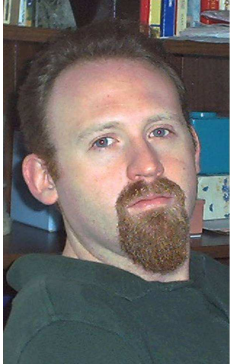


# *Grease* is the Word!

*By Scott Whitaker, Pocomoke High School English Teacher and Musical Play Director*



When Mrs. Jennie Wroten, Pocomoke High School’s Chorus Director, and I set out to choose a script for our school’s winter musical, we were surprised that rumors began to circulate – rumors that we were considering *Grease*. As always, we expected some interest about the musical which might be selected; however, we never anticipated the amount of interest that would be generated by this circulating rumor. Students knocked on our doors, followed us from the office, and even chased us down the halls to ask, “Are we doing *Grease*? Please that say we’re doing *Grease*!” In many ways, our students chose the script for this winter’s musical production.

Imagine the lights in the theatre are about to go down. In those seconds before the stage curtain opens, the actors – waiting in the wings – will be so nervous that they will be walking on air. With much anticipation, our musical will be set into motion – a product of heart, drive, and hard work – ready to woo an audience.

Producing a play is hard work, indeed. If you have been involved with a local church, community, or school play, you fully understand the magnitude of efforts involved with putting on a show.

When it comes to acting, I believe that good acting is a process. The best “stuff” usually happens in rehearsals. For example, Rizzo, played by senior Brittany Cottman, learned how to walk with an attitude, while Sandy, played by sophomore Michelle Redinger, learned how to flirt with her hair. From my perspective as the production director, the best moments are generally not the most polished.

Senior Todd Nock will have two roles: the geeky, nerdy Eugene, and Teen Angel – the guardian angel who guides loveable Frenchy through rough times. “Playing Eugene is harder because I have to put so much energy into playing the geek,” explained Nock. Sophomore Michele Redinger is a lot like Sandy. “She’s relatable,” says Redinger. “She’s a lot like me. She’s sweet and she’s kind.”

Many revisions to a character and the scene precede an actor taking the stage for a performance. Adjustments can be tedious, frustrating, and even unglamorous. Think about having to say the same words over and over again for eight weeks! To do it right, our actors not only memorize a part, but they internalize it as well. They understand their parts in context, not only regarding a scene, but also in relation to the overall play. Acting in a play is serious work, as well as being fun.

In our school system, the arts are greatly supported and many of our schools produce musicals and other theatre productions. We believe that the arts provide three-dimensional learning opportunities for our students – engaging all the senses and developing important skills. Think about how many skills are developed and refined when a student embarks on the challenge of playing a role in a musical production! In addition, the arts can provide that essential ingredient for success: motivation for staying engaged in school and studies.

On January 25 and 26, Pocomoke High School will morph into Rydell High School, circa 1959, finalizing the production process which began in late November 2007. It will be Pocomoke High’s adaptation of the stage version, rather than the film version. Some things will remain the same: Sandy, Danny, Rizzo, and Kenicke. These characters are old buddies that we have not seen for a long time. These characters bring with them the same great songs you remember: “*Summer Nights*” and “*We Go Together*.”

For two nights, the auditorium at Pocomoke High School will be filled with the sounds of Rock’n Roll from the late 1950s, high school pranks, teen romance, and high drama. If you have questions about this production, please call Pocomoke High School at 410-632-5180.