

# Globe

## EDUCATION: a global disparity

Across the globe, schools attempt to educate students in an increasingly dipolar world.

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## Print newspapers face budget cuts due to economic troubles



Laura Bleeker  
Reporter

Ever since the invention of the printing press in 1439, newspapers have been a common way to spread news. But as we enter the 21st century and technology becomes one of the main focuses in life, the newspaper has started to fall out of style.

Instead of newspaper boys and 10 cent papers, we have iPhones, YouTube, radios and television. Just as phones replaced personal visits, and e-mails replaced snail mail, online newspapers have started to replace the old fashioned printed papers.

New technology isn't the only thing that may be the cause of this change. Economic problems have been forcing printers and publications to reevaluate if they will be able to continue daily papers.

But General Manager of the *Washington Missourian*, Bill Miller Jr., believes the more serious conflict is the 24 hour media, and not the economic changes.

"Everybody's hurting a little bit, but if you have a product that no one else is covering, I think those papers are okay," Miller said. "And providing analysis and giving consumers what they want, something that they can't get somewhere else."

Dick Weiss agrees that the real problem is new technology. Weiss, who recently retired from the St. Louis Post Dispatch after being a reporter and editor, is president and founder of WeissWrite LLC, a business that offers writing, editing and coaching services to students, journalists, business people and anyone with a story to tell.

"Your imagination is something you will have forever," Weiss said. "In your imagination there are eternal things, like wine, and there are ephemeral things, like sangria. Stories are eternal, but ink on paper is only ephemeral."

It appears that in smaller communities the papers are not badly affected by the new advances in technology because there is no major media interference. Miller has noticed this in his own city, Washington, Mo.

"I think the future looks better for [community newspapers] than a lot of the large urban daily papers," Miller said.

Miller also believes that papers published two or three times a week will survive much better than daily newspapers. This is because there is already available media to provide the information daily.

"The concept of, 'We're going to get all the information during the day, we're going to put it out during a window between 10 p.m. and midnight, and we're going to print it and it'll be on everyone's doorstep, and it's going to be fresh and ready to go,' that model is probably at risk, because you can get it faster from so many other sources," Miller said.

Even after all of the media, there still seems to be economic troubles papers are starting to face. Prices for paper, ink and subscriptions have been increasing, and the sale revenues are dropping.

"Overall newspaper revenue is down about six percent, advertising revenue is down about 4.7 percent," Miller said.

Larger cities are facing even tougher difficulties. According to a recent outlook on traditional media from www.researchrecap.com, "Fitch believes more newspapers and newspaper groups will default, be shut down and be liquidated in 2009 and several cities could go without a daily print newspaper by 2010."

Fitch Ratings is an international credit-rating agency. This statement leads some to believe that soon, many printed newspapers will be discontinued, at least as daily papers. It also brings up the question of whether newspapers will only be available online in the near future.

This includes the much acclaimed *Chicago Tribune*. The newspaper is heavily in debt and is close to going bankrupt. It has been trying to sell the Chicago Cubs, Wrigley Field and a share in the regional sports cable networks.

In mid-November, the Tribune Company lost \$121 million because newspaper advertising revenue fell.

More recently, their economic troubles have come up again. According to



Lezy Pratt

New building developments in Clayton including Centene Plaza (above), are under review and awaiting funds. However, in light of the recent economic troubles, some companies may have trouble raising enough funds to further their building plans.

## New building developments in Clayton bring jobs, tax revenue

Noah Eby  
Reporter

Several new building developments in Clayton are under review and awaiting funds, but the waning economy is slowing the progress of these projects.

Centene Corporation's Centene Plaza, Orchard Development Group's Trianon, and RJ York's Maryland Central Hotel have all been approved by the city and are awaiting funds to begin construction.

The proposed plans for Centene Plaza—Centene Corporation's future world headquarters—include 500,000 square feet of office space, 30,000 square feet of retail space and a parking facility. The project is also expected to bring many new jobs to Clayton.

"We are anticipating somewhere between 900 and 1,400 new jobs by the time Centene is completely done," said Catherine Powers, Director of Planning and Development Services for the City of Clayton.

The Trianon will be located at 7454 Forsyth, across the street from the Forsyth MetroLink Station, and will have hundreds of condominiums as well as over 30,000 square feet of office space and over 9,000 square feet of retail space. According to the City of Clayton's website, Trianon takes advantage of on the project's location.

"The Trianon is designed as a Transit Oriented Development (TOD), which capitalizes on the development's proxim-

ity to the MetroLink passenger station," the city's website said.

The planned Maryland Central Hotel includes 225 hotel suites, retail, condominium and meeting space, as well as 4,400 square feet of restaurant space, a foot spa and a gift shop.

Powers said that the city is still waiting for the plans to materialize for Brown Shoe's expansion, the construction of Montgomery Bank, and the Carondelet Village Project.

With the current flurry of new construction and development in Clayton, one might wonder why Clayton is so popular among companies looking to build. Powers said Clayton is attractive to businesses for many reasons.

"[We are] centrally located, we are willing to work with developers to get the kind of quality projects that we want and they want, and since we already have many of these companies here, more companies want to relocate near Fortune 500 companies, so it becomes a hub of these world headquarters," Powers said.

As for what the city hopes to get out of the new developments, Powers said that there are myriad things the city wants to achieve via these projects.

"We want quality jobs... we want people shopping, eating, doing all the things they need to do in Clayton, we want the quality architecture that builds up our downtown area, and of course we want the tax revenue," Powers said.

Powers also said that she thinks the effects of new developments on the

Clayton community at large will be for the better.

"I think [the effects] are all going to be very positive," Powers said. "[The projects] are going to bring to Clayton more density, of course, and they're also going to bring to Clayton more of the world-class element that makes us known in the area."

Large building projects are notorious for taking a long time to be completed, and Powers said that the timetable for when the Clayton projects will be completed is up in the air.

"I wish I knew," Powers said. "I think Centene will move forward, knock on wood even for that one, but the rest of it is all based on the economy. We certainly hope sooner rather than later."

The economy is expected to play a large role in the commencement, or lack thereof, of projects like Centene Plaza and Trianon. Powers said that this is primarily because of the economy's effect on fundraising.

"The role of the economy is absolutely huge because nobody can get financing right now," Powers said. "Without their financing they can't move forward, so that's what's holding all of these projects back."

Unfortunately, Powers said there isn't anything that she or the city can do to help move the projects along.

"In terms of affecting the economy, even the president can't affect the economy," Powers said. "We just have to wait it out and do the best we can."

## Gov. Blagojevich charged with conspiracy, soliciting bribes

Apoorva Sharma  
Reporter

Rod Blagojevich, governor of Illinois, was arrested on Dec. 9, for going on, according to U.S. Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald, a "political corruption spree." He was later free on \$4500 bail.

The governor, along with his chief of staff, John Harris, were charged with several accounts of federal corruption, including, according to the Chicago Tribune, "one charge related to the appointment of a senator to replace Barack Obama."

The affidavit released by the Federal Bureau of Investigation supports this claim and states that through wiretapping, an F.B.I agent was able to deduce that Blagojevich was misusing his power to replace the seat left open by president-elect Obama.

"By law, after the President-elect's resignation of his position as a U.S. Senator, which was effective on Nov. 16, 2008, Rod Blagojevich has sole authority to appoint his replacement for the two years remaining of the President-elect's Senate term," the affidavit states. "During the course of this investigation, agents have intercepted a series of communications regarding the efforts of Rod Blagojevich, John Harris, and others to misuse this power to obtain personal gain, including financial gain, for Rod Blagojevich and his family."

The affidavit then explained how Blagojevich and Harris planned to exploit their power for personal gain.

"Rod Blagojevich has also been intercepted conspiring to sell the Senate seat in exchange for his wife's placement on paid corporate boards or Rod Blagojevich's placement at a private foundation in a significant position with a substantial salary," the affidavit said. "Rod Blagojevich has also been intercepted conspiring to sell the Senate seat in exchange for millions of dollars in funding for a non-profit organization that he would start and that would employ him at a substantial salary after he left the governorship."

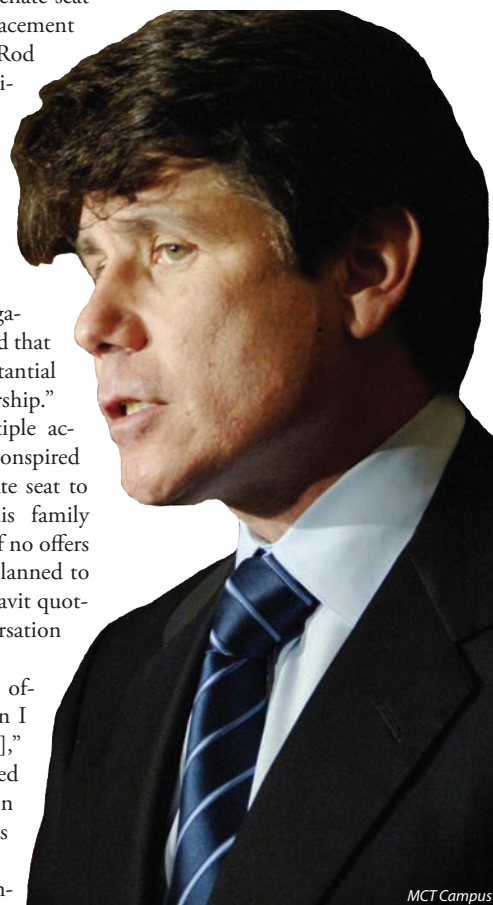
Essentially, there are multiple accounts where Blagojevich conspired to simply sell the vacant Senate seat to whichever offer presented his family with the most fiscal gain, and if no offers of value were made, then he planned to take the seat himself. The affidavit quoted Blagojevich during a conversation with the Deputy Governor:

"If...they're not going to offer anything of any value, then I might just take [the vacant seat]," claimed Blagojevich. He restated his goal with more detail in another conversation that was wiretapped.

"I'm going to keep this Sen-

ate option for me a real possibility, you know, and therefore I can drive a hard

Blagojevich, 5



MCT Campus



3 Proposition 8 passes in California



5 County vote defeats Proposition M



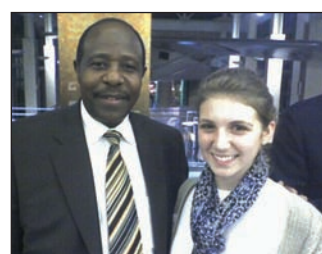
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Economic problems have forced some publications (above) to reconsider consider budget cuts as prices for paper, ink and subscriptions have increased.

