eyes from the sun and smiled up at us, introducing himself as Antony. He welcomed us to sit down and talk with him on the sidewalk, which is often the "only furniture he owns". According to Antony, he arrived in Lawton the winter of 1987 with the military. He remembers that there was a huge winter storm that first year he was here. He served through the first wars in the Middle-Eastern countries and after he left the military stayed here.

He worked for a while after he got out but it wasn't something he enjoyed doing.

"After the military I worked with a janitorial service and a few other services," Antony said. "But, I don't like to sit around at the shop on slow days so that did not work out too well."

We asked Antony if he was on medications. This may seem an odd question but according to Schwarz, one of the biggest problems facing the homeless community across the country is mental illness. Antony claimed that he was when he gets them. He said he tried to use services that the Salvation Army offers but he did not feel as if they were "right for him".

"I do not stay at the Salvation Army because it is almost like being in prison for a guy like me," Antony said. "I like to walk around and observe all the things that happen."

Both Schwarz and Antony have been in situations in which they have lost everything. One of them chose to take the assistance that was available and the other felt as if it was better to do things without help from a structured environment.

Each person has choices to make and lessons to learn and the way that one handles the roller coaster of life is individual. There are places to receive help when one is in need and each person has to choose for him or herself how to handle the ride.





What's Happening in Theatre

Blue Moon Productions, Inc. is very pleased to announce its 2008-2009 season. For the second year, we will stage our productions at the Goodwill Industries of Southwest Oklahoma's Adult Day Care facility at 923 Hilltop Drive .

Lawton Community Theatre presents **Sundaes and Songs**, Friday, August 8th.

Join an old fashioned Ice Cream Social in the Park east of the theatre, starting at 7 pm, followed by a Barbershop concert by *Southwest Pride Barbershop Chorus* inside the theatre at 8 pm.

Southwest Pride is a men's barbershop chorus from Lawton and Duncan Oklahoma. We are a member group of the SOCIETY FOR THE PRESERVATION AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF BARBERSHOP QUARTET SINGING IN AMERICA (SPEBSQSA), also known as THE BARBERSHOP HARMONY SOCIETY (BHS).

Tickets are \$15 and are on sale now. Call (580) 355-1600 for reservations.

The first show of the season is a psychological thriller, **Squall**, by *Elizabeth Hemmerdinger*. The show dates are Sept. 12, 13 & 19, 20.

The show centers on Diana, a celebrated TV journalist, and a fierce guardian of her own privacy. Isolated on an island off the coast of Maine while sorting through the personal effects of her recently deceased mother, Diana is surprised and intrigued when a young stranger, Cordelia, rings the bell. Once a fierce summer storm washes out the bridge connecting them to the mainland, however, Cordelia reveals an unnerving intimacy with Diana's past. A compelling game of cat and mouse ensues, culminating in a violent life-and-death struggle. This show is for adults only.

Season tickets purchased before September 1 will realize a 10% discount. A season ticket for all four shows is as follows: dinner/theater ticket—\$90, show only ticket— \$54 and student ticket—\$36. For more information or reservations, please call 580-591-6730.

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Eiffel Tower

Travel, in essence, is simply an investment. A chance to put out time and money in order to receive a thrill more unique than that found at the local theme park, more adventurous than anything playing at the cinema down the road and certainly more intense than anything you may have seen on television. An opportunity to turn a moment of physical presence into a lifetime of vivid memories.

For the second time in two years, I was lucky enough to explore a small portion of western Europe with a group called *People to People*. This summer the program led me to France and England, where culture meets class and fun is inevitable. Needless to say, I'm full of new memories that will last me a lifetime.

Tales from the Trip: People to People 2008

By Levi Pennington
Staff Writer

We started our journey in Paris, France, which actually wasn't what I had expected. Rather than an elite city for the rich and glamorous, Paris proved to be a haven for all people. A single block may hold beggars, street performers, socialites and tourists alike. A perfect example of the Parisian way of life, "What you see is what you get". No matter where your afternoon takes you in Paris, one thing remains constant...everywhere is filled with a livelihood not found in America. A kind of beauty that doesn't take a keen eye to recognize. Paris is unique in that it's vast array of subcultures combine to make a city truly worthy of praise..

