

'John Could Put a Smile on Anyone's Face'

By GENEVIEVE HAVERSTICK (V)

John Taylor Babbitt. JTB. Brickwall Babbitt. Number 8. HWJB. It seems that everywhere we look now, we are met by a reminder of John, whether it's his name scribbled on someone's binder, his initials on someone's online profile, or the rainbow bracelets on someone's wrist. These things are small symbols, that show the scope of John's influence, not only in the Pingry community but everywhere. There are few things I can say about John that haven't been said, but at the risk of sounding repetitive, I'll try.

John was, simply put, an amazing person. All of us who knew him consider ourselves privileged, and all of us who were lucky enough to have a close relationship with John consider our time with him as a true gift. John could put a smile on anyone's face. In fact, when I was around him, I can never remember not smiling.

There was never a dull moment with John. He had a special presence and an ability to bond with anyone, to make everyday things extraordinary. Whether he was holding up signs behind a teacher's

back, shouting out a "yo, yo, yo" in the hall, or planning his "Green Themed" party, he always had me laughing.

But behind his jokester exterior, John was such a kind, caring person. He would never let a friend down and was always there to help me out when I needed him; he just hated to see people unhappy. When I think of John now, I think of his smile, his

laughter, and his love of life. There was never a time when I thought he would no longer be here with us, because of all of us, he seemed the most alive. There was not a person in our grade who didn't consider John a friend, because he considered everyone his friend. There is not a person who doesn't miss him, because he touched all of our lives in some way.

John was so very special to me, so special to all who knew him. He had a light that surrounded him, a light that affected all of us and brightened our worlds. We are all better people for having known John. He will never be forgotten, and hopefully, we will all be inspired to live by his example. Thank you, John, for touching our lives.



Anna Porges (V), John, and Sandra Hough (V).

Courtesy of S. Hough (V)

'John Is Missed Every Day by Many People'

By AUSTIN LAN (V)

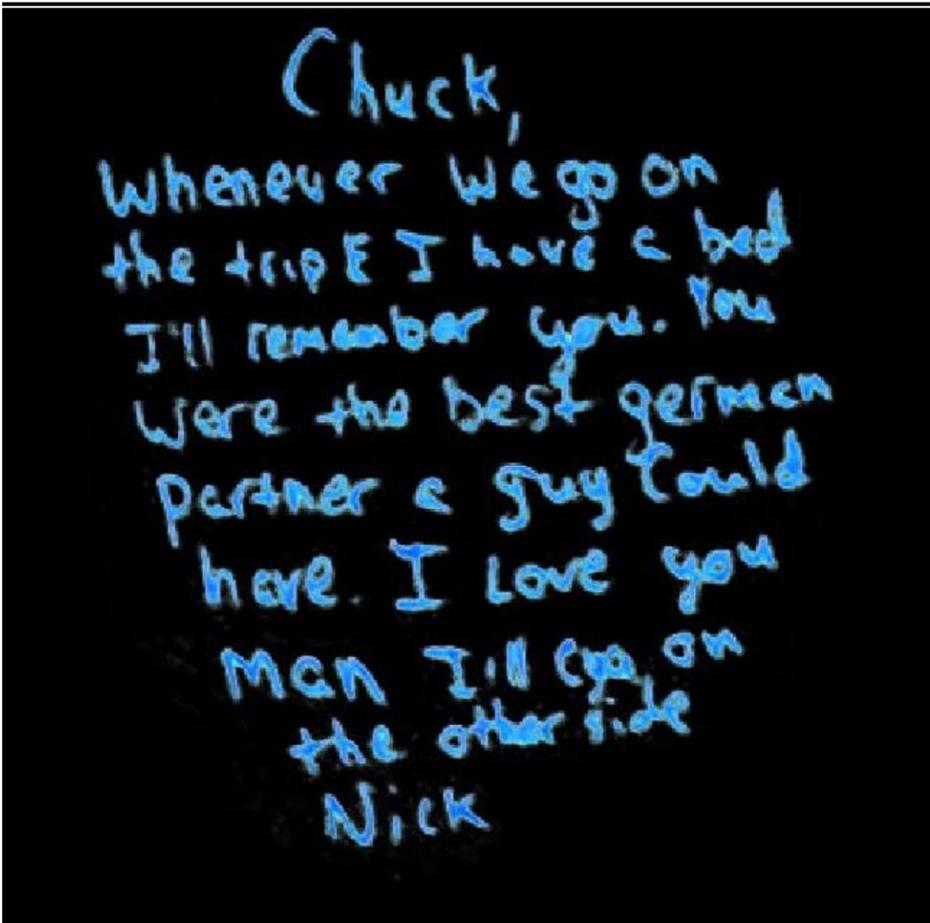
John was a friendly, easy-going person. His laidback, yet hard-working, attitude made him the popular guy that his reputation reinforced. John was rarely shy, and he loved to crack jokes in awkward situations that would either lighten the moment or make it even more awkward. He loved Pingry, and I always heard him bragging about it to his out-of-school friends. John's love for sports and music connected him with many different people. His great sense of humor turned people on to him, including teachers. John

