

THE EDGE

CELEBRITY SPEAK

"I pretty much go out in the world, and no one cares. Once in a while, people say hi." — **Keanu Reeves**, on dealing with the public, in *Premiere*.



Keanu Reeves

ASIAN-AMERICAN HISTORY

Asian-Americans have a long, rich history in the United States. Unfortunately, it's a story you don't learn too much about in school.

PBS' "Ancestors in the Americas" Web site, www.pbs.org/ancestorsintheamericas/index.html, provides some insight into the heritage of Asians in the Western Hemisphere and fills in the gaps that weren't covered in your social studies class.

The site's centerpiece is a detailed timeline of key events in Asian and American history. The timeline begins by making the connection between Europe's desire to trade goods with Asian countries and the exploration of the New World. It's a convincing argument. After all, Christopher Columbus landed in the Western Hemisphere because he was looking for a new trade route to India.

Readers may be surprised by what they learn. For example, there is documentation of Chinese barbers in Mexico City as early as 1625. Filipinos established a presence in Louisiana's bayou country as early as 1763. After the British ended the African slave trade in 1833, Indian and Chinese laborers were used to work plantations in the Caribbean and South America. The timeline also explores Japanese-American internment camps in the 1940s in the United States.



Use Stick Scents, a reed diffuser, to gently scent your room.

SCENT STICKS

There's good aromatherapy and there's bad aromatherapy. Walking into a room and becoming overwhelmed with a scent — whether you like the smell or not — is never a pleasant thing. This is why a new way of dispersing scents into the air has become popular: a reed diffuser.

The diffuser is basically porous sticks in a bottle of fragrant oils. It's a very simple idea, but the results are lovely because reed diffusers gently scent the air. Plus, there's no hazard of an open flame, so you can use the diffuser in places where you can't have candles. And because unattended candles are one of the major causes of fires, why risk using them?

Stick Scents Fragrance Diffusers come in four scents: Sea Petals (reminiscent of summer scents), Green Apple (a sweet, fruity aroma), English Garden (flowery scents) and Morning Dew (a fresh fragrance). You can get Stick Scents (\$24.99) at Target.com.

Compiled from Knight Ridder for Teens.

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Actors (from left) Jon Gries, Jon Heder and Aaron Ruell endeared themselves to audiences this summer in "Napoleon Dynamite," now a DVD best seller. Heder plays the lead role of Napoleon, Gries is Uncle Rico and Ruell is Kip.

The Napoleonic complex

Quirky film's dweeb appeal makes it a high school phenomenon

BY PAUL BOWERS
INK Contributor

Napoleon is your average moon-boot-sporting, llama-feeding, nunchuck-wielding geek. He likes dangling action figures out the bus window and drawing ligers (mixed offspring of a lion and a tiger, bred for their skills in magic). And he's the coolest guy in Idaho.

The movie "Napoleon Dynamite" is a modern-day cult classic among disaffected teenagers, and the gawky protagonist somehow has risen to fame as the new guru of cool. Forget "Revenge of the Nerds." This is cinematic chicken soup for the loser's soul.

"Most people can relate to Napoleon," says David Dye, 16, a sophomore at Fort Dorchester High School, "because sometimes you feel like the loser kid in school."

Apparently, dorks and popular kids alike can appreciate the roll-on-the-floor humor. Since the DVD was released Dec. 21, it has stayed afloat on the Billboard Top 10 sales chart.

Eve Halley, 16, a sophomore at Summerville High School, says she has seen the movie somewhere around 20 times.

So what is it that makes "Napoleon Dynamite" so outrageously popular? It's not a stellar plotline. There basically isn't one. The whole film is a rambling journey through a mundane, rural existence, following Napoleon around in the oppressively boring community of Preston, Idaho.

No actual story develops until halfway through the movie, when Napoleon's friend, Pedro (who just moved to Preston from Mexico), works up the nerve to run for class president against the obnoxiously popular Summer Wheatly. From that point on, the loosely knit posse of geeks is in campaign mode, leading up to the semiclimactic scene in which Napoleon uses his hidden powers to thwart their political nemesis.

'DYNAMITE' DIALOGUE

- "Napoleon Dynamite" lines you'll probably hear like infinity times a day:
- Napoleon: "I see you're drinking 1 percent. Is that 'cause you think you're fat? 'Cause you're not. You could be drinking whole if you wanted to."
 - Grandma: "Knock it off, Napoleon, just make yourself a dang queso-dilluh!"
 - Napoleon: "Tina, eat. Food. Eat the FOOD!"
 - Pedro: "If you vote for me, all of your wildest dreams will come true."
 - Napoleon: "You know, like nunchuck skills, bowhunting skills, computer hacking skills. ... Girls only want boyfriends who have great skills."
 - Kip: "Your mom goes to college."
 - Napoleon: "I already made like infinity of those at Scout camp."

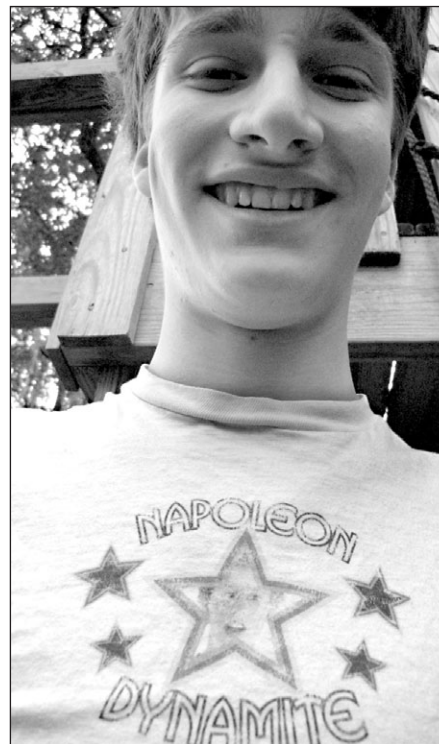
Source: Internet Movie Database, www.imdb.com.