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## Burmese immigrants acclimate, adjust to St. Louis community

Mary Blackwell  
Editor

On the first day of school at The Freedom School, a small private school located in University City, one of the students was huddled against the wall in the hall, frightened and unable to communicate. To the 10 Burmese elementary aged children enrolled at The Freedom School, the new American culture can come initially as a shock.

"For the first six months they pretty much don't say anything because they are just taking it all in and hearing the sound of the language and getting to know they lay of the land and culture," said Cindy Conrad, the English as a Second Language teacher at the Freedom School. "But receptively they are taking it in."

For the Burmese refugees, children and parents alike, language is one of the biggest challenges. Some of the children have never received formal education before, having grown up in refugee camps.

"The parents' English is worse than the kids because in the home there is no English at all," Conrad said. "The parents are offered ESL class but usually because of work or the moms have young children at home, they don't go to English class very much."

Ethnic minorities in Burma are prosecuted by the military regime, which came to power in 1962. A number of abuses, including sexual violence, confiscation of property, and torture have forced over 600,000 to relocate to refugee camps along

the Thai-Burma border, according to the International Rescue Committee.

"There are a lot of Burmese refugees at my church," junior Rebecca Swarm said. "They are actually more specifically Karen, they speak Karen. A bunch of the kids go to Ladue High School."

The majority of Burmese immigrants settled in St. Louis belong to the Karen minority group. St. Louis has long been a city that houses refugees, and the Burmese are no exception. In 2006 alone, the United States accepted 1,612 Karen refugees.

"Almost all of them come from refugee camps in Thailand," teacher aid at the Freedom School, Adina O'Neal said. "So they are coming from makeshift villages to a city where they have their own houses. They have to figure out electricity works and how gas works, and plumbing, and water. Everything is new to them. Public transportation is totally different in St. Louis than where they're from. I don't think anything is easy for them when they

come here."

O'Neal has lived in south city for almost two years, an area highly populated by Burmese refugees.

"I want to say there's close to 40 [Burmese] families living in the south city area right now," O'Neal said. "They are definitely visible in the neighborhoods. They live next to each other so they live on the same blocks."

When the refugees first arrive, organizations such as International Institute, Catholic Charities, and local churches help

with the adjustment to a new culture including finding jobs and ESL classes.

"I first got involved in January 2008 with Burmese connections in south St. Louis," O'Neal said. "Basically we were just having a time when Burmese could come up to the church on Saturday mornings and we would help them figure out like how to fill out a checkbook, how to fill out job applications, how to look for a job – those sort of things. In fact, we ended up getting a lot of the kids involved in a tutoring program in South City."

Although the immersion into a new culture requires some adjustments in lifestyle, many of the Karen are eager to preserve their culture.

"They really keep to their culture," O'Neal said. "They still wear traditional clothing and cook traditional Burmese meals. Those sort of things they've kept traditionally in their homes."

Another challenge, besides the lack of previous formal education, is the Karen native language.

"Until not too long ago, their language was only spoken," Conrad said. "It wasn't a written language. Compared to other countries, it's more difficult when they have never had a written language. If they have some form of a written language that they have learned in formalized schooling, you can pick up the second one a little bit easier."

Despite the adversity, the Karen refugees adapt to American culture to a certain degree. Children often become comfortable with the new language and culture before the parents.

"I think the kids adjust faster than the parents do," O'Neal said. "It seems the kids are learning the language a lot faster because the kids are in school and learning it. So you see the kids adjusting and kind of teaching the parents." ☺



Poe Clee (center) walks with several of the Myanmar children who attend George B. Swift Elementary Specialty School in Chicago, Illinois, Thursday, April 17, 2008.

## Modern pirates threaten international safety, have economic motives



Gabrielle Lachtrup  
Reporter

When we Americans think of pirates, we tend to picture squawking parrots, glittering doubloons, perhaps Johnny Depp in ratty dreadlocks and a grin set with gold teeth.

These pirates of popular imagination are typically British, dashing, and quite handy with a fencing foil. Yet, while such pirates might have roamed the oceans during, say, the eighteenth century, nowadays pirates come equipped with RPG-7 rockets, AK47 assault rifles, and semi-automatic pistols.

Let's you think these pirates are merely an awesome modern update on the Blackbeards of yore, bear in mind that these men are nearly universally poor, often making less than \$600 a month, and from Third-World countries such as Somalia or Indonesia.

Oftentimes, piracy isn't even their day job—unable to bring in enough "booty" to support their families, pirates could be anything from farmers to fishermen. No roaming open sea for months at a time charting unknown waters for

these fellows.

There is little romance to this life, and it is undeniably violent. Stories have been told about Indonesian pirates chopping off the hands of captains reluctant to part with their cargo. After all, one doesn't board a ship bristling with semi-automatic weaponry unless one is prepared to use it, right?

In an interview conducted by Kelly McEvers for Slate magazine, a current Indonesian pirate defended his comrade's practices.

"We only hit captains," the pirate said. "That scares them enough to give us all their money."

The pirate, who goes by the moniker of Agus, says he came upon the life after questioning his neighbor about how he got all his wealth.

"I met a man in my village who was successful," Agus said. "He owned a shop and his wife wore a lot of gold. I tried to stay close to him and ask him how he made so much money. After some time, he told me that he had been a pirate."

Agus, however, admits to having reservations about his lifestyle.

"I want to stop this work," Agus said.

"It's dangerous out at sea. People have accidents, people die. I have a dream that one day I will make so much money I can quit this work and stop everything. But until then, what else can I do?"

However, it's undeniable that for some, the lifestyle can be quite lucrative. Somali pirates, who tend to be better organized than their Indonesian counterparts, have been raiding the waters around their war-torn nation for nearly 15 years.

Traveling in small boats and toting armfuls of weapons, these men seek out cargo ships traveling through the Indian Ocean, often holding the larger ones for ransoms exceeding millions of dollars. During 2008 alone, over 50 ships have been attacked and 25 successfully hijacked. Many in the Somali government have stated that frequent capitulation to the pirate's demands intensifies the frequency of such incidents.

"These pirates are getting bolder every day," said Andrew Mwangura in a September interview with the New York Times.

Mwangura is the program coordinator of the Seafarers' Assistance Program in Kenya, an organization that keeps track of pirate activities.

Recently, reports emerged that Somali pirates had captured a Ukrainian freighter off the coast of Kenya. The ship contained over \$30 million worth of heavy weaponry, intended by the Ukrainian government as an export to their Kenyan allies. The pirates, who have since agreed to release the ship for an unknown sum, originally intended for the ransom to be \$20 million.

"We just saw a big ship," said Sugule Ali, said in a telephone interview with the New York Times. "So we stopped it."

Ali has acted as a spokesperson for the pirates since the hijacking of the freighter.

"Killing is not in our plans," Ali said. "We only want money so we can protect ourselves from hunger."

When questioned whether \$20 million was needed in order to assuage said hunger, Ali laughed. "We have a lot of men," he said. ☺

## Controversial class material affects teaching at CHS

Taylor Stone  
Editor

With the intense media coverage of the recent election and absolute overload of political and even religious enthusiasm, it's no wonder that discussions of events pertaining to controversial issues would integrate into CHS classrooms.

But how do CHS educators grapple with now seemingly tangible issues dealing with religion and politics in their own classrooms?

In accordance to religion, The School District of Clayton Board of Education Policies states that "Religious education is the responsibility of the home and church."

The espousal by any teacher or staff member of any particular religious denomination or faith is strictly forbidden; however, teachers may teach about religion with information being presented at an appropriate maturity level for students."

Similarly with politics, the Board Policies also states that "No partisan political views may be espoused by any teacher or staff member; however, teachers may teach about political parties and politics as related to the governmental systems of the nation or world."

Head of Communications for the District Christopher Tennill addresses the school's task of addressing religion, politics, and other controversial issues.

"There needs to be a respect for everyone's first amendment rights such as freedom of speech and expression, and a balance in classrooms."

The recent political season made an extremely strong presence in daily lives of students, teachers, and faculty.

CHS history teacher Kurt Werner addresses this presence in classroom discussion and the difficulties dealing with it.

"With politics, I tend to come at the issue of political parties and their platforms from a moderate stand point," Werner said. "Most of the students wanted to know who I voted for in the 2008 election and I did not feel that it was appropriate to tell them. I do feel that the restrictions are very reasonable."

CHS history teacher Rick Kordenbrock also addresses this political presence, but has found a different result in the classroom.

"In general I have not found my students to be extremely interested in discussing what they know or don't know about particular candidates or issues," Kordenbrock said. "Of course

there are exceptions, but the majority of my students seem to be uncertain or unconcerned about the impact politics has in their everyday lives. Keep in mind that the vast majority of my students are not of voting age."

Senior Abby Williams provides insight to the student view of teacher's dealing with religious and political limitations.

"Politics weren't highly discussed in my classes, as I'm not taking any history classes this year," Williams said. "But when religion or politics were discussed in the past, I felt that teachers handled the discussions very well and for the most part tended not to appear biased."

Though Williams was comfortable with her teachers' handling of controversial issues, she had a different opinion about other students.

"I sometimes have felt uncomfortable in a classroom setting with discussion of controversial issues," Williams said. "This usually not because of educators, but because of students. There seems to be a lot of animosity toward conservative viewpoints. I have definitely heard of certain cases when students have felt extremely offended in classrooms."

CHS English teacher Emily Grady acknowledges difficulties in straying off the ethical course of religious and political discussion.

"It's too easy for a teacher to impose ideas because they have captive audiences," Grady said. "A teacher's role can be used as a bully pulpit, so to speak."

In the CHS curriculum, sophomores explore a unit on The Bible in literature. Tennill remarks on the to this characteristic of the curriculum.

"With a class over The Bible as/in literature, there's an ability to teach it for its educational merit."

Grady teaches this unit on The Bible as/in literature to sophomores.

"There are a lot of challenges dealing with this unit," Grady said. "In the preliminary lesson, you have to ascertain comfort levels, and allow students to talk openly but not challenge others or hurt feelings. You always have to be fair to both sides and make sure to talk about things abstractly. Students are allowed to have opinions, but I don't think teachers should show their own in front of the class."

With teachers having to contribute to and moderate student discussion about religion and politics, there would be

different views of teachers' roles in this type of discussion.

Werner describes the overall role of educators dealing with politics and religion.