is missed everyday by so many people. People continue to learn from him in his absence, and this shows the tremendous impact he had on so many people's lives. We all miss you so much, bud; I love you man.



Austin Lan (V) and John.

Courtesy of S. Hough (VI)



'I Know John's Short Life Was a Full One'

By MR. NORMAN LAVALETTE

The "rich and creamy" hot chocolate and "handcrafted" chocolate marshmallows with which John presented me at Christmas still stand on the top of my refrigerator as a sort of memorial to John. I still have not eaten them because they remind me of him daily. Being with John was like enjoying hot chocolate with marshmallows draped in a blanket on the couch with a good book and soothing music in the background during a gentle drizzle or a slight dusting of snow on a weekend mid afternoon. I went from "Herr LaValette" to "LaV" to "Eh, LaV" in the hallways among his friends in no time, and we were on the verge of getting even closer. John was a courageous and resilient German student who possessed a wonderful sense of humor, intelligence, and a level of patience with

himself that, for me, explained the kind, accepting, and magnanimous attitude he had toward everyone else. I truly was struck by the emphasis he placed on his personal and professional relationships and his academic and athletic growth, and I felt committed to him in ensuring that he achieved these goals.

Inevitably, thoughts of "what

if?" occasionally enter my mind. And yet, I know that John's short life was a full one, for it was an affirmation of some enduring understandings, namely, that interpersonal contact and human relationships are virtually everything. Since John was successful at this, he had everything. Moreover, John's time at Pingry has reconfirmed for me how potentially powerful, enriching, and, yes, fragile the teacher-student relationship is and how indescribably beautiful it is when teachers and students click. I feel that John truly meant for all of us to feel comfortable and at ease at school, be ourselves in class, and enjoy everyone's company, and for me to enjoy the chocolate and marshmallows, savoring every moment like he did. For now, I simply want to remember him.



Courtesy of the Bluebook

'I Enjoyed Every Second With Him'

By LIZ MOORE (V)

I feel so honored to have been one of John's friends. He was one of my best friends and I enjoyed every second I spent with him. There was something about him that was so different and so special. He genuinely cared about every person; I haven't met anyone as nice as John. He could tell when something was bothering me and would always talk to me. He always knew how to cheer me up. John was the type of person you knew you could count on if you ever needed anything. He made it known to me that

he was always just a phone call away, even if it was because I just wanted to talk.

John was so much fun to hang out with. Whether it was hanging out at school, at a party, or just having dinner together, I always enjoyed his company. John's sense of humor was like no one else's I have ever met. He was hysterical. I could always count on him for a good laugh. He could be so random at times and it just made everyone laugh. Whether it was an inappropriate IP relay call or one of his bad pointless stories, his randomness was so classic and amusing.

John made sure he never took

anything in life too seriously. He was a hard worker, but he never let too much work get in his way of enjoying life. Not only was he a hard worker in school, but he was such a hard worker in sports. He was always so proud of himself after his games and would tell me about all his points or goals. He was an athletic and dedicated soccer, basketball, baseball, and football player.

John had such a positive spirit, and he influenced every person he met. I really couldn't have asked for a better friend than John Babbitt. I will continue to love him and look up to him every day.



John, Nick Devers (V), and Richard Bradley (V) share a laugh.

Courtesy of S. Hough (V)