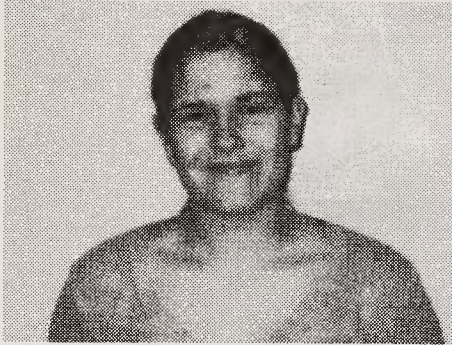


SPEAK OUT!

Everyone has different and sometimes strange family traditions for certain holidays. What odd or unique Thanksgiving traditions do you and your family practice? What are some of your favorite Thanksgiving dishes that your family enjoys, other than the typical Thanksgiving turkey, ham, sweet potatoes, and pumpkin pie?



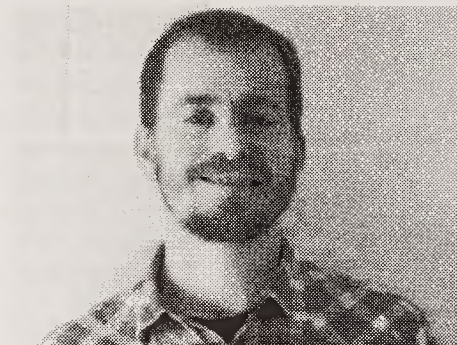
"In my family, Thanksgiving is one of the only holidays that we celebrate normally. My father, who has a sarcastic sense of humor, ususally makes rabbit for Easter dinner, our last four Christmases were marked by a feast of homemade sushi, and we [often] make up holidays as an excuse to [buy] ice cream."

Elizabeth Vachon,
student teacher



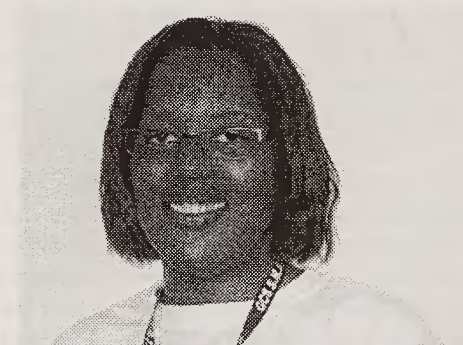
"One unique dish my family enjoys on Thanksgiving is birthday cake. Since my birthday falls on or close to Thanksgiving, my family eats both sweet potato pie and birthday cake. Needless to say, we are always stuffed after our meal!"

Karyn Collie, English teacher



"I am from the coast, so we have Thanksgiving in Wilmington, NC. We ususally have lots of seafood including my favorite, raw oysters! We also have several vegan and vegetarian dishes and usually some venison as well."

Mr. Barnard, science teacher



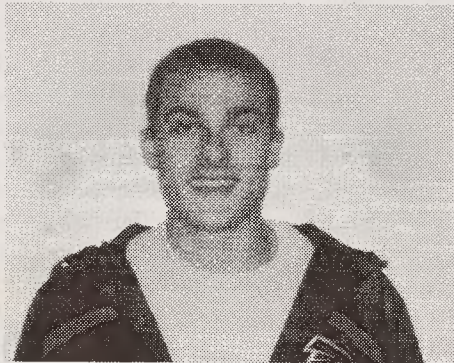
"We torment the dates of family members and then tell them we really like them right before they leave."

Yolanda Baldwin, math teacher



"My family always buys our Christmas tree and decorates it after Thanksgiving dinner."

Gaby Scott, sophomore



"My family always eats turkey dinner really quickly to watch football, while the women in the family clean. Mashed potatoes are the best."

Christian Adkins, senior



"My family either comes here from NY or we go to NY and my Grandmother always makes sure everyone eats black eyed peas for good luck and everyone brings their own sweet potato pie recipe and we choose the best one."

Kiara Triplett, senior



"On Thanksgiving, my family and I get together at one of my aunts' houses. All of my aunts make a type of food like tamales, posole, or tacos al pastor. They are Hispanic foods and very delicious. We also make some desserts. The turkey is not on our menu, though chicken is sometimes."