"A teacher's role in the areas of politics or religion should be one of an informative," Werner said. "The teacher should never try to pull a student one way or the other concerning politics and religion. For example, students like asking the 'why' questions concerning why people believe what they believe and why they follow it."

Kordenbrock has a similar perspective on the role of educators dealing with these issues.

"I think a teacher's role should be to expose students to as broad an array of ideas and issues as he or she is capable of, and then let students decide for themselves what they believe is the best idea or the best approach to resolving an issue," Kordenbrock said.

Grady's view of an educator's role also pertains to that of an informative, not a persuader.

"An educator's role is to provide a safe forum for students, especially if it relates in a curricular way," Grady said. "Teachers should be moderators of some sort, and if appropriate, point out differences or similarities between beliefs. Our job is not to persuade or share beliefs, but to encourage students to think for themselves."

Williams gives a student's perspective on the preferred role and attitude of teachers.

"I think that it takes a certain amount of care from the teachers to be totally unbiased," Williams said. "Teachers should never divulge their opinions because of the pressures students may feel expressing their own opinions in front of their teachers. There should be strictly regulated guide-lines for teachers, rather than seemingly unwritten rules at this point."

"I definitely think that teachers should be a mediator, a neutral presence," Williams said. "They shouldn't express any political or religious opinion at all, but still control discussion

so it won't get too disrespectful to any viewpoint."

Kordenbrock disagrees in regard to the appropriateness of showing opinion.

"I believe that a history teacher, like any citizen, has a responsibility to take a stand when he or she believes an idea or issue is dangerous to personal or public safety or well-being," Kordenbrock said. "However one has to be very certain that the idea or issue is dangerous enough, and the stand is important enough, to risk one's job."

Werner also understands the difficulty of dealing with religion and politics in a classroom setting.

"I think the hardest thing to do is, of course, being impartial and offering all sides of a political or religious argument."

Werner said. "The easiest thing to do as an educator is always play devil's advocate and take the

opposing side. I think another hard thing is talking about

major political or religious issues and trying not to offend a

particular person or group of people in the classroom. One unintentional remark could shatter a

relationship with a student or scar their political or religious views.

That is what an educator must be most careful with in the classroom."

Grady also remarks on challenges within her

ing, only show per-

sonal viewpoints when com-

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mirable or heroic, such as a statement like 'President Johnson supported civil

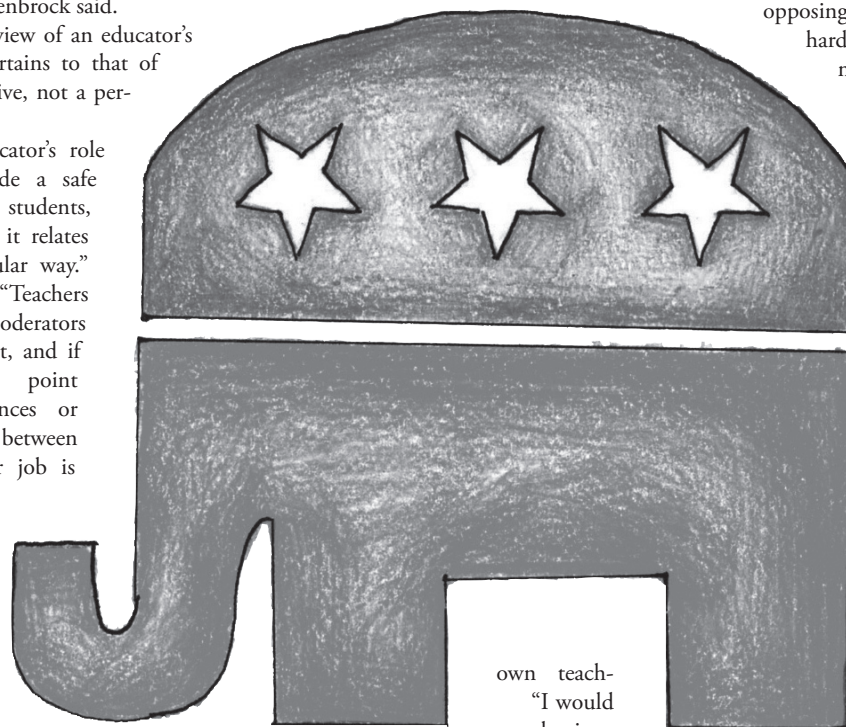
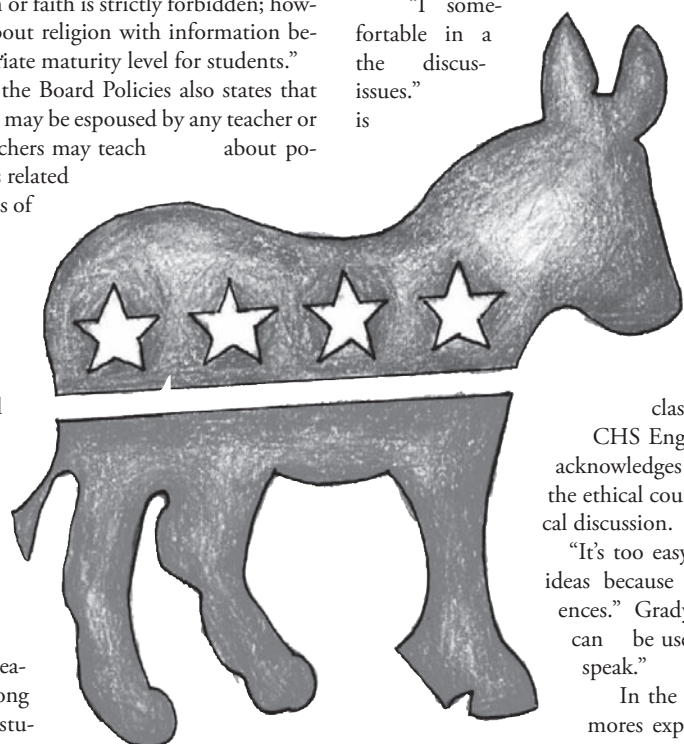
rights,' Grady said "I would never reveal who I voted for in an election because it would risk alienating students. I don't

want students to feel disconnected because of their beliefs. It's sometimes difficult knowing you care about someone but totally disagreeing with their opinions."

Tennill has faith in CHS educator's ability to be informative and unbiased with issues dealing with religion and politics.

"We have a highly qualified and skilled group of teachers that are adept in navigating through issues while not imposing viewpoints," Tennill said.

☺



# Californian ban of gay marriage triggers protests across country

Leah Eby  
Senior Managing Editor

On June 24, 2008, CHS art teacher Christina Vodicka and her partner were married under the California sun. However, with the recent voter-approval of California's Proposition 8, her marriage may become invalidated, a prospect that frustrates Vodicka.

"I believe in equality, in treating people fairly, in nondiscrimination," Vodicka said. "I believe everyone should have the legal right to marry, gay or straight. If it's a religious issue, then churches or religious groups should be able to choose not to perform or recognize marriages. I don't think the government should be able to tell people whether or not they can get married."

The fight for equal rights for same-sex couples has been evident in the California for some time. In 2000, a statewide initiative was passed defining marriage as a union between a man and a woman, and many questioned whether this violated the state's constitutional protections of equality and fundamental rights.

Four years later, San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom encouraged the county clerk's office to issue marriage certificates to same-sex couples, arguing that these couples should not be discriminated against. San Francisco broke state law, issuing more than 4,000 marriage licenses and holding weddings in City Hall, but these marriages were later invalidated by the California Supreme Court.

On May 15 of this year, the California Supreme Court rejected state laws limiting marriage to unions between a man and a woman and ruled instead that marriage is a constitutional right of same-sex couples.

"In view of the substance and significance of the fundamental constitutional right to form a family relationship," Chief Justice Ronald M. George wrote for the majority, "the California Constitution properly must be interpreted to guarantee this basic civil right to all Californians, whether gay or heterosexual, and to same-sex couples as well as to opposite-sex couples."

This ruling proved to be a significant step forward in the progress of gay marriage as a socially acceptable union in the United States. Many Californians, however, believed that this ruling should have been postponed until the November election when Proposition 8 would appear on the ballot, giving the people of California the decision whether or not to ban same-sex marriage.

"If there is to be a new understanding of the meaning of marriage in California, it should develop among the people of our state and find its expression at the ballot box," Justice Carol A. Corrigan wrote in a dissent.

Ultimately, the state did not postpone their ruling, and at

8 a.m. on June 17, county clerks' offices were authorized to officially issue marriage licenses to gay couples. Between May and November, 18,000 gay couples were married in California, some traveling across the country to tie the knot, just as Vodicka and her partner did in June.

However, the status of gay marriage in California was not completely secure following the May decision. On Nov. 4, after trailing in the polls for several months, California voters narrowly passed the ballot initiative Proposition 8 with fifty-two percent of the vote, successfully banning previously legal same-sex marriage.

Proposition 8 was one of three other initiatives throughout the country passed on Nov. 4 restricting gay marriage. In Arizona and Florida, constitutional bans were approved barring same-sex marriage, and in Arkansas, voters passed a measure prohibiting gay couples from adopting children.

The approval of Proposition 8 spurred tens of thousands of protesters throughout the country to come together in opposition of the measure. In San Francisco, 10,000 protesters gathered in front of City Hall waving banners, American flags, and copies of their marriage licenses.

Speakers in front of the New York City Hall shouted that the fight for same-sex marriage is "the greatest civil rights battle of our generation" as marchers in Washington D.C. chanted, "Gay, straight, black or white; marriage is a civil right."

Despite the passage of Proposition 8, same-sex marriages began in Connecticut, only the second state to allow such ceremonies, in contrast to the 44 states that, in the form of laws or constitutional amendments, have enacted legal barriers prohibiting same-sex marriage.

Since the approval of Proposition 8, California legislators have also begun to speak out against the ruling. The California attorney general has asked the California Supreme Court to "review the constitutionality of Proposition 8," according to a *New York Times* article.

Lawsuits that have been filed in opposition to the passage of Proposition 8 state argue that the measure was a significant enough revision of the state constitution that legislative approval is necessary.

The California State Supreme Court has agreed to take the case of the constitutionality of voter-approved Proposition 8. Three main points that the state Supreme Court will attempt to clarify include the necessity of legislative approval for such a substantial revision of the constitution, the legality of the 18,000 marriages conducted this year, and the denial of equal protection for same-sex couples under the state constitution.

As of now, Vodicka and her partner are still married in California, a union also recognized in New York, Massachusetts and Connecticut, but not in Missouri. Their legal status as a married couple will depend on the outcome of the lawsuits now pending.



