

THE MUCKRAKER

THE INDEPENDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY SCHOOL STUDENTS' NEWSPAPER

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Let's begin by stating the obvious: the weather has been amazingly warm - Just in time for the final quarter of this school year! The soothing rays of sunlight and blue skies have made coming to school at least a little bit easier, although admittedly, taking a Klausur in a hot, sticky room, when you could be bathing in the Schlachtensee can get a little frustrating sometimes. But remember, only a few more weeks and then, for most of you, the peak of the "stress-mountain" will be overcome and everything will just go downhill from there, in the most positive sense possible. If you flip through this issue of the Muckraker you will notice some new additions, which we haven't had before. Firstly, an actual, real-live teacher decided to share some fruits of wisdom with us and submitted an article, and to tell you the truth, it was pure enjoyment grading - I mean, editing the work of a teacher. And secondly, you will notice an entire page dedicated to advertisement at the back of the issue - this was actually a last-minute decision, as we had a page left over and couldn't decide what to do with it. This doesn't mean the Muckraker is becoming a billboard so we might have to turn your bribes for future advertisements down.

Also, we'd like to remind you if you wish to respond to any of the articles you read in the Muckraker, please feel free to do so! We're open to any thoughts, comments or response articles. Anyway, enjoy the issue!

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Global Warming - Is It Worth It?

Cloudless skies, warm lakes, bright sunshine - in April?! I'm sure most of you have made the best out of the past couple of days and enjoyed the warm weather that has been waving through Berlin, but while people were swimming at the Schlachtensee or eating ice cream in the park, I couldn't help but wonder: *How* is this *normal*? Only 2 or 3 weeks ago it was surprisingly rainy and cold for March but now, we're



experiencing summery temperatures of 24 - 27°C. And meteorologists are now saying that this year's summer might even be the hottest one in Germany in centuries! Of course, the changes in Germany are less drastic than the ones in other nations or regions. The increasing amount and escalating force of tornadoes in the United States or the unusually heavy rainfall in Southeast Asia are only two of dozens of accounts of harmful weather phenomena. However, this article will not be going in depth over the effects of global warming or the scientific arguments that speak for and against it. Instead, I was intrigued to learn more about an occurrence in the State of Vermont a friend of mine had told me about, and stumbled upon just how complicated the dispute behind global warming really is.

On April 5, 2007 the Association of International Automobile Manufacturers (AIAM), which includes car companies such as Ford, Volkswagen, Ferrari, Daimler-Chrysler and Toyota, filed a lawsuit against the Vermont Greenhouse Gas Regulation that would regulate emissions of the greenhouse

gas carbon dioxide on vehicles. How did this legislation emerge? The federal Clean Air Act that was passed in the 60's but has been continuously revised, allows California to set more stringent emission limits than the federal government does and gives the opportunity for other states to join in on California's rules if they choose to do so. Since then, 10 other states have expressed their interest in addressing

growing concerns about climate change by using the same regulatory system to crack down on carbon dioxide emissions from vehicles - thus, the creation of the Vermont Greenhouse Gas Regulation. Naturally, automobile makers didn't like these changes at all and are now filing a lawsuit on a very narrow legal issue known as "preemption", and are therefore using legal trivialities to block changes that might

hurt their industry.

Many of you who read this might say, "So what?" Very valid point, but just think about this: Changes in the amount of CO₂ emissions are necessary to prevent catastrophic weather fluctuations yet corporate industries are still thinking more about their affluence rather than addressing global worries. Scientists from all over the world, unbiased and concerned, have provided evidence that CO₂ emissions directly affect global warming and as obviously resistant as many governments have been on this issue, the necessity of regulating emissions is becoming more and more apparent and accepted. Nevertheless, events such as the AIAM lawsuit show just how many factors are involved in changing regulations that have long been in practice. The question for major automobile producers is no longer whether or not greenhouse gas emissions affect global warming but rather whether or not it is worth it to make the changes necessary and thus experience an industrial and financial undoing.

Samira Lindner

JFKS Life

Sweet Dreams

The first few days back in the Kennedy hallways – what does one see? Students reminiscing on the days of vacation. What many cherish most about vacation is sleeping in, because during school, we're normally up with the first ray of sunlight, if not earlier.

