

## COMMUNITY OPINIONS

A forum for readers in Dallas County

# They're raising their voices

Today we introduce our 2007-2008 Student Voices, who will be regular contributors to this forum



**Voices**  
Student

### Allie Watkins

Senior, Highland Park High School

Allie has a lot of ground to cover in the coming year. She is interested in religion in education, student mental health, learning disabilities, substance abuse, euthanasia/assisted suicide, the world's environment, bullying in school, standardized testing, animal rights/medical testing, genocide war and peace. ... The list goes on, but the picture should be clear: Allie is a girl with varied interests. After weighing all sides of an issue, Allie says, she can be counted on to be "very opinionated." She has honed her communications skills in advanced placement English and composition, and advanced creative writing.



### Sam Bohmfalk

Senior, Woodrow Wilson High School, Dallas

A high school student and already a sports writer, Sam covers sports for the on-line publication **Lake-wood-now.com**. His editor says when readers find out the reporter hasn't yet graduated from high school, they react with "Wow! This kid is good." Sam is active in such school activities as baseball and National Honor Society. He describes himself as opinionated, "always up for a debate" and an outside-the-box thinker. Topics that interest Sam include standardized testing, school security and mandatory school uniforms.



### Tim Hendrix

Sophomore, Richardson High School

Tim promises one thing: writing that is down to earth, "a little humorous, funny and in some sense the equivalent of having a conversation with the reader." He also aims to critique public education, which he calls an "individuality-killing system." Emphasis on the TAKS has made scores "a larger priority than learning or teaching," Tim says, and contributes to the dropout problem. Describing himself as eccentric and creative, Tim promises to assault public education in "a civil manner, in an attempt to help the outside world understand the enigma best known as the teenager."



### Jeremy Dickie

Junior, Hillcrest High School, Dallas

Experiences as a Boy Scout, Jeremy says, have "changed my life forever." As junior assistant scoutmaster of his troop, he has learned leadership, decision-making and responsibility. Despite his duties with the troop, Jeremy has found time for a long list of activities at school. He has performed in a one-act play in UIL competition and was lead defense attorney at Mock Trial. He also participated in Key Club and in science team competition. As for sports, Jeremy was starting first baseman for the JV baseball team and swim freestyle and backstroke for the varsity swim team.



### Jordan Jackson

Junior, DeSoto High School

Jordan was hooked on journalism when she conducted her first interview for a freshman class. Apprehensive at first, she quickly discovered that she had found her "true love," as she called it. That experience would take her to regional UIL competitions and a determination to pursue a career in the field. She became a member of the newspaper and yearbook staffs and a varsity cheerleader as a sophomore at her old school, Lancaster High School. In addition, she has been playing soccer since she was 5 and now plays for the Arlington Social Club. Jordan plans to write about fashion, social life in high school and being an African-American woman.



### Mary Elizabeth Sedeño

Junior, The Cambridge School of Dallas

An understanding of the "global school" is one insight that Mary plans to bring to her commentary in the coming year. That appreciation stems from the year she lived in Mexico City after she moved there with her family as a fifth-grader. Today, she says, she can write about the "culture and beauty of Mexico that oftentimes does not get written about in American newspapers." Mary has been a tennis, soccer and basketball player. She also has been active in helping out at her church's Sunday school and with the St. Vincent de Paul Society. Her volunteer work has involved the poor in East Dallas and children with Down syndrome.



### Patricia Lee

Senior, Hockaday School, Dallas

Patricia promises to offer her thoughts on a varied fare — human trafficking, technology and modern music. She volunteers at the Center of Survivors of Torture, where she teaches guitar and ESL, and has campaigned for Amnesty International. That background comes through in an article she wrote on Dallas women who were smuggled into this country to work as prostitutes. At Harry Hines and Royal Lane, she writes, "you will meet dozens of women whose lives go beyond the most depraved of your imagination." Patricia has been editor-in-chief of the school newspaper and a member of the Culture Club. A regular in Deep Ellum, she sings, plays guitar, flute and piano.



### Vanessa Jenkins

Sophomore, Dunbarville High School

There are two explanations that Vanessa offers her love of writing. First, she admits to being shy and finds that it's easier to be heard in print. Second, she offers up a quote from Thomas Berger, who said, "Why do writers write? Because it isn't there." A member of band, Vanessa was the only freshman on the newspaper staff last year and sought out ways to make her articles unique and fresh. Vanessa has promised some provocative topics to explore, including "How coaches get paid more to be worse teachers." She also wants to write about new graduation standards and how they make "electives seem impossible."

