

FLASH

THE EGB STUDENTS' NEWSLETTER

May, 2011

LET ME TELL YOU WHAT IT WAS ALL ABOUT

The National Public Speaking Competition, held in March in Bucharest, ended quite in a fortunate way for me. I must say I hadn't expected to actually come in second and qualify for the next round – the international of the competition, because of an episode which I shall mention a bit later. The overall experience, however, was beneficial, indeed, for I have learned a valuable lesson: the element of surprise.

It might seem strange to some, but I have always had a sort of reluctance towards speaking in public given the fact, according to scientists, the first most frightful thing for people is that public speaking, followed by death. So it would seem rather natural that I be part of the "average Joe" team on this one (as I am – I have never bragged to be superior in any ways to others, as I am by no means superior). Nevertheless, reluctant as I might be, I gave it a go. I had participated twice in this competition, first in the ninth grade, when I qualified for the regional heat, but unfortunately (or not), I fell ill with flu, and spent a week in bed, reading *Wuthering Heights* in English (which says much about the boredom to which I was subdued). In tenth grade, I took part in the contest again, and qualified all the way to the national final heat, where I came in third. I was close to qualification, but yet so far. And, this year, by means yet unknown to me, I managed to pull off a second place (behind Oltean Ioana, from Constanța), and I will be heading to London, where the international heat of the competition will take place.

The theme for our speeches was "Dreams and Fantasies", a rather difficult one, if I may say, for one can find innumerable sources of inspiration, subjects to tackle, and so on. Therefore, I drew a line from the very beginning: "Okay, supposedly everyone will go for world's contemporary problems, Martin Luther's famous quote "I have a dream...", and how to succeed by following one's dreams, what have I got left?" And the answer came in an instance: an original approach towards dreams. What are they? How do they take shape? In what ways do they influence our lives? What are they like? What are we supposed to notice about them? Apart from the first one, these were questions that never actually came into my mind. I simply wrote the speech as if I were writing a mere essay – which it essentially is. I may have used words a bit too pretentious, but, let's face it: you can't expect for a slang speech to take you too far in such a competition. You have to use a wide range of vocabulary. The core structure is fairly simple. Five main points (introduction and ending included), one or two comparisons, three or four questions, and a quote from Tolkien at the end – these were the ingredients of my speech. I wrote about 838 – 850 words. It is the maximum limit of words that I can utter with proper pauses for effect, changes of tone, rhythm, and all that, in about 5 minutes (and 20, 25, 30 seconds – it depends on my mood). The limits of the speech were 4:25 (minimum) and 5:45 (maximum).



The competition was strong up until the regional heat. Then, at the semi-finals, things sort of lay low, relaxed a bit, as to me, it seemed that some of the competitors of our regional heat had been better than those of the semi-finals. Out of 44 semi-finalists, 10 qualified for the finals. Which, by the way, were tight. After the speeches had been delivered, and the judges delivered, the chairman of the jury, the Ambassador of The United Kingdom HE (His Excellency) Martin Harris shared with the competitors (as well as the audience) the main criteria according to which the judges had deliberated. Some useful pieces of advice, if you ask me, but it was enough to cast doubt into the hearts of many. In the end, it was clear that the situation de facto was quite different from what the most of us had expected. I, for one, was surprised upon my name being mentioned as the Second Runner-Up, for there was one criterion that referred to my speech, in particular: the speech was a bit too formal and posh. The feedback I got from HE Martin Harris confirmed this very fact. He told me that he would have liked to read the speech, rather than hear it, because of its pretentious language. Other than that, he said it was all right, flawless. I confess I didn't expect this result at all, so I was in a curious state of shock. I mean, I know I should have done something outrageous, but I was pretty down-to-earth. After all, I had said to myself from the very beginning – Succeed or not, I've got nothing to lose.

by Adrian Andrei Vasii 11th E

A CINEMA CLUB IN EGB

Are you keen on watching films? Are you curious to find out the secrets behind the flat screen? If the answer is "yes" to at least one of these questions, then you should count yourself lucky, because this year, at the initiative of Alexandra Furdui of the 11th E, "Elena Ghiba Birta" National College decided to start the first cinema club in this school.

Training sessions are held every Thursday, from 2-4, either in the festive hall or the multimedia room, and anyone interested in making films or just curious is free to join us. Our coordinator is the film producer Onoriu Felea, who is also the president of the Arad Western Transilvania Film Fund, the first regional financing fund for film productions in Romania.

Together, we will learn the basics of what lies behind the scenes and guests of honour- personalities in the field- will give us an insight into the motion picture world. We are also going to make short films, with which we will certainly enter various contests.

If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to contact Alexandra Furdui, in 11th E. So, what are you waiting for? Hop in if you want to have fun while getting an initiating ride into the maze of films.



by Teodora Stepanescu 11th E

WE ALL LONG FOR SOMETHING...

What follows is the speech which secured Andrei Vasii, of 11thE, a prestigious performance and led him to London. No EGB student has ever managed such a performance. Reading his speech may be not extraordinary, but listening to Andrei delivering this speech or another is really something.

What is a dream? Have you ever asked yourselves this seemingly simple, even ridiculous question? What makes this state of mind so special, why is it so important to

us, that, at times, we disregard other matters far more important than remembering the fact that we ran across the wall and the ceiling collapsed over the cat?