John Perez, left and boyfriend, Michael Shugert, both of Sacramento walk hand in hand during a gay rights march outside of the Capitol protesting the passage of California's Proposition 8 in Sacramento, California, on Saturday, November 13, 2008. The Golden State's new gay marriage-ban has caused an outcry across the nation.

"Of course, we will consider ourselves married regardless of the legal outcome," said Vodicka. "We are in a strong, committed relationship. I think it is important that it be legally recognized. It's an important issue to us for many reasons, legal and personal. Unfortunately, it may take some time before American society sees it that way."

The legal advantages that marriage provides are numerous and include having the ability to file joint income tax returns, receive certain dependency benefits such as social security, medical, disability, and unemployment benefits, have visitation rights at the hospital, be able to make medical decisions for one's spouse if he or she is unable to do so for him or her self. Vodicka asserts that second-parent rights for gay couples with children are also extremely important in terms of medical decisions, hospital visitation, and adoption rights.

The possibility that these seemingly fundamental rights could be taken away from both her and her partner worries Vodicka.

"It makes me angry, sad, disappointed and frustrated," Vodicka said. "I'd like to ask people who voted for the ban what changed for them on June 24. That's the day I got married. Did they notice anything different? Hmm, I didn't think so. It may

be personalizing the issue too much, but it is one way of looking at it: what about your life changes because someone else got married? What qualifications do you have to make those decisions for someone else?"

For now, Vodicka and her partner will have to wait anxiously for the results of the California lawsuit. According to a *New York Times* article, the first legal briefs are due on Dec. 19, with opponents of the ban replying in January, with further arguments expressed in March.

Vodicka hopes that people will begin to realize that the issue of same-sex marriage is not one of legality, but rather, of morality.

"I think the way this issue has been spun to the public has missed the point," Vodicka said. "It is a moral issue in some respects, yes, but not about being gay or straight or married or not. It's about being a compassionate human being, the highest expression of morality. There is enough hate in the world, enough ugliness, enough pettiness, enough sham marriages and people who don't respect commitment or the sanctity of marriage. Here is an opportunity to say yes, I believe in sharing happiness, encouraging commitment, recognizing and encouraging love. The world needs more of that, not less." ☺

# Final months of Bush presidency fail to recover reputation

Elle Bullard  
Senior Editor

Until recently, if you searched the words 'miserable failure' in the Google search engine, hits linked to George W. Bush's home page at the White House would appear at the top of the page. If you search George W. Bush on YouTube, a montage of "stupid Bush quotes" comes up. Even now, with his final term coming to a close, the American people are eager for Bush to leave office; there are entire websites dedicated to counting down to the very second in January when Bush will no longer be president of the United States.

These are only some tangible examples of the anti-Bush sentiment in the country. In September of this year, Bush's approval rating dropped to 27 percent. Bush's approval rating has been steadily declining since late 2001, when it was 90 percent.

When Bush first ran for president, he ran on a platform of maintaining economic growth from the 1990's.

"Bush ran a major state in Texas and people were pretty satisfied at least economically with the way he ran that," history teacher Paul Hoelscher said. "I think in comparison to other presidents, he had enough experience [to be president]."

However, Bush was not an expert in international policies, which was dangerous in an internationally focused administration.

"He did not possess the foreign policy knowledge, the understanding of the

economy, or the insight into the needs of the American people to effectively govern," senior Caitlin Bladt said. "In my opinion, he was ignorant to the needs and concerns of the American people and the rest of the world."

Bush, however, was able to win twice, partially due to his charisma, although both the 2000 and 2004 elections were won by a very small margin. Bush won Florida in 2000 only by a margin of about 500 votes. Though he won the electoral vote majority, he did not win the popular vote.

Once Bush became president, he wasn't even halfway through his term when one of the largest disasters that has occurred in the history of the United States happened—the attacks on the world trade center on Sept. 11. These attacks changed Bush's entire presidency.

"The most positive thing that Bush did during his presidency was the way that he led the country in the days immediately following 9/11. While his actions in the months and years following were highly misguided, he did lead the country through the most difficult and terrifying time in recent history. I feel that he should be commended for this accomplishment, yet it is often lost in the middle of many of his other actions."

Immediately after these attacks, Bush announced a "War on Terrorism". The U.S. was generally supported by the rest of the world.

The support that Bush had at the beginning of the war was perhaps not utilized to its full potential.



"I think our standing in the world has decreased, I think the number of soldiers killed in Iraq is significant stain on his legacy and on his presidency," Hoelscher said. "We had such amazing international support and goodwill after Sept. 11 and the situation in Afghanistan,

and then unfortunately I don't feel like that was properly utilized to punish Al-Qaeda, to change the situation in Afghanistan."

However, Bush's decision to invade Iraq is seen as the turning point in the war, and a mistake that was negative for his career. Arguably the biggest mistake that Bush made in his entire presidency was that of marring the world view of the U.S. through his actions in Iraq and other areas in the world.

"I think the most negative part about Bush's presidency is the way that his foreign policies have changed the way that America and its citizens are viewed throughout the world," Bladt said. "I feel that the aggressive, ill-informed, and arrogant decisions that Mr. Bush has made during his 8 years in office have painted an inaccurate and unfair picture of Americans that we will have to work many years to change. I also feel that his antagonizing statements and actions have earned us many more enemies than we had at the start of his term."

Most people do not see the war in Iraq as a success. However, after Sept. 11, Bush increased his focus on homeland security. One of the goals of this movement was to "protect the American people". Bush has kept the American people safe in the sense that he has not allowed another incident like Sept. 11 to occur.

"I think that history is very subjective and interpretations can change but at this point I think that the post September 11<sup>th</sup> fact that we have not been attacked on American soil is a serious consideration for a strong success," Hoelscher said. "Now I started by saying only time will tell, what if two years from now what happens in Iraq comes back to haunt us and there is an attack on American soil, that could still be connected to George Bush."

Another negative issue in the Bush administration was that of the amount of control Vice President Dick Cheney had in white house.

"The situation with Cheney was not only lack of clarity but the amount of overall power" Hoelscher said. "Some people suggest that what he did was unconstitutional in surpassing the power literally within the executive branch and claiming that he wasn't at all connected to legislation."

Cheney's influence was possibly unconstitutional but in Obama's administration it seems that Biden's role will not be nearly as debatable.

Bush has had many failures—one of the most important of which was the failure to keep the U.S. in the rest of the world's favor. However, Bush has had some success in the immediate handling of the Sept. 11 tragedy and his improvement of homeland security.

Interestingly enough, there has already been a movie out based on Bush's presidency and life, called *W*. The film focuses on Bush relationship with his father and ultimate failure in the white house. The movie is relatively sympathetic towards him, and is much more critical of figures like Cheney, Rumsfeld, and Rice.

The Bush legacy will ultimately be one of failure, but he did succeed in preventing any terrorist attacks from occurring on American soil. Hopefully this will be remembered in the future, even in addition to his failures. ☺

# Novel presidential panel attempts to recover damaged economy

Jjeoma Onyema  
Editor

According to history teacher Paul Hoelscher, when FDR took office in 1932, he tried a lot of different programs in order to save America from the Great Depression.

"Some worked and some did not, but he brought positive energy to national leadership," Hoelscher said. "Ultimately, I believe he psychologically 'lifted' the American public out of the depression and put us back on the road of feeling better about ourselves."

The Obama-mania is beginning to simmer, and America is now turning from the elections to the more pressing issues: healthcare, the war in Iraq, and the economy.

Now that America has its first African-American president, and hope for the economy has been instilled into the hearts of many. However, none of these issues are expected to improve any time

soon, especially the economy now that the country is in recession.

Consisting of Harvard alumni, renowned politicians and financial experts, the President's Economic Recovery Advisory Board has received positive views and faith for the economy here at CHS.

"I hope that Obama is willing to try lots of other things and establish some hopeful energy," Hoelscher said.

However, the panel has gotten negative reviews from Washington Nobel Prize winner Paul Krugman predicts that by Dec. 1, the standard policy tools will stop working and consumer spending will continue to free fall as the current economic indicators worsen.

In addition, the unemployment may reach 10 percent, investment spending will plunge, and significant financial recovery will not occur until earliest 2011. Obama has been setting up an economic recovery team in his administration to avoid as much of the Krugman's prediction as possible pre-inauguration.

The President's Economic Recovery Advisory Board is a new panel composed of businessmen and scholars excelling in economics.

This group is based off of the model of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, which was formed in 1956 by President Eisenhower.

Questions like exactly who is capable of saving America from its worst financial crisis run through the minds of Americans when considering choices for this team.

Obama released the names of the members of the recovery panel on Nov. 24: Timothy Geithner, Lawrence Summers, Bill Richardson, Peter Orszag, Jason Furman, Christina Romer, and Paul Volker. For the next

two years, these six financial geniuses will help lead the country out of the worst economic crisis in its history.

Geithner, who is currently the president of the New York Federal Reserve Bank and the vice-chairman of the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC), will lead the team as Secretary of the Treasury with current Federal Reserve chairman Ben Bernanke. According to Stephen Lendman of the Baltimore Chronicle and Sentinel, Geithner is "an insider's insider and hardly a surprising pick [for the position of Secretary of the Treasury]."

Summers is currently teaching at Harvard's Kennedy School of Govern-

ment. He helped remove restrictions from markets with other measures the 1999 Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act that repealed them.

Richardson is the current governor of New Mexico and the future Commerce Secretary; he was a member of the Clinton administration and has been an influential advocate in energy and financial issues. He is one of the first Hispanics to be inducted into the Obama administration.

Hoelscher is pleased to see diversity in the panel.

"I don't know much about Geithner or Summers, but I do like Richardson," Hoelscher said. "I'm surprised he wasn't considered for other cabinet positions, perhaps even secretary of state, but I think many people have a favorable impression of him."

Orszag is the current Director of the Congressional Budget Office, and he is also the next Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Romer is an economist from University of California Berkeley and will become Council of Economic Advisors (CEA) chairperson.

Furman and Volcker will become the senior economic adviser to the Obama administration and the chairperson of the Economic Recovery Advisory Board respectively.

Many of these members aren't extremely active in politics, but Hoelscher is pleased to see that.

"I think [Obama] is looking for a blend of credible names and new ideas," Hoelscher said. "For the business community to be supportive, some people with established careers need to be involved. At the same time, if this is really a 'change' election, there has to be some fresh faces to introduce new ideas."