Scientists aren't sure yet why, but it is a fact that adolescents have shifted sleep preferences. They tend to be wakeful until late in the evening but completely groggy in the morning hours. In light of this, many countries have decided that eight o'clock is too early a start for youngsters. They point to research polls that show that students perform better academically if school hours collaborate with their biological rhythms harmoniously. Statistics shown that only about 25% of youths meet their required eight or nine hours of sleep and the culprit behind this may even be Thomas Edison: Before his invention of the light bulb, people slept an average of ten hours a day!

But why is it that sleep is such a huge part of our lives? It is odd that science is still undecided about why we need sleep. Nature's logic would be "you can't do much when it's dark anyway so let's make the body more energy efficient and equip it with an "off" switch". One theory claims that sleep is time for the brain to organize and archive memories. That might explain why it seems beneficial to study right be-

fore hitting the sheets. Less nebulous is science's explanation of what the heavenly doze we all relish actually is. According to tests, sleep is a state of unconsciousness and only differs from fainting in that noise and other outside factors can awaken us from it. This relaxing loss of consciousness is achieved by a decrease in the speed our brain processes. Our brain waves slow down from about 10 cycles per second when we are awake, to as little as 3.5 cycles per second in our deepest sleep. This numbs our minds and paralyzes our bodies.

Then again, we all know from experience that there must be more going on inside of us than sheer blankness. We wake up with the most bizarre memories of stories that moved or horrified us when we looked so lifelessly knocked out. Every 90 minutes or so, the brain stem sends electrical impulses throughout the brain in no particular order or fashion. The analytical part of the brain, the forebrain, tries to make sense of these signals and thus, stories unravel – stories known as dreams. Although the images that trigger these dreams may be random, most experts agree that dreams are all but meaningless, since the way in which our analytical brain chooses to interpret the mentioned impulses gives insight into our minds. In the most intense phases of dreaming, our brain waves pick up

speed once more and sometimes even exceed the rate of wakefulness. Our bodies, however, remain paralyzed, which is a clever design move on nature's part: If our bodies started acting on what we're dreaming, nighttime would lose its romantic tranquility and we'd have a city of zombies kick boxing, dancing ballet, or acting out scenes from the Wild Wild West. Nevertheless, another theory has it that we don't actually make up stories while we're asleep, but that upon awaking, without us noticing, our brain remembers the random images it was confronted with in sleep and then quickly attempts to make sense of them.

There is still so much to be discovered. But we don't need science to enjoy sleep during vacation, after a busy time of MSE and Abitur presentations, or to know how invaluable it is to us when school starts up again. Nor do we need fancy statistics to realize that most students don't get enough sleep. German politicians have been in frenzy for a while over whether or not to follow the lead of other European nations and some parts of the United States and introduce an 8:30 or 9:00 "books out". While we wait for a final decision in that regard, we'll just have to make do with what we're given and stand strong in a fight against the forces of biology!

Lena Walther

Caught in the Act!

Admittedly, most of our daily visits to the lavatory are mundane adventures of basic necessity or a brief respite from a tiresome lecture. But life offers a surprise every now and then, and what follows is one of the more unexpected experiences of my generally routine visits to the 2nd floor blue building bathroom. It was a particularly busy 6th period in the little boys room, with gentlemen scurrying to and fro around a curious obstacle of two members of the species *octavus gradus* who were busying themselves in the middle of all this activity, sponges in hand, with the removal of *graffito ignobilis*. Naturally my first thoughts bent toward what crime these two obvious offenders had committed to be dealt such a punishment, but I held my accusatory tongue and merely inquired "And to what do we owe the pleasure, gentlemen?" A hint of a scornful smile touched the corners of my mouth in anticipation of their admission of guilt, only to be quickly replaced by a look of surprise – and then embarrassment – at their response. "We just

got sick of seeing the bathrooms look like this." "Yeah, so we decided to do something about it."

This teacher, alleged molder of minds and inspiration of youth, had just been "schooled" by two (relatively) innocent-looking eighth graders. What had I done to contribute to the betterment of my school, unsolicited no less, in the recent past? How had I captured our namesake's exhortation to "Ask not what your country (school) can do for you, but what you can do for your country" as these fine young men were doing in a graffiti-filled bathroom? Having recently read *Lord of the Flies* author William Golding's essay "Thinking as a Hobby," I was embarrassed to find myself the cynical grade two thinker who finds fault in others but offers no changes, while the industrious young men exhibited grade one thinking traits of identifying a problem and offering solutions.