Even to this day, mankind is far away from having apprehended this very notion to the fullest. It seems as though what we have inside our head is much more difficult to crack than the utmost complex encryption machinery ever conceived. If we consider the fact that interpreting dreams is one of the most subjective and uncertain of processes, than it shouldn't come as a surprise that trying to understand the mechanisms behind it all is proportionally more difficult. Add some foggy, peculiar factors, they themselves being bound to subjectivity, and you have a mystery far more exciting and difficult to unlock than what lies beyond the Universe. Of course, one might add that spending more time puzzling our minds over dreams, instead of tending to the world's most pressing issues is nothing but a waste of time. I say different. I say that everything new that we discover, everything that helps us understand and know ourselves better is worth the time and effort. I believe that there is more than meets the eye in this body of ours, and that dreams play a significant part in our existence: they are the bridge between two seemingly opposite parts of our being: the material side and the spiritual side.

You see, dreams are much like chess games. We all know how hard it is to try and win a chess game without thinking ahead, without carefully planning your moves and submerging in the depths of it. The only difference between the two of them is that we lack the rules, in the case of dreams, and therefore we focus solely on trying to predict them. So if we cannot find a way of discovering the laws by which dreams convert reality, why not focus on the details? For, you see, even though contexts may be changed, and the laws of physics and the natural world may be broken, the subconscious is incapable of twisting details of the real world. This means that, no matter how awkward dreams may seem, their roots lie deep within our experiences in the real life. Imagine what it would be like if we understood the messages contained within our dreams, if we could see things for what they truly are, rather than what we see them for. We would be able to understand and see the precise connections our subconscious makes when it is active. We would be able to apprehend why we have certain preferences, dislikes, aspirations and wishes... In other words, we would have reasons and motivations solid enough to sustain future decisions and to make sure whether following a certain path is suitable for us or not.

Even so, getting a better glimpse at our dreams and understanding what we are made of, as well as what we are capable of, will not completely solve the mystery. Humans are subjected to the continuous pursuit of perfection, and therefore attaining it becomes a lifetime creed. No matter how close we may find ourselves to it, we always crave for more. And we owe it entirely to a particular type of wishes, more powerful than any other cravings, desires and lusts that can be conceived: fantasies. These are desires that cannot be literally transposed into reality, be they due to the lack of means or the originality and artificiality of their composing elements. Fantasies are something we all long for and also strongly believe in (even though we are fully aware that we cannot bring them to life). In fact, we are so mesmerized and captivated by them, that we often prefer them to much more realistic, achievable goals. Whether it is advisable to disregard one's own fantasies or not should not really be the most puzzling question about it. History is full both of those who have focused their entire life on down-to-earth goals, and of those who have based and dedicated their lifetime works to fantasies.

In the end, it is up to each and every one of us whether we choose to pursue goals in the real world or not. However, truth be told, we live in the real world, and this means that we cannot simply pursue fictitious our fantasies and not care about whatever happens around us. A compromise is mandatory, in this case. That is, to have realistic goals, but to keep fantasies as a motivation, the never ending, burning flame inside our hearts that drives us further. . . So, follow your dreams and fantasies, at all costs! Keep on going, regardless should you fail or succeed! I say it's worth every shot at it, because one never knows... After all, sometimes "a dream is more powerful than a thousand realities".

by Adrian Andrei Vasii 11th E

THE NATIONAL ENGLISH CONTEST...FUN, FUN, FUN?

The national contest might sound very scary... mostly because it is thought that only the geniuses in each subject go to. But in my opinion it is not at all like that, especially for the National English contest, where I have recently gone to. Don't you think so? If not, let me tell you why that is. English is nowadays a language that is spoken in every corner of the world. In our country, you can encounter the language in every commercial, advertisement, movie and in the music we listen to. Therefore, you can pick it up quite quickly from hearing it over and over again. With a little help from our teachers, and of course a little will on our behalf we can speak it correctly too.



When I had heard that I was going to this contest I was thrilled, but then doubt and fear settled in. As a newcomer in this area of expertise I didn't know what to expect from it. Would it be a strict contest, where the only thing concerning the contestants would be the grades or would it be a great experience from which I would learn and improve not only my English skills but my socializing skills too? When I arrived at the designated location, Iași, all I could see in front of my eyes was a bed, due to the long ride with the train. After a good night's sleep, my "county-mates" and I explored the city with its imposing colleges. Afterwards, there was a short but interesting opening ceremony. The next two days, we sat our exams and hoped for the best. The grades were all in all good, but personally, I do not believe that the grades are the reflection of the students' knowledge. I think that in order to prove your abilities in a spoken language, they should throw you in an English speaking country and see how you are managing your way through. It may sound harsh, but it is a fact, dealing with the natives could have a strong impact on a second language learner.

Leaving the exams aside, the atmosphere that surrounded the contest was amazing. Nobody was stressing out about the contest. Well, maybe a bit of nervousness ... but that was not at all the point. Even though the main goal coming to the contest was to achieve the best possible grade, everybody was friends with everybody, trying to tie new relationships, to make new friends with whom they would keep in touch through the Internet or over the phone. The fun was lingering everywhere. Is the National English Contest only for those who are English brainy? Certainly not. It is a time when you can explore a new city, see what you are made of, make new friends and of course have lots of fun.

by Carina Lalyer 10th C

THE THINGS I HAVE LEARNT SO FAR

Coming to age is not easy at all. It was not easy for me either. Without my parents' constant support, love and understanding, without some of my teachers who have had a positive impact upon my life, and without my best friend's constant reminder of who I should be, I might have ended in confusion, lack of direction and deep disappointment. Today, when graduation is around the corner, I am fully aware of how grateful I should be for everything they have given me, for



everything they have taught me.