The board will launch their nationwide mission in January, and if all goes well, continue until the end of Obama's term. ☺

# St. Louis Art Museum officials suspend \$125 million expansion plans

Construction was set to commence by the end of this year, however current market conditions have placed those plans on hold.

Nicholas Andriole  
Senior Editor

St. Louis Art Museum has decided to temporarily suspend its \$125 million expansion project. Construction was set to begin late this year; however, the current economic conditions have forced the art museum to temporarily suspend the project.

"With the current disruption in the financial markets, we believe it is in the best interest of the Museum and the St. Louis community to temporarily delay our expansion," said John D. Weil, president of the Board of Commissioners in a press release.

In just four years, the Art Museum has received commitments of more than \$120 million towards its \$125 million initial capital campaign goal.

This includes six gifts of at least \$10 million each from leaders in the St. Louis community; 70 percent of the Campaign total has been committed by members of the Museum's boards.

"We are deeply grateful for the leadership and generosity of our boards and the community, whose extraordinary outpouring of support will ensure the success of this important project," Museum Director Brent R. Benjamin said. "This Campaign builds on a tremendous legacy that has positioned the Saint Louis Art Museum as one of the nation's finest comprehensive art museums."

The project is set to include additional gallery space, along with an below grade 300-space parking garage, new entrance on Fine Arts Drive, and new



The main entrance to the St. Louis Art Museum in Forest Park. Museum officials recently announced to temporarily suspend their expansion plans

amenities for visitors including Wolfgang Puck's famous restaurant and an expanded gift shop.

Museum director Benjamin believes the expansion is needed and will help the museum better serve its visitors.

"Through this expansion we will not only create much needed gallery space to allow the display of more works of art, the overall experience will be enhanced

with improvements to visitor amenities and infrastructure, including a new, fully accessible entrance on Fine Arts Drive, and a new, below-grade, 300-space parking garage," Benjamin said. "The physical and symbolic heart of the Museum will remain [at the] Sculpture Hall."

Planning for the project dates back to 1995 when the Forest Park Master Plan was devised, and in 2000 the project was

envisioned in the museum's strategic plan.

The expansion project is being designed by London (U.K.)-based David Chipperfield, and was unveiled in November 2007.

Chipperfield was appointed unanimously by the Saint Louis Art Museum Board of Commissioners in September 2005 to design the expansion of the Mu-

seum's historic Cass Gilbert-designed building in Forest Park.

Chipperfield has won some of Europe's most prestigious commissions, including the restoration of the Neues Museum and master plan for Museum Island in Berlin.

While the expansion plans may be temporarily suspended, the Art Museum continues to serve visitors in its existing

facility in Forest Park.

The museum recently commenced a film series, and has various holiday offerings for visitors.

On Feb. 22, the museum will open "Power and Glory: Court Arts of China's Ming Dynasty", which features more than 125 works of porcelain, paintings, and textiles.

Visitors will be able to obtain Apple iPods for an interactive gallery viewing experience. Admission to Power and Glory is \$10 for adults, and \$8 for students and seniors, and the exhibit will be free to general public every Friday. The exhibit will be on view through May 17, 2009.

While the expansion plans remain on hold, museum officials believe they are in good financial shape as an organization with several funding sources including earned revenue, philanthropy, and funds from the Zoo-Museum District.

"The institution is extraordinarily fortunate," Benjamin said. "We rely not on a single source of income for our operations, but rather on a broad range of sources which include not only membership, private giving from individuals, corporations, and foundations, and income from endowment funds, but significant support from the greater St. Louis community through the Zoo Museum District."

Museum officials do not have a tentative date for ground breaking, as they are evaluating the market conditions.

"We will set a date for our ground breaking once the market stabilizes," Weil said. ☺

# Shaw Park ice rink reopens with expanded offerings to the community

Jonathan Shumway  
Reporter

Shaw Park Ice Rink has reopened for the season and is offering activities to appeal to a wider range of communities. The rink had been closed for repairs that had not been budgeted.

"It is a valuable asset for the community," said Brad Bernstein, a lifetime resident of Clayton. "There are few outdoor rinks in the area, and we are fortunate enough to be one of those communities."

The rink has been around for several decades, it has brought many memories to many people's lives. The rink has always tried to appeal to families.

"My family and I used to go to the ice skating rink, one or two times a week," said Bernstein. "We actually even used to go skating sometimes for Health class when I was at Clayton."

Not only has it brought good times to families, it also has provided employment to youth in the area.

"Most of the employees are composed of either Clayton students or residents," said Andrew Entriakin, the sports program director for Clayton Parks and Recreation.

Junior Jacob Grady, has been employed there for the last two years. His position, a rink guard, requires employees to skate the rink, to ensure the safety of the skaters, and also to have fun.

"It has been a good, fun experience, pays well, especially when being a first-year, and the bosses are lenient," Grady said.

"We have had a busy start with huge turnouts in the last two weekends that it has been open. There have been good turnouts daily," Entriakin said.

The rink is now providing more hours for ice skating, being

open as late as 11 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays.

"We are trying to make it a hang-out place for kids by doing this—especially to make it more attractive to the high school patrons," Entriakin said.

The Clayton outdoor ice rink "has become more popular, becoming a hang-out area, thereby helping out the community," Grady said.

In the campaign to make the ice-rink more popular, there are now more activities offered. One of these activities is the entertaining and fun stick and puck session that is held every Tuesday from 4 p.m. to 5:45 p.m.

"I go to the stick and puck session on Tuesdays," Grady said. "It is a good time, where we can play outside regulations, and anyone can come."

The rink hosted the Frosty Night, on Dec. 5, receiving a big attendance. Another event that is coming up is the Skate S' More on Dec. 19.

The City of Clayton says, "Kick off your winter break with this fun family event. Enjoy a roaring bonfire, hot chocolate and marshmallow s'mores. All for just the price of admission."

Another event is the Clayton hockey team-sponsored event at the rink, where rival teams will play, Ladue on Jan. 14.

"This is the first time that they have had this event. The event will also be televised, so hopefully it will become a popular event," Entriakin said.

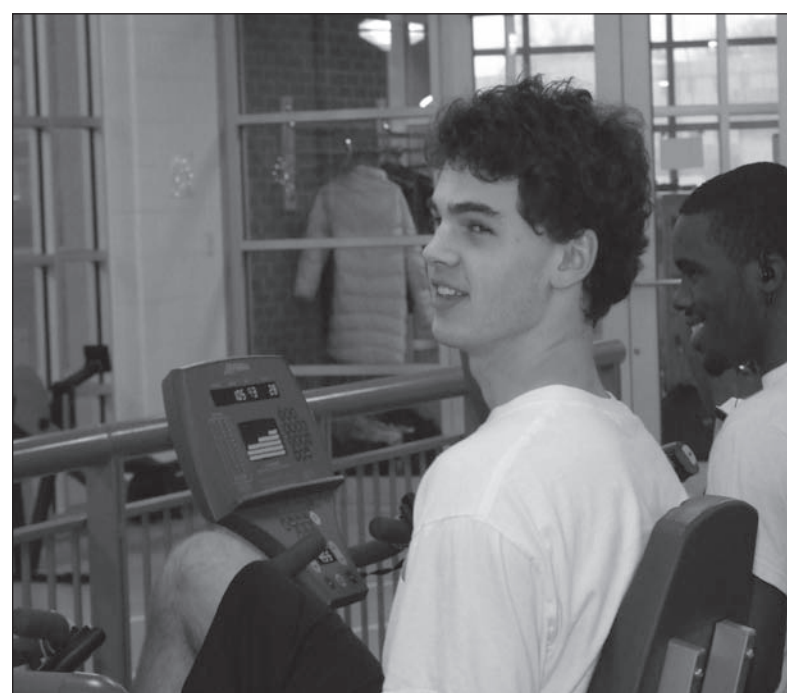
The rink offers both affordable and enjoyable holiday fun for the entire community.

"Come to skate for a good time that is not expensive and a good place to come during the fun holiday season," Entriakin said. ☺



Patrons skating at Shaw Park Ice Rink during the Skate with Frosty event. This year, the rink is has expanded offerings such as Skate with Frosty and new events for older community members such as stick and puck sessions.

# Student use of Center temporarily restricted to accommodate athletics



Junior Sam Jacus and senior Patrick Cunningham work out in Center. Student access was restricted throughout November to allow greater access for athletic teams

Chelsea Cousins  
Reporter

Students at Clayton High were baffled when the word came out that the Clayton Center was closing to all students, unless they were able to show their Center memberships or pay a \$4 daily fee.

Although this decision was made to take place only throughout the month of November, students still seem to misinterpret the reasons for this policy.

"What students aren't realizing is that the decision to show your membership I.D. in the Center was a joint decision between the school and Center administration and is not a permanent decision," Bob Bone, Clayton High School Athletics Director, said.

Although CHS is open to allowing students to access facilities in the Center, this policy has been in place for the third year now, proving to have positive results.

"I think a lot of students were affected mentally, but I do understand why the Center chose to do it," freshman Jer-

emiah Camp said.

The decisions made at the Center were made for several reasons. With the start of fall sports starting, it was hard to make sure that actual Clayton members had enough space to conduct their own personal activities. With teams taking up most of the courts for practice, space was limited.

"This decision was extremely beneficial to the coaches, especially, because it became easier for them to conduct practices without any extra distractions," Bone said.

By having these restrictions, as put in play by both the school and the Center, they were able to control the amount of space being used by different sports teams.

"Sometimes you just have to balance

what's going on in the Center, but there was never a time that we tried to deny students the right to access the Center," Bone said.

"However, students did have to either show their membership or pay the daily fee."

Students at CHS weren't all affected by the changes made in the Center during November; however, many active students had different opinions.

"I'll admit that I was pretty mad when I first heard of the policy because I didn't have anything to do after school except sit in the commons or go home," Camp said. "I was more frustrated because I had to pause my workout for next football season."

"If anything, students understood

that coaches wanted to get their teams ready for their games by practicing in the Center without any distractions," Camp added.

In addition to the number of students being reduced in the Center, many students who usually stay after school were left with no where to hang out.

"Many students that used to stay after school didn't tend to stay anymore because they have no where to hang out, especially since the commons are now off limits," junior Neshia Ingram said, "but because of the fact that the Center is connected to our school, I feel students should be able to workout if they need to."

While students wondered why these specific measures were taken during the fall season, school authorities worked to try and explain the primary cause.

"As long as students were actually working out in the Center, there wasn't an issue," Bone said. "The faculty tried to eliminate students that were uncooperative or preventing students from working in an orderly fashion." ☺

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# Overwhelming support leads to Hidden Valley remaining open

Justin Elliot  
Reporter

In just two months Hidden Valley Ski Resort has gone from closing for good to open forever.