Alejandra Vasquez, sophomore

Classics novels stand the test of time

BY ANNA KANODE

Photographer

Literary critics often term works including "Wuthering Heights," "The Phantom of the Opera," "Pride and Prejudice," "Jane Eyre," and "Dracula" as classics because of their eloquence of the written word and timelessness in meaning. Within the last 50 years, few if any such masterpieces compare. Plots appear lax, vocabulary suits simpletons, and most characters behave weakly.

Anyone who has read "Pride and Prejudice" will never forget Mr. Darcy's persistence regarding the subjects of marriage and Elizabeth Bennet. No matter how many times Elizabeth spurns him, Darcy tries to win her affections by means of conversations, literature, dance, and music. In contrast, the main character from "Blood and Chocolate," Vivian Gandillon, presumes she wants to marry her boyfriend Aiden Teague until she realizes she is madly in love with another character, Gabriel. Ironically, Gandillon shows hatred for Gabriel until the end of the last chapter.

Characters have also morphed for the worst in the chivalry department. Originally, most male characters proved their adeptness at handling swords and pistols, playing an instruments and/or sing-

ing, fighting fairly, and treating women courteously. On rare occasions when women were treated poorly, the behavior stemmed from some indiscretion on her part or an antagonistic male. Raoul, the Vicomte de Chagny, in "The Phantom of the Opera" is the perfect example of courtliness because he knows how to handle weapons, and he risks his life to save the woman he loves. Fistfights only occur between those characters who are immature or juvenile and from extremely destitute backgrounds. Novels written of late, however, involve characters who hit each other over idiotic disputes over misunderstandings that could be cleared up through a verbal truce. Such an incident transpires in the book "Holes." A character named Mr. Sir receives a smack from the "Warden" after she puts on nail polish with rattlesnake venom, leaving him with a very painfully poisoned cheek.

Literature has become quite nondescript linguistically because many words have been dropped. Some omitted words are as follows: thou, thee, hath, and knave. When people converse with such language, their communication is more specific and carries a fluid, musical sound. William Shakespeare's plays are difficult to understand, but they still have that amazing melodic

sound: "But soft; what light through yonder window breaks? It is the East, and Juliet is the sun" are such lines the tragic lover Romeo utters in "Romeo and Juliet." What other playwright can create romance like the great Bard of Avon?

Authors have also adopted a simplistic vocabulary policy to attract more readers, rather than to challenge them. Countless words have more complicated synonyms that could contribute to a more flourishing style. One such overused word is "thought," which could grow in meaning by words like "contemplated," "considered," or "deliberated." Without such embellishment of text, readers miss out on advanced vocabulary building and options for improving their writing skills.

Classical writers created sentences in ways unparalleled by authors of more recent works. The eloquence demonstrated within characters' conversations has been lost as our language is now befuddled with numerous slang terms whose meanings are ambiguous or discriminating. One example supporting this challenge is the use of the word "like." Almost every teen uses this word in just about every sentence, and it makes little sense. Consider the following: "I, like, saw my boyfriend at the

mall with, like, this other girl." Well, did you see him or not? Was it a girl, or like a girl, as in it could have been a feminine male? Since details of the English language have become so unimportant, it would follow that the novels also lack the luster of a captivating plot.

In the past, readers found it difficult to predict future action because the author wove subplots together and threw curve balls at their readers. Now, in numerous cases, readers can predict their books' end before they reach the midpoint. Problems stem from these non-challenging selections of literature because they do not encourage people to read, they do not enhance their creativity, nor do they captivate much interest.

Granted, a few authors can still keep their fans hanging on to every word until their last sentences, questioning the consequences of characters' behavior or awaiting surprise endings that maintain some sensibility. Regrettably, such books are limited.

Classical literature is clearly more stimulating than books written today. Their writers demonstrate respect for proper grammar, sophisticated vocabulary, dynamic characters, and unpredictable plot development. Writers today certainly have their work cut out for them to compete with the masters.