

OPINION

THE CURRENT

I thought senior year was supposed to be fun...

by **Catey Mendoza**
Design Chief

Even before the first day of school this year I could already feel the steam shooting out of my ears. I guess that's what they try to warn you about all throughout high school, but it still doesn't make senior year any easier. It's all just a constant worry.

High school is supposed to be some of the best years of our lives, or that's what everyone told us anyway. At this point, Talkeetna's cat mayor makes more sense to me than that does. All the confusion, frustration, countless hours of no sleep, stressing and just being overwhelmed does not sound like the memories I want to remember from high school. Does it take away from the "high school experience" and leave you standing at graduation just remembering all those hard times? That's where I disagree.

You see it may be hard now, but along the way we make friends, try new things, make memories with the people we've known for all these years. These are the memories that will make it all worth it in the end. But the journey is what matters now and let me tell you, the struggle is way more than real.

Some days I walk through the halls

of Kayhi wondering, "where am I going to be in 4 years from now?" I have no idea. Sometimes I have to ask myself what the point is of going through all these years of school; why do I spend 6 hours of my day sitting in class? What am I ever going to use any of this for? I could be doing so many other things right now. In reality, we may never use any of this in our lives, but some of us might. High school is a time for preparation. It prepares us for what lies beyond the high school diplomas whether it be college, tech school, working, serving our country, or whatever we decide to do with our lives.

The hard part is getting there. And getting there means doing all your school work to

keep grades up as well as applying for scholarships and schools. And be-



ing able to submit it all means meeting deadlines. And meeting deadlines

my life? Do I really want to be that person with 3 jobs and no social life just to

means not procrastinating to get things done. But who really does that? Procrastination is stupid and we all regret it every time it happens, but that doesn't stop anyone from doing it. Just like when we begin to grow up and everyone puts that off till the last minute. Who really wants to worry any more than we already are? Not me. But it's inevitable.

The real question is what are we going to do with our lives? How are we going to be able to afford it? Everything now a days is way too expensive and college tuitions are always rising. This makes me want to give up on everything. How am I expected to just go out on my own after being with my parents and family for 18 years of

be able to afford to do what I want? But wait, what do I want again? There is so much to think about and consider and it's completely overwhelming. Some days I'd love to just shut off and disengage. To run away and not have to worry about any of it.

In Jon Krakauer's book "Into the Wild," Chris McCandless tried this but unfortunately for him that didn't work. He ran away from society to live by himself in the woods in Alaska to get away. Some days I feel like that would be a great idea, just to run away from it all. But if you read into McCandless' story you would know that he died four months later.

Take it as a lesson that no matter how stressful senior year is, running away from our problems is never the solution. McCandless ran away to escape society and ended up dead. People now go visit the bus he died in for some deeper understanding or enlightenment. As nice as running away sounds, I can't and I won't. To persist and push through is most important. It doesn't make it any easier, but it does make it worth it at the end to know that all that you have done is what got us here and it's what will get us through senior year.

Chris McCandless "Into The Wild" Alaskan Territory

by **Cheyenne Mathews**
Editor in Chief

If you are cold, you turn up the heat or find a coat. Hungry? Go to the fridge. Tired? Go to sleep. If you want to help others, you donate to charity or volunteer your time. Unless, you are Chris McCandless and decide that materialism, satiation, and socialization are pointless. There are better ways to give your life a purpose than shunning material goods and donating your life savings to charity.

McCandless was raised in a suburb of Washington D.C., and had no experience with Alaskan forests. According to Jon Krakauer's book "Into the Wild," McCandless cut off all contact with his family, donated his college fund, and literally walked away from that lifestyle.

"More than twenty-four thousand dollars remained at the time of Chris's graduation... he would shortly donate all the money in his college fund to OXFAM America, a charity dedicated to fighting hunger."

McCandless had good intentions, but sometimes the thought is not what counts, but the action taken. If he really wanted to help those who are starving he could have utilized his talents—his excellent education and his ability to make people remember him, and actually benefited others. Instead he decided to live on the edge of starvation himself and ironically die of hunger.

Maybe McCandless just wanted to leave society because he didn't wish to conform, but there are so many other ways to 'rebel' from society. McCandless couldn't find a suitable outlet for his ideas so he walked away. I'm not saying that taking the occasional break from people is wrong. I'm saying that whether he intended or not, McCandless went about it the wrong way. He was never prepared. He was too sure of himself to heed warnings or advice. He wasn't living truthfully because he wasn't living at all by modern standards because he had no purpose.

