

# Michael doesn't like school

by terri ann reed

Michael is 15. He attends John Harris High School at Harrisburg.

Michael's daily mandatory education begins in Homeroom. The room is large enough for thirty students, but there are only 14 students in this room. Some students are talking loudly, walking around the room, and socializing. One girl is filing her nails. Every now and then a student goes to his locker, opening and closing it loudly. The room echoes with every sound. Some students, however, manage to study and read.

A man's voice suddenly fills the room. It is a school administrator speaking to the student body over the public address system. No one listens. The students continue to talk about their own affairs. The teacher says "Sh-sh-sh!" But no one listens to him. Michael laughs and smiles.

It is 8:30 a.m.--English class. The room is cheerful-looking. The morning sun shines in, but the windows are very dirty. They look like gray-tinted windows used in office buildings to help cut the glare. The room is large enough for thirty students, but there are only 12 students in English class.

The teacher sits behind his desk, immobilized and overweight. One student stands in front of the class to give an oral book report on *The Twice Born*. Her voice is soft and monotonous. The teacher mutters, "Please don't lean on the lectern." She retorts, "I'm not leaning." The students listen respectfully to her report. When she finishes her report, no one asks questions. No one really cares.

Another student's oral book report is presented in the same manner. What was the title of that book? Oh well, it doesn't matter. The student reads her report very fast. The students watch her go through the motions. When she finishes her report, the teacher says, "You should have read it slower." The teacher marks something in his little black book.

The teacher asks the students to look at a hand-out which he gave them last week. Everybody, with the exception of three students, produces the correct paper. "You actually remembered?!" he gasps. "I can't believe it!" Michael grins with disgust.

"OK, let's review," the teacher says, still sitting like a permanent fixture attached to the desk. Michael hears words such as phrases, clauses, figurative speech, similes, hanging sentences and prepositions. The teacher says, "This is important! You've got to know this."

Michael asks himself "Why? Why must I know this?"

Michael looks at the clock. It says 3:25 p.m. but he knows it must be about 9:30 a.m. When will this class end?

The teacher has another hand-out. It is tomorrow's homework. Twelve students go silently to the teacher's desk to get a copy. The teacher never moves from his desk. Only his arms and mouth move. Class is over.

Michael goes to pottery class. There are about twelve students in the room. The teacher is running around the room, trying to find clay, water, paper and students. "No! No!" she says when a student doesn't use enough water or too much water to mold the clay.

"Richard!" the teacher says, "Are you going to have a project done by next week?" Richard mutters something.

Two students are sitting together, talking. One isn't working on a project. He did one last week. "But that was last week!" the teacher says, "You have to have another one for this week!" The student shrugs. The teacher gives up.

One student is sitting quietly at the pottery wheel, making it go around and around to shape his mound of clay into a project. "No! No!" says the teacher. "You have entirely too much clay on there!" The teacher grabs half the clay off the wheel and the student watches half of his project oozing between the fingers of his teacher.

Michael goes to a World Culture class. The teacher is a young student-teacher who is learning about the techniques of educating. The room is large enough for thirty students, but there are only about 15 students in this class.

"Has anyone read chapter one?" the student-teacher asks, holding up a book called *Japan, China and Korea*. No one responds. "Well, you should have," he responds.

Michael learns that Orientals honor their elderly citizens and that they live in extended families because they are poor. He learns that the Oriental countries are not like the United States. He learns that Orientals tend to grow up, live, work and die in the same town or village. "Just think if you had to spend your entire life in Harrisburg!" the student-teacher says, implying that Americans are more fortunate.

Michael looks around the class. Two students are resting or sleeping. Three students are doing their English homework so they won't have to do it at home.

It is lunch. It is a welcomed relief for Michael. When Michael returns from lunch, the clock says 10:40 a.m. but he knows it is really 11:40 a.m. Only three and a half hours until school is over for the day.

The World Culture student-teacher continues lecturing. Where were we Oh yes, the Orientals. A student raises her hand and asks, "Isn't everything you said today in the textbook?" "Yes," the teacher answers, "I'm just picking out the things that are important." The student says "OK," and continues to work on her English homework so she won't have to do it at home.

Michael goes to Health Class. They are learning about careers. The teacher asks each student, "What occupation do you want to read about?" One student wants to read about pediatricians. Another student is reading a book about computer operators. The teacher is busy handing out books and pamphlets which describe certain careers. The students must copy important information from these books and pamphlets such as skills and average salary.

"James, are you doing something?" the teacher asks. James is standing at the door, waiting for class to end. Michael is tired, bored, and anxious to leave school for the day. It is only 12:55 p.m.; only one

and a half more hours.

Michael goes to Biology class where he learns about athletes feet and fungi. He learns how to pronounce protists, thallophytas, eumycophyta, basidiomycetes and deuteromycetes. Michael wonders what thallophyta has to do with his life.

Biology class is constantly being interrupted. Someone knocks at the door. The teacher whispers to the person at the door and then resumes class. One student walks in late. Again, someone knocks at the door. The public address system blares through the room, "Mr. Smith, Mr. Smith, please report to the office." This appeal is made four more times.

The last class is Home Economics. Michael is very tired and bored. He day-dreams during the film-strip presentation on how to be a good consumer at the grocery store. The narrator of the film-strip, which is recorded on an album, says you can save 9 cents by comparing certain items. Michael is tired and bored. He doesn't care about 9 cents.

School is over. Michael and all the students scatter out of the class rooms. A school administrator is speaking to the student body again over the public address system. No one listens. Everyone wants to get out of the building. Michael disappears into the crowd.



XGI Blood Drive

*Let us put the bite on you*

**XGI's doing fine**

Saturday, April 28th was a big day for the fraternity softball team. The team reached the quarter finals during the annual statewide veteran's softball tournament. Third baseman Craig Hocker batted .833 and had no fielding or throwing errors. Here on campus, the team defeated the Petards 6-5 and the Cunning Linguists 11-4. On May 8th, the Nuclear Wastes beat the fraternity 11-3.

Veteran Fred Downs has recently had his Viet Nam story published. The book is very readable, and one copy is available in the XGI lounge, W114.

Our spring blood drive is in the works. The bloodmobile will be at Capitol Campus on Thursday, May 24th. Since the date falls just prior to the Memorial Day weekend, the Central Penn Blood Bank is delighted that they will be able to stock fresh blood for the holiday. We'll be recruiting donors in the coming week; so be prepared for a return of the vamoires.

The fraternity has two meetings remaining for the spring term. They are Tuesday, May 29th and Tuesday, June 5th. Meetings start at 9p.m.m and are held at the American Legion in Middletown. All are welcome.

The fraternity membership is disturbed over the recent administration clarification towards the campus liquor policy. We believe that the SGA and administration will be able to arrive at a satisfactory interpretation; involving both a greater understanding by the administration and more responsibility from the student body.