Our next stop brought us to Hereford, England, the site of our home-stay. For three days we had the opportunity to rest and enjoy the hospitality of our temporary "families". While staying with our hosts, we had the opportunity to participate in traditional English activities such as cricket and football. (Soccer to us.) After a day or two of sports activities we got the chance to partake in a traditional Sunday evening meal. This included chicken, turkey, stuffing, gravy, rolls and an enormous amount of deserts. Essentially, a Thanksgiving meal.

Once the quaint town of Hereford had offered it's attractions to us, we made our way to London, the Grand Finale. These last four days seemed to pass by more quickly than I could sink into them. I suppose time really does fly when you're having fun. From coffee houses to roadside vintage shops, London had everything necessary to be an alternative metropolis.. The city itself seemed to invite those with a mind slightly different than that of the "normal" person. Being surrounded by so much that was considered out of the ordinary really was refreshing. In fact, in my opinion, the quirky vibe of London just may have rubbed off on me.

After being gone for nearly a month, coming home was exactly what I had hoped it would be. Familiar faces, comfy beds, known landmarks and even old friends. All of which were met with open arms. I'm still enjoying the comforts of home, and I couldn't be happier. Although, I'll always remember everything that happened while I was away...and no matter how long I stay home, those memories will never fade.

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Last-Minute Summer Reading (For the Unmotivated)

By Adrienne Crezo
Staff Writer

I'm a world-class procrastinator. I put things off until the last available second, and if they don't happen by then, well, they may never happen at all.

Every year I make a running list of books I want to read; I never complete even a fraction of the list. If you're like I am, then you get too absorbed in doing all the other things you like to do... like lounging, napping, and sleeping. Even if this isn't the case (and really, who gets to spend all summer having fun?), you may have fallen short on your lofty Summer Reading goals like I have.

To save yourself the embarrassment of returning to school having read nothing more than the take-out menu on your fridge, I've put together a short list of quick and easy to read titles, each with fewer than 240 pages. If you're ambitious, you can get them all in before that first day of class. If you're not so ambitious, you can definitely read one or two before you have to crack a textbook.

Not Quite What I was Planning: Six-Word Memoirs by Writers Famous and Obscure (Larry Smith and Rachel Ferscheleiser)

Not many books are faster or easier to read than this one. At 240 pages and with sentences only six words long, this book can be finished within a few hours of uninterrupted reading.

Some are funny, some are sad, some are weird, but each little memoir gives the reader something to think about. I found this book after a friend challenged me to do a list of six-word memoirs as a blog exercise (*thanks, Superfly!*). Check out smithmag.net/sixwords and submit your own-you may make it into the next edition!

The Postman Always Rings Twice (James Mallahan Cain)

In only 188 pages, Cain spins a dark and intense tale of a clandestine affair, greed, and self-destruction. Set in 1930, the wife of a diner owner meets a sexy drifter and they plot a scandalous escape from her boorish and abusive husband. This classic noir has been made into many movie versions, most famously starring Lana Turner and John Garfield. But do yourself a favor and read the book; it only takes a little longer than watching the movie and is a more powerful experience.

I Was Told There'd Be Cake (Sloane Crosley)

Crosley's sharp wit and hilarious retelling of memories from childhood through present are funny, cringe-worthy, and relatable. In 240 pages of well-written and honest vignettes, Crosley's unconventional style evokes sympathy and laughter, and reminds me of all the things I forgot about growing up in the 90s. Plus, I can definitely relate to her obsession with Oregon Trail. I would still play it if I had it!