From childish questions such as "Mama why can't I do that?" to a constant rebellious teenage behavior, the road cannot be that long. To some extent, I recognize myself in such attitudes, but I have got over them without experiencing major crises. The soothing voice of my mother, the wisdom in my father's words, the positive example of my teachers, the generosity of my best friend have helped me pass through the inevitable difficult moments in any teenager's life. I feel sorry for those who have not found strength in themselves, or support in others to get over a negativistic attitude. I have seen many teenagers who got tired of fighting the general confusion and committed all sorts of (minor) crimes, assuming that what is permitted to others should be permitted to them too.

One more thing that I have learned from both parents and teachers is that doing one's best is more important than winning, being the first in a competition, in academic studies or in the business world. One cannot win all the competitions in his life, and geniuses are rare. Some people become depressed because they are not able to be the first. Not I, though. What worries me most is that I do not try hard enough, that I do too many things at the time, that I still do not know what it really means to do your best. I have been told that doing your best makes you feel good about yourself, and I have to confess that there were times in my life when I experienced such a feeling, as well as other times when I felt disappointed with me. Once again, the reasonable voice of my parents made me understand the next time I should work harder, that it was right to feel disappointed, as this was the road to progress.

Who I am and what I am are the result of my having such great parents and teachers next to me during my formative years. Now, when I am about to leave them I wish I could give them something in return for what they have done for me. I know that the best thing I could offer them is to make them feel proud of who and what I will become in the future and I am determined to do my best for that. As for my best friend? I know that no matter where our paths would take us we will never forget each other. I have no doubts that sometime in the future we will be remembering the moment we decided to take different paths and we will be looking back with pride and satisfaction. Today, on leaving school, my future seems wonderfully challenging and promising. It is for me to make it real and I am eager to do so!

by AM 12th E

IN FAVOUR OF OUR UNIFORMS



I know we are all different and it is perfectly normal to be like this. Each of us has different tastes, likes or dislikes since a lot of factors have shaped our personality and character: the religion, the place where we're living, the city, the group we are in the school with our friends and family. This difference between us is visible in the clothes we wear every day, as well. Again, this is perfectly normal. What would it be if we wore identical clothes all the time? It would be annoying, even depressing.

However, there are situations in which a group of people wearing the same outfit gives a positive impression. Take sports, for instance: the members of a team wear the same T-shirt and shorts showing that they belong to the same group, striving to achieve something together. Doctors and lawyers wear a special outfit to show that they belong to a certain profession. Fire-fighters, police officers, pilots and flight-attendants, all of them wear a uniform, and none of them feels humiliated, depressed or deprived of their

own personality. As for schools, things differ. Some pupils wear their uniform and feel proud to be associated with a certain school, while other pupils reject uniforms from the start.

What is wrong with our uniform? Is it too difficult to wear? For a lot of EGB pupils it really is. I talked with some schoolmates and their arguments against wearing uniforms in EGB are not very strong. They say uniforms are expensive, ugly and harmful to their personality. To say that our uniform is expensive is a nonsense: everybody can afford a pair of blue jeans, two white shirts and a personalized tie. Then what is ugly in such a uniform? The jeans we wear all the time any way, the white shirt which makes us look neat and tidy or the tie which can be worn in different ways? Furthermore to say that our uniforms make us all look alike and deprive us of our personality is silly. Our personality can be expressed in many –more or less subtle ways-including the way we wear our clothes. The same outfit worn by two people will look different, because we are not identical.

In my opinion, uniforms in school are a good idea. First of all, there is not discrimination between the children with a better financial situation and the children who are less. Furthermore, uniforms in a school give that school a feeling and an aspect of order and discipline, of a school with refined students and with clear rules which are respected. And don't forget that our school is a prestigious one. You don't know how proud I was when I was at Public Speaking Contest at regional phase which took place at our school. There were children from Oradea, Timisoara and other cities and I... I was home, in my native city, in the city I live. Moreover, I was in my school! And they could see that I was wearing my school uniform. Is it so hard for you to take a white shirt and a tie when you go to school? I have to wear it too, but I don't complain, because we have nice and acceptable uniforms. We do not have to wear ugly, pleated skirts or white socks and rough shoes. If we didn't have this uniform in school, I am sure that most of you would come to school many times wearing a shirt, because it is a fashionable and elegant piece of clothing. When you see a pupil on the street wearing a white shirt and a cherry-coloured tie with "EGB" emblem on it, you know that boy or girl is a schoolmate of yours; you know that pupil is from "Elena Ghiba Birta" National College. So, let's do this for our school!

by Anamaria Foltean 7th A

VIVIANA COJOCARU-TV STAR AT SEVEN YEARS OLD

Viviana is a 7-year old EGB pupil who has recently become the star of a local TV show. Her enthusiasm, energy and vivid intelligence has charmed the audience. When I told her that I wanted to interview her she accepted it without any emotion or surprise. It is a perfectly normal situation to be interviewed at such an early age, she thinks. Being in the limelight becomes her!



Here's the interview:

R: I know you participate in a show on West TV. What are you doing there?

V: Well, I have fun with my friends, Andrei and Iza. Andrei tells us stories and Iza tells us a lot of curiosities.

R: I have heard you enjoy singing, is that true?

V: Yes, I like it a lot. I even made my own song for West TV.

R: Do you take music classes?

V: I don't take any music classes, but I sing at school the with my classmates and my teacher, Livia Popa

R: What else do you enjoy doing?

V: I enjoy cutting different figures out of paper, painting, learning math and Romanian.

R: If you could choose between school and music, what would you choose?