The boys' example stayed with me all throughout the day, and for days to come. Why aren't we *all* a community

of builders, of contributors, of *change-makers*? Oh, there are some extremely talented people at this school, and indeed, they do much to make the John F. Kennedy School rank among the top schools in Berlin. But usually there is always something in it for them, too, whether it is the applause at the end of a great production, the friendship and skills gained from MUN, or an Ivy League acceptance letter. What do Nick Schulte and Paul Mattern get from cleaning a disgusting bathroom? What would we ALL get from doing the unexpected nicety, going beyond expectations, creating a positive change just because it's the right thing to do? It would be most interesting to witness. As for me, I'd simply like to thank the two young gentlemen (and also the authors of the articles in the Muckraker that most likely inspired *them*) for a rather motivating example of student leadership. Who's next?

Chad Felt

Socratic Seminar

Is there really no alternative to the typical "hand-raising" in the classroom? Students, do you remember any classroom exercises your teachers tried with you that were somewhat outside of the norm? Teachers, have you ever thought about trying something new? What is it that makes a good classroom atmosphere? Is it in the hands of the teacher, the students, or both? Take a minute to think about these questions before reading on.

The Socratic seminar sounds like a good substitute for hand-raising. Based on the Greek philosopher Socrates' dialectic

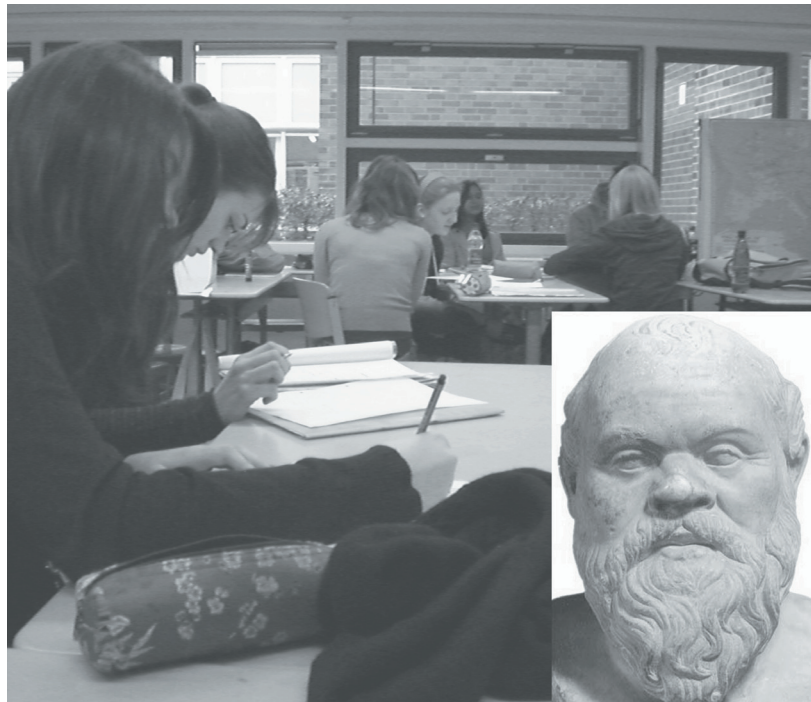
direction of the group in case they get caught up in trivialities. This will usually be the teacher, who might start the discussion with a question or may leave it open for a participant to propose an idea. The leader can ask questions or give clarification or advice throughout the dialogue.

While the Socratic seminar is not a substitute for hand-raising in school, it is a fun alternative for both the teacher and the students. The teacher can relax and is able to observe how well his/her students can think for themselves, while the students can demonstrate their

potential in a sophisticated discourse. Such a seminar can be held in any subject, whether it's a language or a science class is of no importance, as long as the text is chosen accordingly. Its success is in the hands of the students, as they do the talking, which means that they have to do some

preparatory reading and ideating. The students must respect one another, allowing each other to speak without any disruptions, for otherwise the seminar may go haywire and turn into a chaos, which would be a disappointment for both the teacher and the students.

The Socratic seminar is a fun, thought-provoking classroom exercise, in which students deepen their understanding of a specific topic in order to have a productive discussion. It is a good means for a teacher to see who is really thinking and to bring variety into the classroom in order to avoid monotony. Teachers should try new methods of instruction every now and then, as continuous lecturing is not the most productive means of learning. The Socratic seminar, while being only one of many alternatives, deserves to be tried on occasion - after all, Socrates founded Western philosophy and the Western way of thinking with his dialectic method.



tic method, it incorporates the idea that students should think for themselves and discuss ideas instead of enduring a teacher's lecture. One should learn through dialogue and contemplation, not through memorization. Socrates believed that he could bring anyone to think, if he asked the right questions.