The Pleasure of My Company: A Novella (Steve Martin)

At just 176 pages, this deceptively diminutive novella is a big book packed into a little book's cover. The second novella by comedian Steve Martin-one of my favorites-focuses on the life of Daniel Pecan Cambridge (*check out Shopgirl: A Novella, his first book*). The protagonist is an obsessive counter and highly neurotic; through brief encounters with neighbors, his therapist, and a social worker and her young son, Daniel is able to gain some freedom from his obsessive behavior. Martin's work is funny and quirky, and he captures the reader from the opening lines with his precise and simple language.

Look for Adrienne Crezo's articles along with all other content from OKIE Magazine online at www.okiemagazine.com



Ashley Tausch

A Sensual Portrait Painter

By Ginger Hansen
Staff Writer

Have you ever been totally drawn to a painting because of the intense feeling and mood it presents while viewing it? One artist who is a master of these kinds of paintings is Ashley Tausch who loves to capture sensual scenes depicting young women who are caught up in some sort of situation concerning passion, love or anguish. When viewing Ashley's work, there is a story being told that might have been out of the chapters of the artists own life in an expressive way. However, she loves that people can get their own interpretations from her paintings and encourages them to do so.

Ashley was brought to the Lawton/Ft. Sill area 13 years ago due to her father being stationed here. Later on, she stayed because she got married to her husband Sgt. Dee Carter, who is currently serving in Iraq. Originally, Ashley attended the local university to seek out a career in graphic design, but found out that her path was to go in the direction of painting. From there, she got a BFA degree and has not put down her paintbrush since. Currently Ashley does commissioned work of anyone who wants to sit for a sensual or erotic portrait of them.

One of my favorite paintings of Ashley's is a self-portrait titled "Vulnerable". One of the reasons I am drawn to this painting is the over all use of color that is subdued but intense at the same time. She uses oils in earth tones with some Pthalo greens or blues coming through. When up close to this portrait of her, you get the sense of being in a dark room with her eyes wide open, as if she is frightened by the dark figure coming through the door behind her. You as the viewer can make up your own interpretation, but the actual reason for the painting is too intense for Ashley to tell me the truth, which makes me extremely curious. Now I am fascinated by the mystery that surrounds this beautiful painting. Another painting that carries the same sort of mood is a portrait of her husband titled, "Dee in the City". She paints Dee sitting outside of a café looking off into the distance, which again leaves the viewer wondering what is going on.



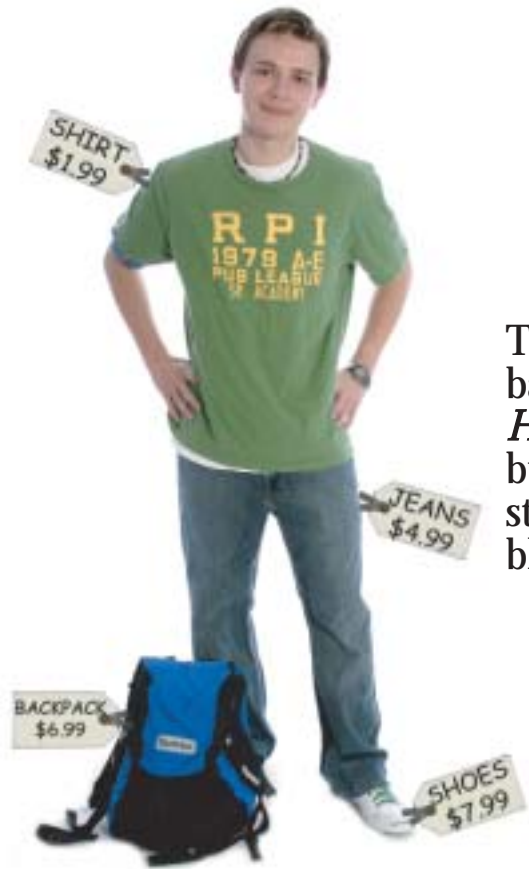
In some of her series' of paintings there is a motif of the person with a sort of "Elvis style" lip curl. Beautiful girls with perfectly painted lips snarling with attitude are my favorite because it gives the composition an interesting appeal that is very original and contemporary. Her influences come from such artists as *Lucien Freud* and *Diane Arbus*, who were famous for capturing compositions of people in curious situations.