V: I would choose both, I can't decide. Still, I think it would be school.

R: From all the subjects you study at school, which is your favourite?

V: I have two subjects which I like a lot: math and Romanian. And I also like painting.

R: Do you like school? And why?

V: Yes, I like it because it is funny and we play very much. Sometimes I have to clean the classroom, but I like it.

R: What music do you enjoy listening to?

V: I listen to Phineas and Ferb and their sister, Candace. For her mother's day, Candace made a song for her mother and I like it. I also listen to Hanna Montana (Miley Cyrus).

by Valentina Axente 11th E

THE STORY OF AN IMAGINARY EGB TRIP

The hidden cave is not hidden at all. This is the reason why nobody cared to explore its dark and winding tunnels in search of adventure, of mystery, ultimately in search of the search itself. Until one day when a group of EGB students got off the bus at the wrong stop. It was a mistake, of course, but orientation had never been their strongest point.

When they got off the shabby vehicle they saw some sort of monument, but to be honest, they had never excelled in arts and so it was natural for them to ignore any artistic manifestation. Two paths opened behind the so called-monument, one obviously trodden, probably frequently used by the locals, the other barely visible and probably rarely used. What to choose? Of course, the less travelled path (the EGB students have always taken pride in their unusual *penchant* for challenging situations). Following the grassy road they climbed, they descended, turned left, then right, then left again without worrying about their ignorance. They crossed a river whose shallow waters didn't prevent them from continuing their way to a destination unknown. Shrubs and bushes, thick and ominous appeared in front of them. The path became almost invisible in a desperate attempt to prove its usefulness and eventually managed to lead the tired travellers into a sort of plateau above which the desolated entrance of the hidden cave lay in its splendor.

Of course, there was a sign post, kind of shabby and half-covered with moss whose practical purpose was to announce whoever cared to come that way that the hidden cave was right in front of their noses. It was worth the effort, though, as when they turned their back to the entrance they managed to get a glimpse of a village so beautiful and small that it seemed unreal. The unusual cross of what seemed to be a church reminded them that they had seen something similar or identical just before they got off the bus. After all, civilization was not that far...

The EGB students marvelled at the paradise below, wondering if the place behind them was its counterpoint, or something like this. One of the students had the idea to produce a map. Yes, it was true...the village was on the map and the hidden cave too. What kind of a cave was that? Why was it on the map if it was hidden? Encouraged by

this fallacy they decided to explore the cave, just a little bit before sunset and, of course, before they got too hungry.



The cave is populated with endangered species of birds, insects, plants and animals besides the species one normally encounters in such places. Boulder ferns, rock brakes, asphodels, bleeding hearts, foxgloves, eglantines, tansy, zinnias, dewberries, poison ivy, and tumbleweed hide their heads in the dark corners of the cave while salamanders, toads and vipers crawled along the walls. Pismires, termites, caterpillars, cicadas and all sorts of kissing bugs kept to themselves untroubled by the frequent intrusions of the so-called tourists. As for animals, nothing can compare to a mythical creature-half human, half inhuman or extraterrestrial we encountered in the cave. It looks like Yeti, if Yetiever existed. When the EGB students got out of the cave long before the sun had left the sky, they couldn't help talking and talking about the zillion wonders they had witnessed. Some claimed that what they had just seen was too much for any human being to understand and that access to the cave should be forbidden to tourists, the poor ignorant. Other students, more pragmatic refuted this feeble argument and demanded equal rights for all human beings, for all the creatures in the universe, as well. They got into groups and pairs and after more or less mature thinking most of them reached the conclusion that a debate was absolutely necessary if things had to be clarified. A brainstorming session was set up without delay, two teams of debaters were chosen and each team got five minutes to prepare their arguments for or against access to the Hidden Cave. The affirmative team won, after all, their arguments are more reasonable than those of their opponents, who had to admit their failure and accept the other team's solution. They must have bitterly experienced the benefits of democracy when accepting defeat, but they did everything with grace and much political correctness.) And so, the HIDDEN CAVE WILL NOT REMAIN HIDDEN TO THE PUBLIC ANYMORE.

by Roxana Onea 9th E

A LEONARDO PROJECT IN EGB



I have known about this project for a quite long time and I was very excited to participate, just like my other colleagues. We were all very enthusiastic and very curious about how it's going to be there, where we would stay, and mostly what we were going to learn.

We left by plane from Timișoara and for some of us it was our first flight experience. Some of us loved that sensation you have when the plane is soaring; others just hated it because it made them feel dizzy. After we got to Leipzig we were accommodated by

Wisamar, not all in the same place but we still hang out all together, except the ones who loved to sleep during the day, and some of them really loved to sleep, or had to because they couldn't sleep at night because someone kept snoring.

At Robotron things were as serious as they could be. We did what we had to do, paid attention to our tutor while he was explaining, applied what we were shown in his examples in our own programs. Of course there was a little joke from time to time to

make the atmosphere a little warmer after long hours of work. Going into town or shopping was a real challenge, as we could barely find someone who spoke English, and when we found one it was heaven on earth, we could finally speak and be understood.

Our guide, Anne, was incredible. She was always in a hurry, we kept hearing: "We need to hurry!" or because she had a little problem with bad luck chasing her while we were there she said quite often: "I have some really bad news...[...] we need to hurry!". But she was funny and made our little trips more exciting, and maybe they wouldn't have been so without her. Our guide from Berlin, Adam, well, he was a man with a "great" sense of orientation and he didn't seem to have a problem with time, like Anne had, he was really relaxed... all the time. Still, he showed us important sights of Berlin like the Berliner Dom, the Wall of Berlin, Technikmuseum, some parks, the Opera and some universities.