A Socratic seminar, as opposed to a debate, does not necessarily seek a conclusion. It rather looks for the ability to think, make up, and change one's mind when hearing persuasive arguments or new ideas. It is usually based on a text with great literary value and it makes its participants, desirably ten to fifteen students, think, discuss, and ask questions about related issues. One key thing is that the participants do not raise their hands to be called on, but take turns speaking, without interrupting one another. They are to try to add to previous comments or ask questions for clarification or further inquiry. However, the students are not entirely on their own - as is perhaps the case in other types of discussion. There is a seminar leader to guide the general

Indoor Recess

The typical high school student likes to compare his/her stress level with that of a seventh grader. Comments such as, "I wish my life was as relaxed as theirs", are quite frequent in conversations of students in the tenth grade and above. But is it fair to say that our younglings have an easy life? The seventh graders are new to high school: after having spent up to six years of their lives in the elementary school, they move into an entirely alien environment. They have more classes, new schedules, and lockers to get used to. In short, the kiddies have to adjust to a whole new life.

On a rainy day the high school students, be they seventh or thirteenth graders, are usually found in the library, in the hallways, at activities, or in the aula. While we are granted this rather wide variety of places to spend our free moments at, the elementary school students are forced to spend their rainy lunch hours in their homerooms, a phenomenon commonly known as "indoor recess".

When comparing the stress level of a seventh grader to that of a fourth grader, be it on a rainy or a sunny day, one would probably come to the conclusion that the seventh grader is under far greater pressure. However, while it is true to say that stress increases as one moves to a higher grade level, one should not forget that the ability to handle stressful situations increases at approximately the same rate. Thus the seventh graders or even the fifth graders will feel about as stressed as the tenth graders preparing for their MSEs, the seniors for their APs or the Abiturienten studying for their Abi-Klausuren. The high school student, while wishing for the stress level of a fourth grader, usually does not desire the lack of freedom that goes with it. Although many of us would stay inside on a rainy day simply out of habit, none of us would appreciate being forced to stay in a room. Indoor recess, while perhaps a necessity for the younglings, is a rather scary idea for the high school student, who is very much used to the liberties involved with being an adolescent.

It is unfair to say that the younger students do not have any stress. On occasion, even a third grader will feel stressed and anxious about a test or a project. For the high school student, the third grader's project may seem like a joke, however that older student was also once in that lower grade level. Probably, only very few of us can look at their school life in retrospect and proclaim that everything has been easy up to that point.

JFKS Life / Culture

How to Fail More Easily

On the 30th of May 2006, the members of the Educational Director (ED) meeting voted on a changing of the grading system for the High School Diploma. This change meant that now a 5+ is no longer a passing grade for the Diploma students, and receiving a 3, now a C+, will not be eligible for the Honors Diploma.

This change was initially made because some thought that the Diploma students shouldn't have a failing grade that is so much lower than the Abitur failing grade, which is a 4-. This Abitur failing grade, though, is acceptable because the new Abitur grading system has lowered the corresponding percentages of each grade in the sciences. Now on written tests or exams, 95% is a 1+, 90% a 1 and so forth. Mathematically seen, a higher failing grade than the Diploma students but lower required percentages for each grade, "cancel each other out", so it's fair. So why did the American Diploma grading system have to change?

This new change can be perhaps seen as a motivation for the students to try harder and do better, but how can the

students improve when they are unaware of this change? Out of 100 people asked, only 2 people knew about it. It can't only be our fault. Is it really our responsibility to ask around every day if the grading system has been changed? Secondly, this change happened so suddenly, that most of us were unable to adapt to it in such a short time. Out of the 100 people asked, all 100 people were victims of this new grading system. Either their Grade-Point-Average (GPA) dropped drastically, or they suddenly failed, or they lost their chance to get an Honors Diploma only because of this adjustment. It is only natural that we need a certain amount of time to adapt to a new grading system.