Ashley Tausch is truly *the best kept secret of the Lawton art scene*. She is currently working in the studio for upcoming shows and is always willing to work with those who have always thought about getting an oil portrait done.

Ashley can be contacted through www.myspace.com/ashleylovesdee for commissions.

Back to School in Style on a Tight Budget

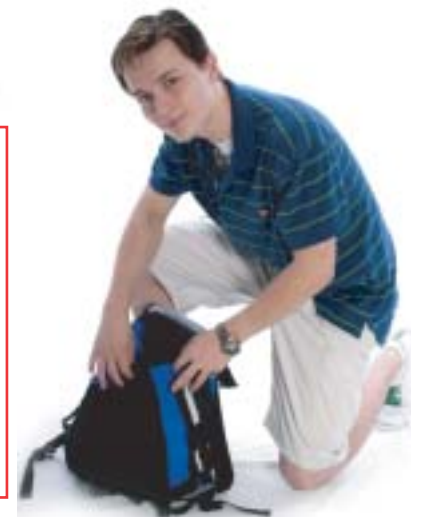
The mission was for our young adult models to head back to school in style on as little green as possible. *Hey times are tough!* Each of them were given 50 bucks and turned loose inside the local Goodwill store to shop for as many school fashions as possible. *Success!*



Recycled clothing makes perfect cents and it's also great for our planet - *less waste people please!*



Both models were easily able to locate at least two complete brand name outfits along with accessories including the backpack, purse and jewelry items.



Thank you to Goodwill Industries. See their ad on page 19. Look for more fashion layouts with our models from local retailers in future issues of OKIE Magazine.

Thank you to Amanda and Vladimir for being our guest models in this month's issue of OKIE.

Photos by Freeze Frame Photography



It's more than a locker - It's part of me!

By Megan Nickell
Student Staff Writer
Lawton High School

Every one knows school's just around the corner. All the kids going into junior high and high school will have a new learning curve. There are multiple classes, more books, separate folders for all those classes, and you're thinking - "Where am I going to keep all this stuff?" This is where I come in.

Kids, you have a locker. Use your locker. Decorate your locker, DUHHH!!!! A word to the wise, make sure you know how wide your locker is and how deep it is. You don't want to buy some cool new item and find out it won't fit inside the dinky locker (our lockers are pretty small). When I get to school the first thing I do is think of a new way to decorate my locker. *I want my locker to represent me!* If I'm having a bad day I want to be able to open my locker and feel like a million dollars. *My locker always inspires me.*

After I enroll and find my locker, I think about what I want greeting me every time I open the door (which can be anywhere from 2 to 5 times a day). I don't always have a lot of time between classes so I have two things in there every year. The first thing is a **mirror**, whether it is the kind I can stick to the door or one that I can prop up on the top shelf. *It's necessary.* The second is **my pictures**. I put pictures of my family, friends, pets, and

people who inspire me. That way, even if a teacher just busted my bubble and I'm upset or angry, I can see someone who loves me, someone smiling at me.

With that said, let's get to the interior. First you want to decide if you want to put a "**wallpaper**" up in your locker. This can be done in many different ways. The only thing to remember is it must be removable, or you may get into trouble at the end of the year when the school conducts locker checks. You can use real wallpaper, or create your own "wallpaper". Personally, I create my own. I like to use brightly colored construction paper and put my pictures on it. The one thing to remember is that you should not cover the louvers on your locker door. Just an f.y.i., this is an easy access spot for notes to or from friends, boys, girls, and school flyers.

Then we come to accessories. Your first question about this is **shelves or no shelves**. I like shelves. I can stack books, binders, and folders there by class or area of school. My first shelves were attached magnetically. Thankfully, the *new two-tiered wire shelves* work so much better. I think that's what I will use this year.