We also loved our trips to Dresden, an absolutely gorgeous city, with an amazing architecture; our little trip to BMW was very interesting too, I personally never thought that I would like it so much. We had our funny moments in our left spare time. The boys loved to play football, and on their first match, one of them, don't know how he actually did it, but he fell and sprained his ankle, and only after two long minutes of playing football. But a few days before this little incident another one of the boys fell and hit his knee, but not in any moment of the day, but in the middle of the night.

We enjoyed our time in Leipzig, the time we spent at Robotron, the work we did there, our trips, and those nights we spent together watching movies, or playing cards, going out for walks in the center of the city or in parks. There were some that said that they wanted to go home even from the first days we got there but they can't say they didn't like those things.

by Șerban Andreea 11th A

FASHION IN EGB

Why are teenagers interested in fashion? There are several reasons, all of them very important in any teenager's life. First, fashion is a social statement, an outward means of expression to their peers and the rest of the world. Then, fashion also provides teenagers a sense of identity by signaling which "grouping" they belong to. It may also signal a more independent or inclusive personality. In addition to these, teens can be extremely conscious about overall image when they are "in love. They will often exploit fashion as a means to attract a certain type of person. Rebellion may also be acted out via fashion. Since rebellion is often a huge aspect of a teenager's life, it is not shocking that teens often use shocking fashion to rebel against their parents, their classmates, and/or society. Many teens pick up on fashion trends in an effort to avoid humiliation and mocking from peers. Poor fashion choices in the eyes of others can often be an open door to ridicule. Often, fashion for teenagers is the result of the desire to be like a celebrity. Celebrities are perhaps the greatest influences on teenagers in the modern world, and they can have a huge impact on a teen's ideas about fashion and its importance. So What about fashion in EGB?

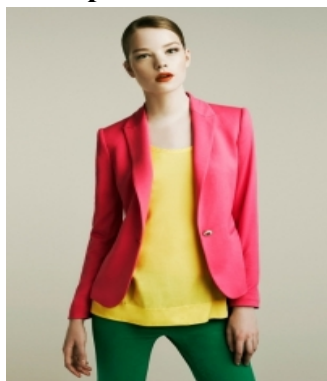
„Elena Ghiba Birta” National College is not only a very good highschool, academically speaking, but also a very demanding institution when it come to what's in and out. Although everybody is supposed to wear uniforms, almost everybody tries to express their personality and improve or repair their aspect in various ways. Surviving in EGB is not easy at all. Hundreds of eyes watch you critically everyday on the corridors and if you commit a fashion crime your reputation in school is definitely compromised.

I'm going to give you some advice to help you understand what you have to wear if you want to be accepted in this elitist society called EGB. In other words, I'll tell you what you need to own and wear and what you shouldn't in order to „survive” here.

First of all, totally in are touch screen mobile phones like Iphone, HTC or Samsung. Almost everyone has a touch screen mobile here. Purses are in too because you can't wear high heels without a purse. Totally in are skinny jeans worn with UGG's are in during the winter. Long skirts are totally out just like old fashioned mobile phones. Cargo trousers are the least fashionable thing you can wear. Out are sport shoes too,

except for converse, while platforms and high heels are definitely in. Of course, there are volumes to write about fashion in EGB, but I have to end this article somewhere.

Zara April 2011 Lookbook



One more piece of advice: if you are not a slave to fashion you will end up being labelled as anachronistic, ancient, antediluvian, antiquated, antique, archaic, bygone, dated, dead, dead and gone, discarded, disused, dusty, extinct, fossil, gone, had it, has-been, horse and buggy, kaput, moldy, moth-eaten, old, old-fashioned, old-hat, old-school, out, out-of-date, out-of-fashion, outmoded, outworn, passé, stale, superseded, timeworn, unfashionable. You can choose one or more "labels", but the result is just the same.

by Larisa Cladovan 8th A

GOSSIP IN EGB

Most of EGB students spend their breaks in the school yard, sitting on the benches and talking about all sorts of things. To be accurate, most of the talking is gossip. Moving from one group to another you hear both boys and girls asking or answering questions like these "Do you know why Dan and Alice broke up?", "Can you tell where she does her nails", "Doesn't she look awful with those pumps?", "Andy's hairstyle is so passé, isn't he? And his mobile phone is antediluvian! What a fool!". Well, as you have probably noticed the most important issues EGB students talk about are looks, being in or out of fashion, love affairs, sports, valuable possessions, such as cars or jewelry.

Sometimes girls begin long stories, forgetting to make their point (if any): "Oh girl, I went yesterday to the mall with a good friend of mine and saw this pretty dress in that new shop! It was so cute!." She goes on and on describing what she saw, then mentioning who she met, what they talked about... and so on. The boys, on the other side, brag about games: "I have reached level 22 in that new game! It is the coolest thing ever! I can't wait to get home and see what I have to do to reach level 23!". Oh, I have almost forgot! "Did you see the football match last night? It was great!"

Everything so far seems pretty harmless and can hardly be called gossip according to the definition given in the dictionary. **Gossip** is defined as "idle talk or rumour, especially about the personal or private affairs of others. The term can also imply that the news is of personal or trivial nature, as opposed to normal conversation. The term is sometimes used to specifically refer to the spreading of dirt and misinformation, as (for example) through excited discussion of scandals". Unfortunately, gossip in the meaning given above exists. If "Flash" could include some gossip columns, their titles would be something like those below;



Dan & Alice split.

