

ISSUE ONE – Sept 2002

1. From a story titled "Football team kicks off season hopeful, we had to remove this quote: **"It's kind of embarrassing to go represent the team before each game only for them to lose,"** Color guard member David Whitten said. **"I don't have high expectations for the team this year because of their record the past few years."**
The administrator believed that the football players would harass the student quoted.
2. A letter to the editor from a student explaining how Afros are distracting. The administrator said it is racially discriminating.

ISSUE TWO – Oct 2002

1. In an opinion column about the distribution of the "A" award money that the school was given due to outstanding FCAT scores: The columnist, Brittany McHenry, was arguing how it's not right to be giving the money to custodians and teachers. It should be given to the students, the rightful recipients of the money, by providing more technology, books, etc. We had to remove these parts:
"...our school is operating on communistic ideas that everyone's job is equal... I've had some of the best instructors, and it saddens me to witness their disappointment in an administration that usually they'd pride themselves in working for."

ISSUE THREE – Dec 2002

1. In a story about teenagers who grow up too fast, we had to take out the quote: **"All I hear about on Monday mornings at the bus stop is who slept with whom, and what drugs they were using while they were doing it,"**

ISSUE FOUR – Feb 2003

1. In a story about the danger of the speeding golf carts being driven by members of the administration and custodians, a student, Megan Oswald was quoted that was hit by a golf cart while walking out of a classroom. This incident did happen, as there were many witnesses and an accident report filed. Oswald said her arm was run over by the golf cart while she was on the ground after being hit. The administrator made us take out the quote claiming that Oswald did not have her arm run over.
2. Taylor Stallings wrote a column about how she believes that only athletes should receive a varsity letter and chorus and band should not. The administrator told us to omit the entire column, having the staff to scramble to write another column in time to go to press.
3. A letter to the editor from a group of students listing the top ten reasons why band isn't recognized and never will be. We were told to omit the entire letter.

4. A letter to the editor from a student who was complaining about how the guidance department at the school fails to be helpful. The bolded lines were to be omitted from the letter:

... Things went mostly as usual along the lines of our guidance counselors **and an unpleasant receptionist... Rarely do I ever see a pleasant smile from our not-so-friendly receptionist, and rarely so do I receive service.**

5. To raise a few more bucks towards the production of the paper, the staff organized the sale of Valentine's Day classified ads. A student could write a message to their loved one for a dollar a line. These classifieds had to be omitted:

I eat pie.

Joey

BUFU owns you. Have a nice day.

Blue Fish

ISSUE FIVE – March 2003

1. In a story about the TMH students receiving help from other students, the reporter, Rachael Chitty, interviewed witnesses who saw the TMH students being treated unfairly by the helpers. This entire part of the story was told to be cut:

Although as few as three non-TMH students are enrolled in the class, concerns have been voiced among students.

"I saw a boy in a wheelchair fall. No one would help him up," junior Samantha Hollingsworth said. "When I went over there to help him, [the helpers] told me not to, that he was too heavy."

Hollingsworth said she confronted the teacher, "but [I feel] she just 'blew me off.'"

Annette Toro witnessed another incident.

"My friends and I were eating lunch in the breezeway by the chorus room, and I saw a girl bring a TMH kid to buy Skittles," she said. "When the boy got the Skittles she took the Skittles away and started to tease him. She ended up eating his Skittles."

The incident was never brought to Jeffrey's attention.

"I have my students fill me in on each other's behavior," she said. "Typically if someone is mistreating the kids, it is taken care of properly."

Jeffery said she did feel the students should take a prerequisite course to the class.

"We do have a behavior analyst coming to do an inservice for the Exploratory Learners," she said.

Despite concerns, Fournier doesn't see a problem with inexperience.

"Training really isn't necessary. All you need is an abundance of patience and understanding."

Longstreet agreed.

"You don't need training to be friendly and encouraging to someone."

2. In a column discussing how attendance during FCAT days for juniors and seniors should not be forced, written by Brittany McHenry.

Sitting in first period for three hours watching "Wayne's World" and "The Simpsons,"

I questioned the practicality of school attendance during FCAT testing.

That line was censored and we had to replace "Wayne's World" and "the Simpsons" with the word "television" because the administrator did not want others to think that juniors and seniors spent the allotted three hours in their first period class watching uneducational films.

3. In a review about the wave of reality dating shows on television, the author, Thea Pajunen, described each show and these words had to be "toned down."

naked hot tub party

nudity in a hot tub

trashy sex-related themes

4. Originally, Adam Becker wrote a story about teenagers who carry weapons for the centerspread. There was a quote from a student claiming that **he "keeps [his] gun near [him] at all times."** Another student, not on staff, read the article and reported it to the administrators. The administrators called Becker down to tell them who carries a gun on school. Becker refused to tell them who the student was and the story was not to be published.

5. In place of the weapons story, we had Nick Smith write a story on the lifestyles of homosexual teens. The story is extensive, well researched and has the potential to win awards. The administrator told us to omit the entire story. Our advisor fought the issue and it was approved. The administrator was concerned that the gay individuals quoted in the story would be harassed. The staff member obviously interviewed the individuals with them knowing that it was for the newspaper and would be published. We do not think the administrator grasps this concept. During the same day, the principal of the school wanted to see the centerspread and we learned the next day that the story could not run. The fifth issue of the Telstar will be postponed until we have another staff member write a story to fill the space. We also have advertising that is directed towards those students wanting to go to prom, which is April 26. We previously promised these businesses that the issue of the paper will be out about a month before prom.

6. In a story discussing the lack of current events in classrooms, a student said:

"Teachers are definitely under-educating students, be it personal ignorance or over-zealous scheduling."

We were told to omit the quote.

7. In an opinion column discussing the uselessness of \$200 purses and backpacks, Nancy Dyer, the writer said

...They buy these purses to prove that their mommies and daddies have money. That's pathetic... I suggest you take a good look at what else that \$200 could have been spent on. Maybe 10 Jansport backpacks or a brain transplant...

Those statements were to be toned down, even though it was the writer's opinion.

8. Taylor Stallings wrote an opinion column discussing the over-whelming amount of "moochers" on campus. She makes a reference to the moocher's breathe smelling **"worse than a dead skunk that's been baking in the sun and rotting away for days"** after they mooched money off random kids to buy themselves lunch from the cafeteria.

The administrator wanted the line to be taken out because he said that it was making a direct reference to the quality of the school's cafeteria food. That issue was fought and was allowed to be published.

9. Due to Taylor Stallings's column being censored fourth issue, the comic on staff, Nick Smith, decided to draw a comic in reference to the situation and the fact that our publication is censored. This is the cartoon:



We were told to omit the cartoon and Nick had to draw a new one quickly before press time.