Next you need to decide if you want to add a **message center** and if you do, what type of message center. There are small cork boards you attach magnetically to your door. These have post it notes that you can use or your friends can use to leave you messages. There are dry erase boards that work the same way. Personally, I like the dry erase boards. It is much neater and I don't have little bits of paper all over the place. Now, on most message centers there are little cup holders or pockets. I keep my locker lip gloss in one and put the marker and extra pens and things in the other. That way, I can freshen my lip gloss, grab a pen, or make a note for later all at the same time.

So, you've heard about me and my locker, now it's time for you to decorate your locker. You can put anything you want in your locker (as long as it's school appropriate). Let your imagination be your inspiration. All these items I've mentioned can be found locally at most discount stores, dollar stores, craft shops and other local retailers.

Get your dimension, plan your style, get your lay-out, get your locker stuff and have fun! This school year I will be giving you heads up on all sorts of things to help you through this exciting year.



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A Man In His Element: Summers Revisited

By Charles Schertle
Staff Writer

Summer. Thoughts of summer instantly conjure up memories of my youth. It was a care free time of playing in the sun. For me and my friends, the end of school meant countless adventures awaited us.

Even as young kids we would ride our bikes all over Baltimore City and the suburbs of Essex and Dundalk. We explored every street, alley and trail along the way to nowhere in particular. Summer meant spending lazy days fishing under a shade tree not caring whether we caught anything or not. Summer meant mowing lawns or carrying bags at the grocery store for some pocket change. And it was nothing for us to just grab our gloves and bat and head over to the baseball field where there was almost always a game going on that we could jump in on.

Today, things are different. Most kids stay inside all day watching Cartoon Network or playing on their Playstation or X-box while being pampered by the air conditioning. For me, staying in during the summer meant I was in trouble for something. I couldn't stand it. I mean I did have my Atari 2600 to play, but you can only

play Asteroids or Pac Man so many times. I could always play with my transformers, but my mom would yell at me every time I blew Megatron's head off with a Black Cat. She had this thing about using explosives in the house. I don't know.

Now I look at my daughter, and she thinks that she is in trouble when we tell her to go out and play. Ride a bike? Forget about it, she would much rather spend two solid months of watching Sponge Bob Square Pants than get on her bike. After 5 minutes outside she is complaining about the heat and ready to come inside. My youngest son, on the other hand, loves the outside. Anytime I go outside, even if it is just to get something from the car, he has to come with me just so he can throw rocks in the street.

When I was growing up (back before air conditioning) it was usually hotter in the house than it was outside. It was a relief to go out and play. And I could never watch cartoons as long as kids do today. Well, that is partly because we only got three channels, four if we wrapped the rabbit ears in Reynolds Wrap. But still, the cartoons were over by 10 at the latest or noon on the weekends leaving the rest of the day to play. Back then staying in would do nothing more than subject me to hours and hours of talk shows and soap operas. My growing mind just couldn't stand such torture.

For me as a child, and still as an adult, summer is a time to get outside and experience life. I encourage everyone to take advantage of the gorgeous Oklahoma weather and experience everything that Southwestern Oklahoma has to offer. Go for a hike in the wildlife refuge, go fishing at Lake Elmer Thomas, or spend a Saturday at the water park or at Frontier City. Go to Meers to grab a burger, do anything this summer but stay in the house sucking up the AC and watching T.V.

*(Be careful out there Charlie -
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Dear Agnes

free advice - you get what you pay for

I CAN'T TELL WHETHER I'M JUST FRIENDS WITH THIS WOMAN . . . OR IF IT'S MORE THAN THAT

Dear Agnes,

I just started seeing this really cool girl. We've hung out three or four times . . . and most of the time, it seems like she's into me.

But other times, it seems like she's not interested in me AT ALL.

Once, while we were out, she talked about how "hot" this guy who walked past us was. And we haven't kissed yet.

Does she just see me as a friend? Is four dates without a kiss a bad sign? She really has me confused. Of course it's a bad sign isn't it?