***George back on track,
Lucy isn't 'desperate.***

Diana's passion for clubbing.

***Alex's scandals worsens after the
party last week.***

***Sandra can't stand Mary and
Helen.***

Alice's got a new tattoo.

***Lucy's stumbling on the red
carpet: heels too high to walk
properly.***

George's ear-ring vanished.

All those titles would be printed in bold, capital letters, of course, because they are of utmost importance in our life in EGB.

by Cristina Filo 8th A

THE EYP EXPERIENCE

Between May 6th and May 8th, a team of 11 enthusiastic students [Alexa Adina, Brăiță Lavinia, Cebuc Bianca, Creț Norina, Ilie Mara, Mancu Valentin, Petrovici Alexandra, Roș Manuela, Sabău Roxana, Șoaită Rebeca, Vasii Adrian Andrei] had the time of their life in Busteni, Prahova, where they took part in the European Youth Parliament Regional Selection Session. If reading about our experience made you keen on finding out more about it and maybe even become part of this organization, you can learn more about it at www.eypromania.eu.



The simple, basic definition for EYP would be "European Youth Parliament", but the weekend we've spent in Busteni is beyond any definition. It was more than stepping into the big European family and embracing the political history of this "adoptive mother" of ours, it was more than a few dozens of youngsters coming together and pretending they're grownups. The EYP Session we've participated in taught us the true nature of the EU and let us walk a mile in the shoes of those who pull the strings. EYP has become for all eleven of us a treasured memory not to be forgotten and maybe a source of inspiration for the paths we are to take in life.

In theory, we've been part of this amazing experience for 3 days. Practically, this is going to stay with us for a lifetime. In theory, the session was divided in 3 parts: teambuilding on Friday, Committee Work on Saturday and General Assembly Debates on Sunday. Practically, this weekend has been a melting pot of lessons to be learnt, fun and meeting new people with whom we share same interests. But what no one told us about before we went there was the P.E.D.

Our chairperson, who helped us through the process of becoming true EYPs only told us about the P.E.D., "Post EYP Depression" before we left. So as the train started its engines, taking a deep breath after almost not catching it, we've all had this strange feeling that we almost hoped we missed the train and we almost hoped the time stood still and this weekend didn't end yet. Back home, back to school. No more staring at the cute Italian chairperson, no more playing weird games outside in the cold, no more writing post-its and laughing at our golden rule of "Loving your delegation", no more teasing with the Mures delegation, no more dressing in traditional costumes while serving "ham", "sausages" and "zacusca", no more Bucharest delegations trying to imitate our beloved "ioi" (a word that has grown on many EYPs back in Busteni). No more EYP.

But we're coping with our P.E.D. and instead of sobbing and thinking about how much we miss it, we're happy to announce you that soon enough we'll open an EYP center in Arad as well, which only means that in the near future, others of you could take part in the same amazing experience and maybe in the next issue of Flash another member of the Arad delegation will write his story about how much he wished he had missed the train back home.

by Bianca Cebuc 11th E

MUSIC IN EGB

One day one of our teachers asked us to define music. Although we all believed we would be able to come up with good definitions-after all we listen to music every day-in the end we realized that our definitions were poor and silly. I wonder why. Music is part of our lives and without it everything would be boring and sad. We listen to music to relax, to feel alive, to fall in love, to forget, to be able to wake up in the morning and go to school. We see teenagers lost in a world of their own, nodding their heads to the rhythm of the music coming through their earphones which have become a must nowadays.

As I was trying to find out what music trends are favored by EGB students, I realized how different we are in spite of all the things we have in common. The most frequent answer to the question about the kind of music they listen to, was something like that: "almost everything". Choices seem to vary according to the feelings or the activity in which one person is involved. Most students listen to the so called electronic music. In fact this is the trend in clubs where DJs compete in ingenious remixes.

There are students who are fans of rock, house, latino, manele or rap. You can recognize most of them by the clothes they wear. If I can understand those students who like rock or house or latino, I can't understand those who listen to manele. They are a strange kind to me. They say they like manele because they are simple and catchy. "You feel like dancing each time you listen to them", they say. What's more, they say they can identify with the message expressed by those manele. Is there any message?.

To be honest, there are no music trends in our school. It may be clear what is hot and what is not, but pupils keep listening to diverse musical styles which best define their state of mind one time or another.



by Beatrice Farcutiu 8th A

THE FOUNTAINHEAD



The Fountainhead is a celebration of man in the purest and most elevated form he could and should reach. It is an ode to perfection and to those few who manage not to sacrifice it for the sake of the others but preserve it instead and dedicate themselves to its keeping intact. Ayn Rand commits herself to the capture of the essence of such rare men, stressing that her "purpose, first cause and prime mover is the portrayal of Howard Roark as an end in himself". However, since the author also adds that she addresses the book to any reader who proves worthy of it, one could

interpret it as an urge to regard *The Fountainhead* as an inspiration. It is very difficult though to ascend to the ideal state of mind so gracefully mastered by Roark. Nevertheless, the power of negative example is very effective, perhaps unrivalled in this

world. Thus, avoiding a transformation into Gail Wynand can be synonymous to a metamorphosis into Howard Roark.