Thirdly, this change has only affected our school, which means when we apply to colleges in the United Kingdom, the USA, or Canada, or wherever else, we will have a big disadvantage. The very first document they look at is the High School transcript, in which our GPA shows our academic skills. When colleges look at our GPA, they don't always look at name of the High School. A college admissions officer of NYU has

revealed the truth. Since the admission officers don't know every existing high school, each school is treated equally when looking at the GPA. Just because our grades dropped, doesn't mean we got more stupid, does it? Unfortunately, our transcripts will not explain our situation and even an explanation will be just an additional bunch of words to the admissions office people at the colleges. Why destroy the reputation of our school and reduce the chance of students getting accepted at good colleges?

A school is there to educate and help the students. Therefore, the only realistic reason—a student can think of—behind this change must be that it was meant to motivate us. But this change has done exactly the opposite. It has become a source of sadness, hopelessness, and even failure. When this decision is reconsidered at the school conference, I hope its members will be aware of the failure of this new grading system and change it for the better, thus bring new hopes to the school.

Anonymous

Crocodile Tail Steak and Pomegranate Sauce

Many of us enjoy spending our free time going to a movie at the CineStar, shopping at the Arkaden at Potsdamer Platz, or hanging out on Schlossstraße and the Kurfürstendamm. A retreat, which probably only few people know of and which I would like to introduce to you, is a street called Goltzstraße in Schöneberg. This short street, which extends from Grunewaldstraße to the Winterfeldplatz provides a unique atmosphere for both young and old.

Tightly packed on the Goltzstraße are a variety of restaurants offering exotic cuisine. Among the many Indian restaurants to be found on this street, is my personal favourite, the "Maharaja". This restaurant offers a weekday menu, which includes a soup and a main dish ranging from 4€ to 4.50€. The Persian restaurant, "Shayan", has tasty specialties such as "Gorme Sabzi", a dish with various herbs and dried lime, or "Kho-rescht e Fassenjan", a dish with walnut and pomegranate sauce. Each of these platters costs about 6€. "Quán", a restaurant that offers Vietnamese and Southeast Asian meals, has a "must-have" dish called "Bun Bo Nam Bo", a light Vietnamese specialty made up of

beef, lemon grass, peanuts and rice noodles. "One", another Vietnamese restaurant, offers extremely generously sized sushi platters. It is advisable to eat here during the week, as a lunch menu consisting of a drink, a main course, and a homemade dessert costs only about 5.50€. The best falafel in town can be found at "Habibi" at Goltzstraße 24, directly on the Winterfeldplatz. If you are open to new culinary experiences, I suggest dining at "Massai", an African restaurant. Here you will be served such extraordinary treats as "Ostrich Steak" (13€), "Zebra Steak" (16.50€), or even "Crocodile Tail Filet" (17.50€). For a less exotic dinner I recommend the Spanish restaurant "Tapas y Más". The restaurant, which is open from 17 o'clock onwards, provides a wide selection of tapas, as well as other traditional Spanish delicacies.

Not only are Goltzstraße's restaurants very special, but its shops are also one-of-a-kind. The articles for sale here cannot be found in Berlin's shopping malls or department stores. For example, the store "Mobilien" offers many funky accessories in pop colours and prints, as well as a variety of retro-style para-

phernalia. Fabiola, a Flamenco shop, offers anything the flamenco dancer's heart desires. The outdoor country market on the Winterfeldplatz, open every Saturday, is also a must-see.

Additionally, Goltzstraße is home to four art supply shops, known as the Wilhelm Rütter hobby shops. Each of these four shops specializes in something different. For example, one shop sells every painting and drawing supply imaginable, another shop sells beads in every shape, size and color, as well as anything needed to make individual jewellery creations. Yet another sells school and handcrafting supplies. The ceramic supply store even has a furnace where customers can burn their own self-made clay objects.

Now that "spring is in the air", why don't you try something new? You are sure to have a great time taking a stroll along the Goltzstraße with its numerous sidewalk cafés, restaurants, and shops. It is an enjoyable alternative to the hustle and bustle of many other streets in the German capital.

Laura Kampf

Comments, Replies?

send your opinions and articles to:

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Culture / Entertainment

„Sry, g2g... ttyl8er“

In Zeiten von SMS, MSN und dem WWW werden viele Wörter und Sprachbestandteile verkürzt und vereinfacht. Schnell, schnell, ich habe nicht viel Zeit – und schon fehlt das „e“ am Wortende. Aus „Ich habe dich lieb“ wird „Hab dich lieb“, und schließlich „hdl“.