Two months ago Tim Boyd, president of Peak Resorts Inc., said that the resort was closing due to a dispute with the city of Wildwood over expanding the resort's parking lot and adding a new tubing section to the resort.

"My decision to close the resort is not a negotiating tactic," Boyd said two months ago after announcing the Hidden Valley was to be closed.

However, an unprecedented amount of support urged him to reconsider.

"Obviously the public's reaction to this has been overwhelming to us," Boyd said.

"Sometimes you kind of lose sense of how important something is to people. I think this whole exercise opened our eyes as to how important Hidden Valley is to this region."

After reviewing the pleas of Hidden Valley patrons, Boyd put in his final offer to the city.

"We proposed to have the council approve a 10-year master plan that would have a loose timetable for expanding the facility," Boyd said.

At a city council meeting last month the commission members voiced unanimous support to go ahead and start forming a master plan that will be approved in the near future.

"This plan will allow for the freedom Hidden Valley needs to grow," Boyd said. "After this master plan is executed, Hidden Valley will be more like a resort you would see in Colorado or Wyoming, but without the mountains."

Boyd continued to say that he is considering building ski-in ski-out type real estate, where residential housing has direct access to the slopes.

After hundreds of complaints from Hidden Valley patrons from across the region, insisting that the city of Wildwood was to blame for the resort's closure, Wildwood Mayor and commission member Tim Woerther is especially happy with Boyd's decision to keep Hidden Valley open.

"Hidden Valley will become the sort of unique development we would love to have in the City of Wildwood," Wo-



After nearly being shut down, Hidden Valley will remain open to the public due to an overwhelming response from patrons. Hidden Valley has been a haven for winter sports fans since its opening.

erther said. "Having something where people can own a home, a chalet, or whatever, then be able to ski onto the slopes 70 days out of the year would be unheard of in this part of the country."

Although no changes to Hidden Valley have been approved yet, Boyd said the 9 hole golf course that operates during the warm weather months will almost definitely close, since the land is needed for new ski runs and condos.

Many skiers and snow boarders are ecstatic about Hidden

Valley's decision to stay open, however many students at Clayton High seem apathetic to the issue.

"I am happy that Hidden Valley is staying open for all of the people who go there, but since I haven't gone since the fifth grade field trip, this decision doesn't really affect me," Sophomore Marin Klostermeier said.

Nonetheless, the Clayton students who actually go to Hidden Valley are extremely thankful.

"I am overjoyed that Hidden Valley is not closing since I

go there a lot, and I am ready to hit the slopes this winter and have a cold, fun season" Sophomore Devan Westermayer said, a frequent snow boarder at Hidden Valley.

Luckily, to ensure that there will always be a ski and snow boarding facility to service the St. Louis region, Boyd said he would like to place the resort in conservancy.

"Meaning that the property can only be used for skiing or public use in the future, even if I no longer own the land," Boyd said.



The Saint Louis MetroLink pictured above is at the central west end stop, one of many destinations the public transit system travels to.

## MetroLink faces public criticism

Nick Andriole  
Editor

At a time when there has been increasing awareness of environmental concerns, and volatile fuel prices, area voters had their opportunity to express support for the St. Louis area's transit system, and voters said no.

The area's transit system, which includes MetroLink light rail, Metrobuses, and Call-a-ride para transit services for the disabled, is operated by Metro, formerly known as the Bi-State Development agency.

On Nov. 4, St. Louis County voters defeated Proposition M, which would implement a one half cent increase in St. Louis County's sales tax rate. Area voters appeared to question the credibility of this organization and Proposition M failed with only 48 percent of voters approving it, according to the St. Louis County Board of Election Commissioners.

In 1997, St. Louis City voters approved a sales tax increase; however, Metro is unable to collect that money until the same increase is approved in St. Louis County.

The defeat by county voters has forced Metro to pursue fare increases and service cutbacks to retain a balance budget. Metro officials, however, are aware of the challenges their agency faces and must overcome.

"Metro will become a smaller system," Metro Director of Communications Dianne Williams said. "Currently Metro has over 9,000 bus stops and approximately 50 MetroLink stations in St. Louis City, St. Louis County, and St. Clair County, Ill. Currently, the Metro system comes within one-quarter mile of 95 percent of the employment centers in the region. Beginning this spring, this will no longer be true."

In wake of the proposition failing, the agency is being forced to raise fares along with cutting existing service. On Nov. 21, the Metro board of commissioners approved a two-stage fare increase due

to take effect Jan. 1, followed by an additional increase in July 2010. Metro last increased cash fares for buses and MetroLink by 25 cents in August 2006, upon opening the new Shrewsbury line.

Metro has also begun to investigate cutting services, and one proposal may require Metro to discontinue MetroLink service at 8 p.m., as well as eliminate the free-ride zone in downtown St. Louis, and eliminate the additional trains provided for sporting and other major events held downtown.

However, all cutbacks have been proposed and must be approved by the Metro board of commissioners, which is scheduled to meet later this month.

Some voters question the credibility of Metro. Senior Ryan Walden does not support Metro and voted against Proposition M.

"I don't use Metro and don't think the public should be responsible for paying for their financial mess," Walden said. "Their financial problems are their own fault."

Metro officials believe they have sufficiently made the community aware of the current and future challenges they face; however, they recognize the voters have decided.

"For several years, Metro has informed the community that without a new revenue source that keeps pace with inflation, system cuts and fare increases would be required in 2009 and beyond," Metro President and CEO Robert Baer said in a press release. "While we are deeply disappointed with the results of the vote, we understand that the community has spoken. Accordingly, the Metro Board of Commissioners, in consultation with regional stakeholders, will now finalize plans for reducing the system."

Citizens for Modern Transit Executive Director Tom Shrout believes that the area citizens do indeed favor expanding MetroLink and would like a joint city-county ballot initiative.

"The people living in far West and South County appear to be hindering the expansion of transit as a whole," Shrout

said "Metro serves the entire area of St. Louis City and St. Louis County. Had the vote included both St. Louis City and St. Louis County I am confident it would have passed."

Recently, Metro faced troubles due to rising fuel costs, increased ridership, and the loss of its civil suit against its contractors in the Cross County MetroLink extension, which was completed one year and \$126 million over budget in August 2006.

Frequent Metro critic and Clayton business owner Tom Sullivan believes Metro is not pursuing the best public transit options for the community and has serious concerns about the agency.

"There are significant concerns about the agency and its credibility and accountability to the public," Sullivan said. "Essentially Metro functions outside of public control and does not follow sunshine [open records] laws, spend public money on its campaign, and is unable to provide the accountability most government entities do."

Transit advocates feel Metro has provided sufficient accountability to the general public.

"Apparently some people in the county agree Metro does not provide enough accountability," Shrout said "I believe Metro has done a decent job [in providing accountability] but some members of the public do not and Metro should continue working on that."

Shrout disagrees with Sullivan and believes MetroLink is the best transit solution for our area.

"It has been demonstrated historically that MetroLink improves system ridership," Shrout said "Since MetroLink opened in 1993 there has been a resurgence in transit ridership."

According to Metro, with current funding sources and service levels, the agency projects a \$45 million annual shortfall beginning in July 2009.

Details regarding fare increases and services cutbacks will be made available to the public in the forthcoming months on Metro's website, [www.metrostlouis.org](http://www.metrostlouis.org).

## Blagojevich scandal may have serious repercussions

Blagojevich, 1

bargain," Blagojevich said, according to the affidavit. "You hear what I'm saying. And if I don't get what I want and I'm not satisfied with it, then I'll just take the Senate seat myself."

Obama simply stated that he had no information regarding the governor's plans prior to the arrest, and voiced his opinion on the issue.

"I had no contact with the governor or his office so I was not aware of what was happening and, as I said, it was a sad day for Illinois," Obama said. "Like the rest of the people of Illinois, I am saddened and sobered by the news coming out of the U.S. Attorney's office."

However, the criminal complaint filed by the United States of America had many more charges aside from that regarding the Senate seat. Both Blagojevich and Harris were charged of conspiring to fire editors of the Chicago Tribune.

"Rod Blagojevich and John Harris, together with others, offered to, and threatened to withhold from, the Tribune Company substantial state financial assistance in connection with Wrigley Field, which assistance Rod Blagojevich believed to be worth at least \$100 million to the Tribune Company, for the private purpose of inducing the controlling shareholder of the Tribune Company to fire members of the editorial board of the Chicago Tribune, a newspaper owned by the Tribune Company, who were responsible for editorials

critical of Rod Blagojevich," the affidavit stated.

The governor's conversations that were recorded through wiretapping explained the cause of these acts of corruption. Blagojevich said in one conversation that he needed the money to help his "financially hurting" family, according to the affidavit.

"I want to make money," Blagojevich said to Harris.

Other government officials have begun calling for the governor's removal from office, although they differ on how that should happen. Even the president-elect has joined the bandwagon.

"I don't think the governor at this point can serve the people of Illinois," Obama said in a Chicago news conference. Nothing in the governor's case implicates Obama or his staff.

According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, the Illinois legislators are debating impeachment proceedings if the governor does not step down on his own.

The Illinois Supreme Court could also step in to remove him from office. The Illinois House meets in emergency session Monday to consider stripping the governor's office of its authority to name a U.S. Senate replacement.

The measure would set up a special election to choose the occupant of that seat for the last two years of Obama's term. Lt. Gov. Patrick Quinn called the removal of Blagojevich "the primary duty of the Legislature right now."



## Newspaper sales continue to decline

Newspapers, 1

*New York Times* article, "It is not clear how seriously Tribune is thinking about seeking bankruptcy protection; analysts and bankruptcy experts say that the hiring of advisers, including Lazard and Sidley Austin, one of the company's longtime law firms, could be a just-in-case move, or a bargaining tactic."

Recently, *The Post Dispatch* has been dealing with some of these problems. Lately they have been forced to let go some of their staff, as well as shrink the newspaper.

"*The Post* has been losing a lot of paper recently because of the costs," Weiss said. "They've had to cut things like show times and features; there is less journalism."

According to an article in *The Turner Report*, "These are unprecedented times, caused by the national economic slump, that require us to reduce costs," said Kevin Mowbray, the news-

paper's publisher. "However, even with these reductions, we will give our customers the best print and online news products in the St. Louis metropolitan area."