Both Wynand and Roark were born in similar conditions but they grow up to be very different due to the decisions that shape the course of their lives. They emerge from the inferior blanket of society and stand out in the masses through their professional achievements. Nonetheless, their means and motives make the same sharp contrast which appears between slavery and mastery. Howard Roark has no interest in the approval of the others, whereas Gail Wynand uses it as a vehicle. As a talented and open-minded individual, he does not perceive the applause of the mob as a necessary fuel in order to function, but he believes it a requisite to his purpose. Wynand underwent defeats in his unfortunate youth and has henceforth been dominated by a desire to crush those who attempted to crush him. In Wynand's fallacious conception, the key to bringing people down to their knees is serving them their own poison: vulgarity, ignorance, hypocrisy and aversion to anything truly extraordinary. He marks the success of becoming the owner of the newspaper *Gazette* by changing its name to *The New York Banner* and transforming it into a banner of the lowest values of society. He thinks he has a major influence on the public opinion, not realizing that his newspaper follows the whims of the mob and not the other way around. He tries to control it but he unconsciously submits to it. He wants to flaunt his superiority but he debases himself instead. He tries to destroy it, but ends up destroyed.

Gail Wynand is a tragic hero and, like all of his peers, he possesses a character of rare quality. His talent, ambition and exertion raise him from rags to riches and his intelligence makes him aware of the absolute truth that beauty and grandeur lie in man's accomplishments. Wynand feels infinite reverence to those who, by means of their curiosity, courage and dogged determination, push mankind forward. Notwithstanding, his decisions do not betray any of these; on the contrary, they produce a dubious notoriety and subsequently his downfall. His spite belittles his numerous qualities and the flame of life sustained by his abilities, his immense capacity of work and his will to be his own master is eventually extinguished by an error of judgment and a lust for revenge. The only factor of his failure is a miscalculation, a mistaken belief that the masses must be punished for the depravity and misery which surrounded him as a child and for the insolence with which they repeatedly pointed out to him: "You don't run things around here". Since power is the weapon of revenge, Gail Wynand sets out to seek it and lets himself be driven by an unconscious fear of defeat to a situation without escape.

The final choice between Howard Roark, the embodiment of Wynand's ideals, and The Banner, the result of his effort, his talent and his spirit, leads the reader to the cathartic revelation which a tragedy leaves behind. Gail Wynand's existence is a reminder of the domination of fear upon many men who could reach the highest peaks of living with themselves as an only reason but who are too scared of the others' rejection or warfare against them. Howard Roark does not fear anything. In the skyscraping height of his thought, he is as unflinching as his buildings – no tempest could ever shake him. He is prepared for any blow that may come his way, should it send him back to the start line, in a quarry, an isolated town in Ohio or an empty office. The manner in which he lets offences pass him by may be regarded as almost religious. However, his refusal to lower himself to the level of the rotten world he lives in does not reveal a fervor of creed but a total indifference to petty schemes, fame, the subordination of people or the material aspect of his work. He accepts all the blows without planning retaliation because he does not feel any of them. One may venture to say that he turns the other cheek, but truth is the palm that wants to slap a person like him could never reach him. Howard Roark has one faith, the one which bows down to man, the only living creature who has built the instruments needed to tame the beasts of the world. Man has already conquered nature but the greatest challenge remains. Contrary to depictions in fairy tales and ancient legends, the most dangerous monster has neither claws, nor fangs, but the hideous face of a selfless man.

Keating's case, like many other, is incurable. If Keating may be excused because he would never be capable of greatness, Gail Wynand is blameworthy for being aware of his potential without using it. A debacle like his is a lesson not easily ignored and an

encouragement for all the "Wynands" who can still change their lives to follow in Howard Roark's footsteps. After all, he is not only a model of perfection, but a fountainhead of life.

by Andrada Danila, 12th E

DISCOVERING THE OLD MASTERS VINCENT VAN GOGH

Vincent van Gogh was born on the 30th of March 1853. His personality seemed to build up in contradiction with the respectable, conformist, bourgeois family in which he was brought up; *"My youth has been sordid, cold and unproductive"*, Vincent wrote to his brother, Theo, in one of the hundred letters sent to him (Van Gogh's letters are among the most fascinating memoirs from the XIXth century).

The first painters to understand Vincent's exceptional value and claim him as their master were the expressionists. In 1888,



Vincent van Gogh settled down in Arles, in Provence, where he painted all of his celebrated works in a burst of creativity. Each day, Vincent would walk through the countryside and look for subjects to paint. He hardly ever spoke to a soul, except for a postman who became one of his few friends in town, and spent hours in his tiny hotel room writing letters to Theo and other artist friends - notable Gauguin. When Gauguin came to visit, the two artists constantly argued about various issues. Van Gogh accused Gauguin of having murdered his ideals. What followed next was the world's most famous self-mutilation in art history...

After the self-mutilation, van Gogh's mental health deteriorated badly. He actually slept in a hospital in Arles but made trips occasionally back to the Yellow House to paint. This caused consternation among the locals who petitioned for 'the mad Dutchman' as they called him, to be locked away as a menace to society. And so, in the end, Vincent himself asked to be committed to an asylum. *"Work distracts me infinitely better than anything else"*, he told Theo, *"and if I could once really throw myself into it with all my energy, possibly that would be the best remedy"*.

During the last two months of his life Vincent was looked after by Paul Gachet, a friend and a client of his brother's, Theo. Gachet tried to cure him, but he was ultimately unsuccessful.

Vincent continued to paint the landscape, but with the grey light of northern France now dominant in his work, he grew ever more anguished. His disturbed mental state was intensified by a sense of isolation and rootlessness which had led to some of the darkest paintings ever made.