Diesem oder ähnlichem Schicksal erleiden heutzutage immer mehr Wörter. Ursachen dafür sind Zeitmangel, Faulheit, oder mangelndes Interesse an korrekter Rechtschreibung. Auch das Internet mitsamt E-mail, Chatrooms oder Websites hat seinen Beitrag zur Verstümmelung der deutschen Sprache geleistet.

Was sich daraus entwickelt, ist unschwer an der Sprache vieler Jugendlicher zu erkennen. „LOL“, „brb“, „hdl“ und „rofl“ schleichen sich langsam, aber sicher in den Sprach- und Schreibge-

brauch vieler Teenager ein. Bemerkenswert ist dabei, dass viele dieser Abkürzungen keineswegs aus dem Deutschen, sondern aus dem Englischen stammen. So setzt sich „LOL“ aus dem englischen „laugh out loud“ zusammen.

Nun fragt man sich, was diese Vereinfachungen und Abkürzungen uns eigentlich für Vorteile liefern. Schließlich dauert es nicht einmal eine Sekunde, aus einem „Ich geh dann mal“ ein „Ich gehe dann mal“ zu machen. Und die Zeit, die manche brauchen um „g2g, cu l8er“ zu entziffern, wäre sicher viel besser angelegt, hätte man gleich „Ich muss gehen, bis später“ geschrieben. Abgesehen davon, dass solche Abkürzungen somit zu 99% ihren Sinn verfehlen, tragen sie auch noch zur Verblödung der deutschen Sprache bei. Wenn wir jetzt aus Faulheit oder Idiotie das „e“ am Ende

des Wortes weglassen, wer weiß, was die nächste Situation mit dem ohnehin schon falschen „Ich geh“ anfängt. Vielleicht ein „Ich G“ oder „ig“. Und wenn diese Wortbruchteile sich auch noch in der gesprochenen Sprache ansiedeln, sprechen unsere Urgroßenkel irgendwann in einem Geheimcode-ähnlichen Mischmasch und Wirrwarr, der für uns heute unverständlich wäre.

Sprache steht nicht nur für Kommunikation, sondern für eine gesamte Weltanschauung. Demnach sollte man sich ruhig die Zeit nehmen, Wörter so zu schreiben und auszusprechen, wie es sich gehört. Und auch wenn dabei vermeintliche Zeit verloren geht, ist es auf längerer Basis betrachtet ein Opfer, welches man bringen sollte.

Ina Fischer

French Kiss

Wie sieht es eigentlich mit den Franzosen und der Liebe aus?

Nach ihrer Musik, Speisen und Politik nun ein Ausflug in ihre Art zu lieben. **B e g i n n e n** wir mit dem French Kiss. Wer kennt ihn nicht, diesen Begriff? Doch woher kommt er? Einer Theorie zufolge erlebten ihn an der Französischen Küste stationierte



amerikanische Soldaten des zweiten Weltkrieges als erste. Nach dem Besuch einer Prostituierten wird einer von ihnen gesagt haben: „Wow, the way she kissed me, that was French!“ Möglicherweise. Allerdings ist das nicht halb so romantisch wie die Franzosen im Volksmund. Denn nicht umsonst ist Paris die Stadt der Liebe, und nicht etwa Rom, obwohl doch die Italiener die leidenschaftlicheren sind. Außerdem

sind grobe dreiviertel der im deutschen Fernsehen ausgestrahlten Nachmittagsfilme französischen Ursprungs, gedreht in Frankreich, von und mit Franzosen. Selbst im Lieblingskino der meisten Kennedyschüler wird es vorgebracht, in der Werbung fürs Kino selber erwartet die blonde Begleiterin des Liebhabers französischer Filme etwas anderes als einen Abend im Kino. Unsere Nachbarn mit der zungenbrechenden Sprache scheinen also, nicht nur

was das Essen angeht, regelrechte Gourmands zu sein. Dies belegt auch eine Aktuelle Studie, welche belegt, dass französische Mädchen, im Vergleich zu vergangenen Jahrzehnten, ihre erste sexuelle Erfahrung immer früher machen. Allerdings ist dies keine sich auf Frankreich beschränkende Entwicklung.

Sind die Franzosen also wirklich anders als wir, im Bezug auf ihre Art zu lieben? Nun, das Bild, gefunden auf einer französischen Website, bestätigt dies Eindrucksvoll. In diesem Sinne, viel Spaß.

Dies Irae

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APRIL 20TH

SMALL AULA

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