After leaving *The Post Dispatch* Weiss became a contributing editor to the online newspaper *The St. Louis Beacon*. He believes that this is the future for journalism, and that printed newspapers will soon become a thing of the past.

Miller, however, believes that their newspaper will remain in print for quite a while. He also is part of a printing company, and is confident they will stay in business. This is due to the fact that they have recently bought several new printers and aren't experiencing any drastic economic downturns.

Whether it is due to technology or the economy, newspapers are changing.

"But journalism will forever be important as long as we stay true to our values and work together," Weiss said.

# In St. Louis, city schools are a different world

Nina Oberman  
Editor

Albritton's hand moves cautiously across her paper. The multiplication problem is a sea of numbers strewn illogically into columns and rows. Glancing upwards, she reaches for a concrete answer.

A seventh grader at Fanning Middle School in the St. Louis Public Schools (SLPS) district, Aaliyah Albritton dreams of something more.

"My big sister and brother dropped out of high school," Albritton said. "My mom dropped out of college. But I'm going to go to college, and I'm going to stay in college."

Yet when asked what 6 times 8 equals—she shrugged.

Albritton's dilemma is not unique in urban schools: as adolescents dream of careers their parents could never attain, America's educational institutions are failing to provide students with the tools necessary to realize their visions. At Fanning, a mere 2.3 percent of eighth graders passed the MAP math test in 2007.

"The schools are still pushing toward educating kids and preparing them for college," said Patrick Banks, a teacher at Beaumont High School in the SLPS district. "But because of the way in which schools are doing so, I see students coming in less and less prepared each year."

Banks points to a weak emphasis on elementary education as one of the key flaws of the SLPS. As students matriculate into middle and high school, they lack the proficiency necessary to move forward.

"They don't have the reading skills, they don't have the math skills, they don't have the communication skills," Banks said. "What we see at fourth graders coming in who are at a ninth or fifth grade math level, and who can sometimes barely write sentences."

While elementary engagement is vital, the roots of the educational crisis are multifarious and deeply ingrained in St. Louis's demographics. The majority of students attending SLPS live either at or below the poverty line. According to each district's 2007 annual reports, 81.6 percent of SLPS students were eligible for free and reduced lunch, compared to only 15.3 percent at Clayton.

Urban Future, a Missouri non-profit

organization founded in 1998, is working within city schools to tackle the burdens that low socio-economic status can place on urban youth.

"Most people just relate poverty to financial means," said Blake Buchanan, director of the IMPACT™ tutoring program within Urban Future. "But it's really a lot more than that."

Ruby K. Payne's "A Framework for Understanding Poverty" defines the condition as "the extent to which an individual does without resources." She groups these resources into eight different categories: financial, emotional, mental, spiritual, physical, support systems, role models, and knowledge of hidden rules.

"If you look at poverty as the lack of resources, the resources can all be seen as legs on a chair," said Ted Gatlin, an IN-SPiRE™ team leader with Urban Future.

"If one leg is missing, the chair is going to become wobbly. So what happens to our students is that they're unbalanced, and once they are balanced, they get into a bad position."

Education is the key to breaking out of generational poverty.

However, because of their "wobbly" position, students' main focus can't always be on completing homework.

"The priority a lot of times cannot be education," Banks said. "Many of my students have to go find a job because they need to support their family. A lot of them can't see the long term benefits of an education, so they put their focus on things that will give them short term results."

SLPS and Clayton have identical graduation requirements, consisting of four credits in English, three in Social Studies, Math and Science, and seven total in electives. However, while 98.3 percent of Clayton seniors graduated in 2007, only 37.8 percent of Beaumont's class did.

"Urban Future's main goal is to help urban students to see and believe the possibilities," Gatlin said.

First and foremost, students need the vision to succeed. Or else, school is merely

a by-product of their existence.

On a national level, only 50 percent of students in low income communities will graduate from high school, according to the 2005 National Assessment of Educational Progress. However, those that do will perform on average at an eighth grade level.

"Unfortunately, I think students tend to settle for mediocre results," Banks said. "I see those who celebrate for getting a C on a test because it's passing. There are definitely intelligent students here who are very competitive, but they are mostly the minority."

Clayton, by contrast, seems to be an environment of intense scholastic competition. Students find pressure from their fellow classmates, succeeding through mutual challenges.

"I've always been competitive," sophomore Ian Miller said. "Peers around me who are trying really hard encourage me to try hard too, because I know I can be a part of that group of people who strive for academic achievement."

At Fanning, Albritton sees things differently.

"It's not cool to be a good student," Albritton said. "But I guess it's okay."

The gap between city and county schools exists, therefore, in statistics on the surface, but in culture at the core. When the norm is success, students abide by that standard. And when the vast majority of a school's population is not succeeding, that becomes the norm.

The disparity in access to technology may also play a role in students' motivations. During an age when almost any information is available at the click of a mouse, most students in urban schools don't have a mouse to click.

"Having a computer at home is definitely beneficial, if not essential," Miller said.

In addition to using his laptop to type essays and assignments, he often looks to

the internet for research and review.

Going back to Payne's definition, however, inner-city students lack not only material resources to succeed, but also the emotional support to do so. Without parents who are encouraging students to persevere, academic excellence becomes a far-fetched dream.

"Our parents are a lot less interested in education, and that rubs off on children," Banks said.

Although teachers and administrators hope to involve parents more closely, their plans have not necessarily translated into action. Organizations such as Urban Future are left carrying the torch. In addition, the SLPS administration's rapid change in leadership over time has left many parents disillusioned with the district's promises of improvement.

"In the past six years, we've had five different superintendents," Gatlin said. "With each one comes a different philosophy, different policies. And what happens is that the students are the ones left holding the bag."

Despite an ever-changing administration, teachers are constantly striving to impact their pupils for the better. The involvement of young adults in this endeavor has increased tremendously in recent years, prompted by the Teach For America (TFA) program.

Proposed by Wendy Kopp in her senior undergraduate thesis at Princeton, TFA is a corps of recent college graduates who commit to two years of teaching at an urban or rural school. TFA brought Buchanan, a native of the west coast, to St. Louis.

"When I first started, I thought that TFA was just a break from school," Buchanan said. "But spending two years teaching made me realize that this is very difficult, while very rewarding and very important work. I like being in the fight."

Buchanan has chosen to dedicate his life—at least for a little longer—to fighting the injustice of educational inequality. Since 1990, TFA has continued to grow through participants like Buchanan, gaining an outstanding reputation for social service.

"In our country that aspires so admirably to be a place of equal opportunity, still where you're born does so very much to determine your educational prospects,

and in turn your life prospects," Wendy Kopp said in her video appeal for graduates to join the corps.

More than five decades after the Brown v. Board of Education ruling in 1954, America's schools remain unequal.

But Albritton still dreams. "I want to be someone who saves people's lives," she said. "A hero, or something."

Perhaps the future heroes of America won't be doctors or lawyers, but educators.

A 2000 study conducted by the University of Texas-Dallas analyzed extensive amounts of standardized test data alongside teachers' qualifications. Researchers concluded that "having a high quality teacher throughout elementary school can substantially offset or even eliminate the disadvantage of low socio-economic background."

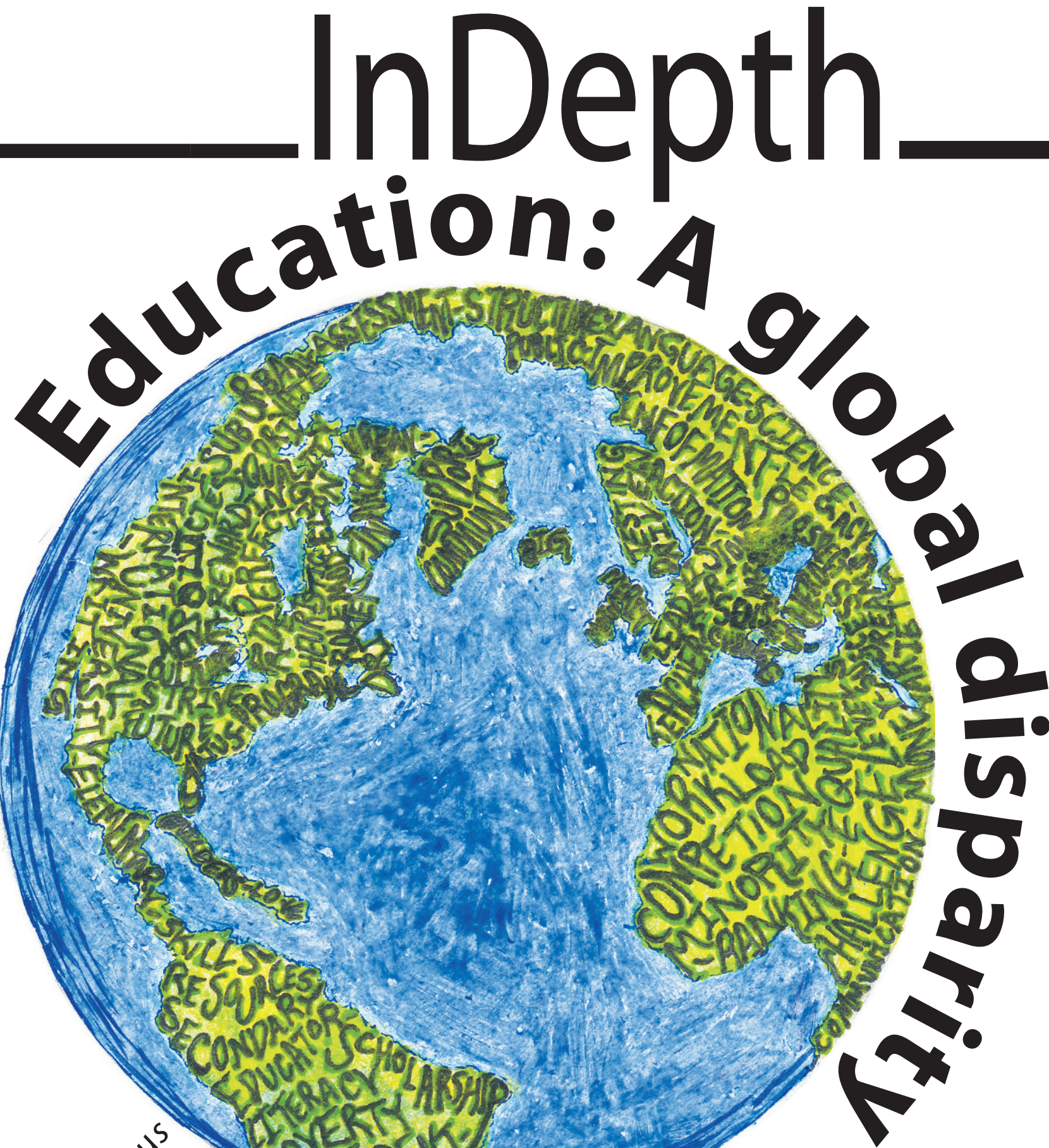
Teachers, then, become the key to realizing the American dream. Banks cites that a high school graduate will make \$100,000 more on average than a non-high school graduate in their lifetime, and a college graduate will make \$1 million more than a high school graduate.