--David the Dumbfounded, 26

Do you have questions or concerns regarding your love life, family, friends, work or other issues? Dear Agnes is here to help and it's FREE but remember you get what you pay for
email dearagnes@okiemagazine.com

Dear Dumbfounded,

Have you expressed interest in her other than just friendship? Is she aware that you feel like you have been dating? Women are complex creatures and sometimes we are not quite sure how we are supposed to be acting. She may have talked to you about how hot the other guy was to gauge what your reaction would be. Sometimes people use jealousy as a measuring factor of the presence or lack of interest.

Don't put the cart before the horse. If you really like this girl do not worry about the kiss at this point. I suggest that the next time you take her out you spend some time discussing with her how you feel and what you are thinking about the situation.

One of two things could happen - either her cool exterior will warm up and burn bright in the romantic light that you see her or she will stay cool and establish that she is merely interested in being your friend. The second will be somewhat painful but at least you will know where you stand.

It's time figure out if you are on the same page, chapter or even reading the same book and be dumbfounded no more!

- Agnes



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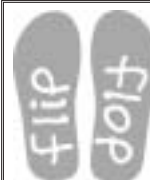
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Mental Upchuck

School is back in session! Yay!

By Dave Roberts
Staff Writer



As August gets underway, I feel an overwhelming sense of joy that school shall be starting again. It's been an arduous three whole months of the ball and chain telling me to find ways to entertain the daughter. So far this summer we've done it all. Please don't get me wrong. I love spending time my legitimate love child. The only problem I've faced is the onset of the *teen instinct to constantly speak about anything and everything*. The urge to argue with anything that contradicts her developing opinions. It's honestly the most annoying stage shes yet to go through. It's been a wild summer of fatherly entertainment.

We started off the summer with the family Memorial Day on the lake. Or rather what was supposed to be a family day on the lake. We arrived at the boat ramp around 9 or so in the am. Unloaded the boat and tied off to the dock. We were sure to pack lunches and snacks along with the essentials, water and beer. We had skis, new life preservers, tow ropes, and a new tube big enough to accommodate four. After a few trips around the lake, and one site seeing venture of the northern tributary, we decided to make port for lunch. My wife had taken the time to fix her specialty - cheese and bologna on bread. After filling our stomachs, my daughter noticed some of her friends a few doors down at which point she quickly disappeared for the rest of the afternoon. *Sigh*.

After a carnival or two, several showings of summer blockbusters, and three blown off trips to the mall, I devised a plan. I decided to put my metaphorical pants back on and planned a camping trip for the whole fam. *It was perfect*. I please the wife and wage vengeance on the little one. After a small shopping spree to the sporting goods shop, I was ready to book. I had everything. A new tent, lights, an outdoor stove, campsite shower, non perishable foods, beef jerky-a-plenty, even an outdoor toilet contraption with "organic and bio-degradable paper". *This was setting up to be awesome*.

The person I share a house with was happy being an outdoors person herself, but my poor mouthy daughter was going to fight this all the way out of the city limits. She tried every excuse she could think of. Every possible outcome of terror and tragedy. She even whipped out the time honored silent treatment. I was loving it. However, after arriving, paying dues, setting up, our first outdoor campsite meal, and one night in the tent, I was missing my couch in the man cave. I decided to stick it out to protect the possibility of backfire.

The second day on the range was a nice one. Filled with nature walks, tree climbing, a little swimming, and for whatever reason, I cooked a squirrel over the campfire. That second evening, I realized that my daughter had not talked back, rolled her eyes, or made that weird generational "psshhh" noise in contempt. In fact, she smiled a lot, laughed in unison with her old man, and even took a nice heaping taste of campfire squirrel. So I decided to let her off the hook and head home the next morning. It was a nice retreat of personal growth, family ties, and great memories.