The acting isn't going to win any awards, either. No offense, but it doesn't take a lot of theatrical finesse to deliver memorable lines such as, "I caught you a delicious bass," or, "Your mom goes to college." Napoleon's face remains emotionless throughout most of the movie, and his pseudo-girlfriend's sideways ponytail is incessantly annoying, but the characters remain believable because the quirks fit their antisocial, self-conscious lifestyles.

It would seem that the movie was destined from the start to be pigeonholed as just another obscure independent film, especially with a budget of less than \$50,000 (just a little bit more than was spent on "The Blair Witch Project"). This is a movie with no special effects, no big-name actors and no stunts, except, of course, for the insane bike stunt in which Pedro gets "like 3 feet of air."

So if it's not the plot, the acting or the flashy visuals, then what makes "Napoleon Dynamite" tick? It's something that Hollywood always has tried to accomplish. It connects with the audience when the audience least expects it. People get so caught up in the oddball humor that they scarcely notice how attached they've become to the characters.

After all, these are people everybody has known at some point growing up. There's the snotty cheerleader, the uncle



STEPHEN WRIGHT/INK CONTRIBUTOR/NORTH CHARLESTON HIGH SCHOOL
"Napoleon Dynamite" fan Dylan Summer, 16, a junior at Fort Dorchester, has a T-shirt inspired by the movie.

who lives in the past, the 32-year-old dweeb who never leaves his grandma's house and, of course, the poufy-haired kid who draws mythological beasts all day.

And the things the characters go through are common experiences for anyone who has lived through high school. Who hasn't, at some point, gotten ditched at a school dance, taken or given a beat-down, or spent a summer in Alaska hunting Wolverines?

It's a cosmic connection that can't be explained in laymen's terms; it probably has something to do with Jungian archetypes or the collective unconscious (or something like that). It's about a group of freaks and geeks on their symbolic Hero's Journey through the daunting obstacles of the real world. Aside from that, everything that's unfair, lame or just plain stupid about growing up is subtly satirized in

Napoleon's universe.

That's why it's such a huge hit at high schools across the nation. Just walk through the crowded hallways of any local educational institution saying, "Gosh!" indignantly, and somebody's sure to respond with a resounding "Idiot!"

"Napoleon Dynamite" is the biggest thing since tater tots, and that's really saying something. "It teaches you to be your own person," explains Dylan Summer, a 16-year-old junior at Fort Dorchester High who has a "Flippin' Sweet" T-shirt inspired by the movie.

Images and quotes from the movie are popping up everywhere: on shirts, bumper stickers, buttons, posters and even on reproductions of Napoleon's avant-garde wardrobe. Hot Topic at Northwoods Mall dedicated an entire section of the store to Napoleon-themed merchandise, then ran out and was waiting for a new shipment of items last week.

Schools have been polarized into two factions: There are the enlightened students who have witnessed the glory of Napoleon, and then there are the poor saps who think of Napoleon as a French conqueror. It's easy to spot members of the first group. They're the ones sporting "Vote for Pedro" T-shirts and loudly complaining, "But my lips hurt real bad!"

Napoleon and his friends have spawned dozens of such inside jokes, all part of a widespread "Napoleonic complex."

Last November, the small town of Preston (where the movie was filmed) hosted a Napoleon Dynamite Festival, complete with a tetherball tournament and a steak-throwing contest, according to the Utah State college newspaper. The previously unheard of community has rallied under its newfound fame, eternally thankful for the movie that put it on the map.

In much the same sense, geeks, losers and "Dungeons & Dragons" enthusiasts around the country have united under the flag of "Napoleon Dynamite." For the first time in recent history, their way of life has been brought into the spotlight, and it has been declared "flippin' sweet."

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JASON FLETCHER/STAFF

Teenagers coping with common colds

TEENSHEALTH.ORG
Knight Ridder Newspapers

Ugh, you've caught a cold. The cold is the most common infectious disease in the United States and is responsible for more school absences than any other illness. About 1 billion colds cause sniffing, sneezing and stuffy heads every year. Most teens get between two and four colds a year.

WHAT CAUSES COLDS?

Most colds are caused by rhinoviruses that are in invisible droplets in the air you breathe or on things you touch. More than 100 different rhinoviruses (the name comes from "rhin," the Greek word for nose) can infiltrate the protective lining of the nose and throat, triggering an immune-system reaction that can make your throat sore and your

head ache, and can make it hard for you to breathe through your nose.

No one knows exactly why people become infected with colds at certain times. But no matter what you hear, shrugging off a jacket or sweater when it's chilly, sitting or sleeping in a draft or going outside while your hair's wet won't cause you to catch a cold.

Air that's dry — indoors or out — can lower your resistance to infection by these viruses, though. So can allergies, lack of sleep, stress, not eating properly or hanging out with someone who is smoking.

Being around people with colds makes you more likely to catch one yourself, of course. Rhinoviruses can stay alive as droplets in the air or on surfaces and may be able to make you sick for as long as three hours after someone who has a cold has coughed or sneezed. If

you touch your mouth or nose after touching skin or some other surface that's been contaminated by one of these viruses, you may catch a cold (unless you're already immune to the virus from having been exposed to it before).

If you already have a cold, you are more likely to spread it to others if you don't wash your hands after you cough or sneeze. Going to school or doing your normal activities probably won't make you feel any worse. But it will increase the likelihood that your cold will spread to classmates or friends.

DURATION OF SYMPTOMS

Cold symptoms usually appear two or three days after you've been exposed to a source of infection. You are most contagious for the first three or four days

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