Vincent wrote his last letter to Theo on the 27th of July, 1890 - *"In my own work I have put my whole life in jeopardy and I have half lost my mind in the process..."* He died on July , 29th, after he had shot himself in the the heart. The local priest wouldn't give him a funeral because he committed suicide, but a day later he was finally buried with sunflowers on his grave...

by Larisa Spravil 12th C

THE 1980'S EXPLOSIVE ART SCENE

In the 1980's the art market began to boom. Buying art was chic and quickly became an object of investment, just like shares in stock. Charles Staachi is the best known of those collectors who began to buy art in the 1980s, a man who still possesses the power to determine the path of an artist's career today. The high and mighty of the American society was no longer satisfied with the genteel sponsorship of museums, which they saw merely as a duty to the community. They increasingly found it obligatory to seek out fashionable galleries on the weekends, to attend openings or visit artists in their studios. Art became part and parcel of lifestyle. Fueled by the fear of not being on top of the times, collectors bought whatever was being stocked as the latest "it". Suddenly, potential collectors actually had to get themselves on waiting lists buy from some of the newest painter idols like Eric Fischl, Julian Schnabel and Keith Haring.

This gave rise to an absurd situation, in which artists started producing according to the laws of supply and demand. The disastrous results of this system on artists' lives and careers soon became obvious. Where before the goal was to get one's best work into museums, the objective now was simply to sell, sell, sell, indiscriminately. The defining works of a career landed in the living rooms of private collectors, only to reappear in the market two or three years later, commanding prices that no museums could bear. The dividing line between high and trivial culture, which Pop Art had already questioned and transgressed, now became increasingly porous. The liaison between high and trivial culture was very much the achievement of one man, Andy Warhol. He was the first to succeed in mixing the once strictly separated worlds of high culture and ordinary life, until they became practically indistinguishable. His life swung freely between art and glamour, as was obvious in every aspect of his public persona: he was neutral about accepting patrons who wished portraits from him. As a publisher, Warhol pioneered a very special type of press exemplified by his magazine, Interview.

The boom art world was advanced by a new type of gallery owner. By controlling the way in which an artist was promoted, this new art merchant also defined the rules of the game by which prices were set and manipulated. Mary Boone, an important gallery owner of that time, understood perfectly how to use the media to get people talking about her gallery and her person. Suddenly, magazine covers and headlines were no longer the monopoly of celebrities from Hollywood, who had to make room for a new type of celebrity from the art scene. Art was no longer a polite, gentlemanly business, where movement and ideas could be influenced from the background in the mode of Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler or Pierre Matisse. The art dealer became a permanent, media-starving star, and his or her business plan determined the direction of contemporary art.

by Claudia Duica 12th E

NO FUTURE FOR SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

More and more people are using social networking sites, such as *Hi5* and *Facebook* to connect with each other. Young people, in particular, use them because they are attracted by their novelty and the apparently endless possibilities they offer.

First, social networking sites are accessible to almost anyone. Having a computer at home is an ordinary thing for ordinary people. Communication is not a problem anymore and, as you touch the keyboards of your computer, you get the feeling that you are not alone. Sometimes the feeling is so intense that you have the impression that the friends you make while accessing these sites are real.



In my opinion these social networking sites are harmful only if accessed in excess and without doubting their reliability. If you have an account on one of these sites and you log in once or twice a week it is quite natural and there is no harm in it. If your friends or classmates have an account on these sites, you must have one too. If you do not have one, you may be excluded from the group. However, you can become addicted to these sites you may trust the people you socialize with via these sites more than you trust anyone in the real world. You will end up in a parallel universe, a virtual world populated with strangers you call friends. It is then when you start to have problems.

I believe social networking sites will not have a future. When another novelty or multifunctional gadget appears, the interest in such sites will decline. Social networking sites are trendy today but tomorrow they will become obsolete. In spite of the people who have become addicted to them, in the end more and more people will realize that nothing is more valuable than face-to-face communication. The smile on your friend's face, the laughter, the emotions, the pain...all these are not to be found in a virtual world, as perfect as it may seem to be.

by Diana Mihu, 11th E

WHY I LIKE ITALY

During the spring holiday I had the chance to visit Italy. I enjoyed everything I saw there, but what I liked most was the Italian fashion. So instead of expressing my admiration for the ancient history of this great country, I am going to express my profound admiration for its fashion.

I have heard people saying that elegance is in the Italian blood, that most Italians would give up comfort in order to achieve it. Indeed, Italy is a nation that cherishes physical appearance. Yes, it is great if you have a good heart, but Italians would expect you to have "well-groomed hair, an impeccable sense of dressing and a really neat pair of shoes besides". Why not, when everything you need is at hand? The Italian fashion has everything one may possibly want. From pioneers such as Elsa Schiaparelli to the modern Roberto Cavalli, Italy has had some of the best fashion visionaries watching over what they wear, be it clothes, perfume, shoes, jewelry or hair, for almost all of the last century. For work wear, they have Brioni and Zegna, for real special occasions they have Valentino, Armani and Versace, As for Prada, Missoni, Ferragamo, Ferre, Bottega Veneta, Damiani and Bvlgari, their reputation in fashion circles across the world is undeniable. Almost everybody who counts at Hollywood cannot imagine themselves walking on the red carpet without wearing clothes, shoes or jewelry made in Italy.

In Italy, fashion is almost a national passion, and to see the latest trends one need only glance around the various piazzas, restaurants and streets. It is interesting to notice though, that most Italians choose to follow trends that suit them, they do not wear fashionable clothes just for the sake of being trendy. What's more, the Italians know how to wear their clothes-with sophistication, refinement, with style.

by A.F. 11th E

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