He went back on years of human progression to a time when humans had no other purpose but survival.

McCandless was lucky. He could have died in Mexico, Carthage, or in Arizona, but he didn't and that I attribute to luck. By writing "Into the Wild" Krakauer made McCandless seem noble. For conclusion Krakauer pins the death of McCandless on a potato seed. Krakauer makes McCandless death a fault of an inept plant guide, when in reality McCandless would have survived if he had brought his own food and wasn't foraging from unrecognizable plants. Later research concluded that the seed that 'killed' McCandless was not actually at fault for his death.

McCandless led a life that I would not chose for myself because I value my life, my sanity, I like having a cause and a purpose, and I would not want to waste away instead of mixing in with society.

For everyone who read "Into the Wild" and thought, "Wow, simple and honest! I should go off into the wild and find some of this truth myself." I urge you to rethink. Alaska is a beautiful place, but survival is not simple. McCandless may have set off to find truth and simplicity in his life but remember... he died. He didn't have the proper equipment or knowledge and even if he did, there is no guarantee he would have survived. Even prepared Alaskans have died in the wild because of an accident, or a machine failure, or even weather conditions. Be smart. Be prepared. If that's not your style and you want to live 'true' like McCandless, then at least write about your travels and experiences, so that when they find your body more Alaskans can criticize your choices later on.

It's harsh. But so is the Alaskan wilderness.

by **Connor Bird**
Staff Writer

Was Chris McCandless, from "Into The Wild" by Jon Krakauer, a complete madman, or a mere transcendental idealist? Does it matter? Years after his death, his actions are still being debated by everyone from Krakauer and other columnists to arm-chair psychologists.

Like many young adults trying to find their way, McCandless believed society was a detriment to him, and he would be better off without it. Krakauer didn't exactly portray the connection between McCandless and his family as a close and loving one, but he had all he needed; such as support, food and shelter.

So why did he do this? What happened?

McCandless studied in Emory, Atlanta, so he clearly wasn't stupid.

Maybe he had split personalities-or-dissociative disorder? This is possible, and many have considered mental illness was at hand; especially Craig Medred, writer for the Alaska Dispatch. Medred opposed Krakauer's response to McCandless' journey and disputed Krakauer's portrayal of a potential madman. The fact that McCandless had developed a secondary identity (Alex Supertramp); decided to journal his adventures in a third person perspective (stating things like, "Alexander is jubilant"); all support the madness theory.

People who suffer from mental illness often have a hard time accepting reality for what it is. Supertramp had showed something similar in the fact that he took in the tales of Jack London as reality; as if his portrayal of the wild was whole, and accurate. The writings of London, such as "Call of the Wild" (a tale of a man trekking into the Alaskan wilderness), had inspired McCandless since he was young, and is likely the tale that lead him up to Stampede Trail to begin the last chapter of his tale. Where McCandless had perhaps gone wrong, was where he built his real-

ity off of the fictional tale of London, and his half-truth portrayal of the very harsh Alaskan wild.

Reportedly a good-hearted man whose spirit was always soaring, McCandless struggled with talking to people. Once he got to know them though, he was as open as any man. Never telling the entirety of his tale, nobody could ever decide why he was on his journey. But regardless of his backstory, people always seemed to know that there was some underlying truth written behind his story.

Another possibility is that McCandless was just genuinely upset with the way society had conducted itself, not unlike many other Americans and people around the world. His studies in college indicate he was well aware of things like famine and hoarding of resources; and McCandless was a man who sought genuine thrill, and total experience. He wanted to live in a world that was ideally perfect in every way; where man had pursued their destiny of personal growth.

But I can't blame him for it. Sometimes I can see myself making the same escape. Society is a bit of a burden, or at least the way it conducts itself today. Now, I wouldn't go as far as to move into a bus after months of successful experience seeking and view broadening, but that might be because I know how harsh the Interior of Alaska can be, like many other Alaskans around me. I understand wanting to be independent, but in this world, there are necessities that cannot be ignored - money, food, resources and tools. If he had gathered these things in advance, perhaps his experience and thrill seeking adventure wouldn't have been the death of him.

Where McCandless struggled was the fact that we don't live in that world, and he was seeing increasingly how true that was.

But regardless of his backstory, people always seemed to know that there was some tension with his family; or some underlying truth written behind his story.