I reflected upon the very thing I set out to do during that drive home. In a way, my plan did backfire. I didn't make my daughter as annoyed in the ways she has me. I didn't ever get the opportunity to contradict her radical judgments and theories. I didn't even have to raise my voice or glare an evil eye. It seemed to work out perfect. When we hit the city limits inbound, I decided to award her with her cellphone and music gadget for sticking it out in the wilderness but the evil within her returned. Instantly she was on the phone telling and texting her saga of the weekend from hell. *No electricity, no music, no distractions*. I popped off that it wasn't that bad of a weekend; at which point the inner argue reared its nasty face. *Sigh. For the record, squirrel tastes like chicken*.

If you have a question or comment for Dave, e-mail him at droberts@okiemagazine.com.

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Queen of the House

"... School days, school days, good ole golden rule days...."

Yes, the time that parents yearn for and kids dread is upon us once again. School is back in session this month.

Early nights, early mornings, home work, snacks - the whole kitten-n-caboodle is at our door. Parents will be picking up items for lunches and kids will be complaining about the same boring lunches they had last year.

I'm here to say let's change that attitude now. No more peanut butter and jelly jammed together and dropped into the lunch bag. No normal, boring ham & cheese sandwiches grimaced over and traded for something barely better from the kid sitting in the next aisle over. I've got some ideas that will take those lunches from blaugh to ta-da. Now the other kids will want to trade with your munchkin. Stop the old sandwich line, we've got a new line up.

This is a not your ordinary peanut butter and jelly sandwich. A twist on the old favorite turns this into a **crunchy-chewy peanut butter and jelly sandwich**. One thing to remember is that this does not have to be made with white bread. You can use wheat, potato, or even pita bread. Take your wheat bread and on one slice spread your peanut butter and jelly. Then sprinkle ½ tsp raisins and 1 tsp granola. Top with your second slice and viola! - peanut butter and jelly with a zing.

Next we are going to make delicious rolls - **turkey rolls** in this instance. All you need are 2 flour tortillas, 2 tsp mayo (if desired), 2 slices turkey, ½ cup shredded lettuce, and 2 tsp shredded cheese (any type). Lay out your tortillas, spread on the mayo, layer the turkey, lettuce, and cheese. Roll, wrap and place them in the baggy to take to school. Another twist on this is to chill them slightly and cut into spirals. The kids have fun eating round "sandwiches". A note here, don't limit yourself to just turkey. You can use ham, roast beef, chicken. The lettuce, cheese, and mayo are open as well. Experiment with toppings and you and your kids will be satisfied.

Now, who says sandwiches are all you can send to school. **Pasta salad** is easy, can be eaten with a plastic fork (for those who don't want to send your actual cutlery to school), you can add different meats to it and it can be a treat.

So come on ladies. Let's get our imagination running and liven up those ordinary brown bag lunches with something that will make you a hit with not only your kids, but all the other kids in the class.

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It's been hotter'n a goat's butt in a pepper patch.

He fell out of the ugly tree and hit every branch on the way down.

Have a cup of coffee - It's already been 'saucered and blowed.'

It's so dry; the trees are bribing the dogs.

My cow died last night, so I don't need your bull today.

He's as country as cornflakes.

This is gooder'n grits.

Busier than a cat covering crap on a marble floor.

If things get any better, I may have to hire someone to help me enjoy it.

I'm 'bout as nervous as a long tailed cat in a room full of rocking chairs.

Notice to Northerners moving south:

Save all manner of bacon grease. You will be instructed on how to use it shortly.

Just because you can drive on snow and ice does not mean southern folk can. Stay home the two days of the year it snows.

If you do run your car into a ditch, don't panic. Four men in the cab of a four-wheel-drive pick-up with a 12-pack of beer and a tow chain will be along shortly. Don't try to help them. Just stay out of their way. This is what they live for.

You can ask southern folk for directions, but unless you already know the positions of key hills, trees and rocks, you're better off trying to find it yourself.

Remember: "Y'all" is singular. "All y'all" is plural. "All y'all's" is plural possessive.

Don't be worried that you don't understand anyone. They don't understand you, either.

Send us your funnies to editor@okiemagazine.com. We love a good chuckle.



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