On a deeper level, however, education means more than a well paying job. Knowledge increases awareness, allowing people to form a more connected, involved, and caring community.

"The more educated a group of people are, the more successful and driven they will be in life," Banks said. "Education is vital because it helps people not only to better themselves, but to better others around them."

Although the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act made improving America's educational institutions a national priority, U.S. public schools have yet to realize its vision.

"There is unfortunately a societal belief that schools can't make a significant difference in the face of socioeconomic disparities, that children of color cannot meet high expectations, and that it is not worthwhile to invest in mitigating the challenges of poverty that make it harder for students to focus at school," Kopp said in her mission statement. "It doesn't have to be this way."



In the city and county, west and east, industrialized and underdeveloped, schools strive to educate students in an increasingly dipolar world.



Equality Achievement Action Structure Challenge Organization Accountability Focus  
Levels Resources Mission Secondary Knowledge Burdens Prospects Merit Improvement  
Districts Economy Injustice Progress Funding  
Nation Perception University International Status  
Value Responsibility Student Opportunity Graduation

## International approaches to learning vary

As American students work to match the standards of their peers internationally, students around the world are taught in a variety of methods that depend on the structure, funding, and focus of school systems in their countries.

Sneha Viswanathan  
Editor

In 2003, the United States ranked fifteenth in the world in mathematics for eighth graders, according to the National Center for Education Statistics (<http://nces.ed.gov>). This was America's ranking among 46 countries that participated in the Trends in International Math and Science Study, conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). The United States received an average score of 504, 38 points above the international average. In comparison, several countries including Estonia, the Netherlands, and Belgium received scores of at least 530, which is 64 points above the international average.

Despite its scores on international assessments, the United States' test scores are not a direct indication that its quality of education is not competitive with that of other countries. According to Dr. Susan Everson, a professor of educational leadership and higher education at Saint Louis University, several factors are reflected in the United States' test scores.

"[Test scores] depends on the level of the children and the subject matter and how many children are tested in each country," Everson said. "In many cases, the US is doing quite well, and in some others it may not be doing as well. People take a kind of a broad sweep, and report it [test results] without looking at the great detail behind it all. It depends on who's in the test pool. For example, some countries don't test all of their students; they only test a group of students. In our country we test all our students, so statistically that makes a difference."

Another challenge that the US faces in educating young people is the size of its student population. "I haven't worked in a system that educates as many kids or as large a population as the US does, so in that regard we have a lot to be proud of," Everson said.

According to Everson, the international scores are more reflective of the quality of K-12 education than overall public or private education in a nation. "At the high levels students are doing quite well, and in other situations they're not," Everson said. In higher education, (colleges and universities) we're still considered the most successful higher education system in the world."

However, students who have attended schools in other countries feel that they are more prepared for jobs after completing high school.

"I definitely think European kids are more prepared," said junior Lisa Giovetti, who attended school in Italy. "By doing more subjects, they get a pretty good idea of what they want to do."

Giovetti also thinks the flexibility offered by the American school system can be disadvantageous.

"Here, the fact that you can choose your own subjects means that you might not even take hard subjects, so you're less prepared," Giovetti said. "In Italy sometimes you have to take hard classes. In Europe, you have one teacher, for five or three years, and you have a journey of three years with those same teachers, and they really get to know you. So it's much more intense because they have a path for you that is already set up; you don't choose it by yourself so you can't mess up. Here, you can take only one year of a hard class and that's much easier."

According to senior Puhuan Zhao, who attended school in China, the material taught in schools and the focus of educators also contributes to a difference in the level of difficulty that students face in different education systems.

"American teachers are more focused on the concepts; so if you understand the concept, you are good to go," Zhao said. "But in China you need to know how to do it [a particular type of problem], so for those purposes teachers might give you many questions, like 50 of the same type. So even though you don't understand why you do it, you know how to do it when you see the problems."

Giovetti said that increased student involvement in the American education system has both a positive and a negative impact on the quality of education.

"In the United States, the students participate a lot more," Giovetti said. "In Europe, kids just learn passively; they just sit and study. That's one of the positive things about school here that I like. The negative thing about teaching [in the US] is that the teachers do a lot more superficial things, and students don't get in depth in what they're learning, they just go through the whole thing vaguely. One thing that I think is bad is when we're supposed to analyze something the teachers always let the students do it, and the students do a superficial analysis of things."

The subject material taught in some other countries is also

geared more towards tests and exams. "School in China is really competitive, because they tell you your class rank for each test out of the entire grade," Zhao said.

"Usually the top hundred students are in two special classes." "Here in the US, with the way they organize quizzes, tests, and homework, it's so easy to get a good grade because if you do your homework, if you participate, if you do well on quizzes that are really easy, it's very hard to get a bad grade," Giovetti said. "In Europe, you get four exams, and that's all the grades you get. If you fail, you fail. You can't make it up. So you have a good chance of getting a failing grade at the end of the semester."

According to Everson, the over arching organization and funding of a country's schools can make a big difference in the type of education that students receive.

"There is as much difference between, for example, European countries as there is between European countries and the US," Everson said. "Different European countries organize their schools and fund their schools in different ways. In some countries they don't even have school districts, each school is sort of stand alone, and they have this funding formula where all schools are funded through the formula, including private and public schools. In other places you have big local education agencies, like in England, and they're as big as countries, and all of those work in a system like a school district. In some countries, the high schools have to be a certain size, and if it's not that size, they have to merge with another school to be large enough to get their funding."

However, Everson considers the biggest factor in quality education to be the perception that different societies around the world hold of educators, as well as the motivation of educators themselves.

"There are some countries where educators are highly respected, they're paid well, they are given a great deal of autonomy, and that's a huge deal," Everson said. "There are some young people now moving into education who feel that way, that it [educating] is a calling, and they're quite good at it. The number one issue for success for students is having a highly qualified teacher in the classroom, so that's the biggest thing everybody has to deal with, no matter where they are."

## Q & A: Moving from suburban to urban

Former CHS English teacher Kathleen Puhr speaks about her experiences teaching in St. Louis Public Schools, contrasting the environment of the city school district with that of Clayton.

Jeremy Sleeke  
Editor in Chief

Why did you decide to move to the city from Clayton?

Well actually I had decided to retire from Clayton in 2004, and I was doing some writing and some work for educational testing service, and some tutoring as well. I received a phone call last summer and pretty much was called out of retirement to help out the city because the woman who they thought was going to teach AP English decided to retire at the last minute, so they called Clayton, talked to our Superintendent, and they gave him my name, so they called me up, and I had no plans to return to classroom teaching, but it was an offer I couldn't refuse because it was one class of AP English.

How do you like teaching in the city schools?

I like many things about it, and I am driven crazy by other things. The things I really like are the students' eagerness to learn, and their gratitude for having a person that knows the subject and cares about the subject. I have 14 students, and they're all girls this year. Last year I had 10, with some guys mixed in with that. We're trying to build a program, we're trying to get students to think of themselves as scholars, to think of themselves as real students and not just kids putting in time at a place.

Could you describe the differences between comprehensive, magnet, and charter high schools in the city?

The St. Louis public system has probably about nine, maybe 10 high schools now. Four of those are what's called comprehensive high schools, and those are just neighborhood schools, anyone who lives in the area can attend them, and those are among the lowest performing, most troubled schools in the district—they have the high drop-out rates and so on. Those schools include Beaumont, Sumner, Roosevelt and Vashon, and those are the ones that are in the press, they get the bad publicity a lot of the time, so that's one fact. For magnet schools, students have to bring a certain ability to them, in our case it's ability in the visual or performing arts, so students have to audition, or they have to draw, or demonstrate that they're performers or something like that to be admitted to the school. Charter schools of course are run for profit, and they are competing and draining away kids who would opt for magnet schools or go to charter schools, so as a proponent of public education I regard them as a bad idea, as an enemy. And in fact there's a competitive performing and visual arts school that's a charter school and I just don't like the idea of them being around to draw our students away for a profit.

How would you characterize the state of public education in the city at this point?

It's sort of a patchwork of really good things—good teachers, good students, good programs—and some appalling teachers, students, and programs. And I think the appalling student piece is directly related to the kinds of teachers and materials that are available to the kids, and of course too the socioeconomic strata of the parents and the family. When you're struggling to survive it's really hard to focus on anything but that, so education sometimes takes a lower priority because the kid is paying for the electric bill or trying to put food on the table. And we see some of that even at Central, some of my students are working to pay for groceries, or pay the gas bill or what have you.

Is there anything else you'd like to add?

These kids that I'm working with are really remarkable people because they have many strikes against them financially and in terms of family situation, and also in terms of the kinds of educational experiences they've had up to this point, but they are very grateful to have a competent and qualified teacher working with them, and I get thanked almost every single day, which is really nice. At Clayton your whole schedule is filled with outstanding teachers, but these kids don't see that, so being in an environment where I'm able to be a good teacher for them is very rewarding.



Kathleen Puhr guides a discussion in her AP English class at Central High School, a magnet school in the St. Louis Public School district. Although she retired from teaching at Clayton in 2004, Puhr returned to teach one class at Central, where she finds students who are tremendously grateful for her qualifications.

# Heavy AP course load challenges Clayton students

Schuyler Longmore  
Reporter

Senior year comes around and high school students can finally see a glimpse of light at the end of the tunnel. Some students take it easy in high school, especially during senior year when senioritis kicks in, but others choose a more difficult path to success.

Many students take Advanced Placement classes, or AP classes as they are commonly known, to challenge themselves and rank in the highly competitive world of college applications, and a select group of the most dedicated even takes four or more AP's.

"While they may be difficult, all of my AP's are very interesting," senior Tom Maxim said.

Maxim takes four AP's, including English Literature, Chemistry, Art and BC Calculus.

"They often cover the most interesting material," Maxim said. "They tend to go more in depth than most other classes do."

So while the workload is a burden, the high level of interest these students find in the material often outweighs the stress. Students taking multiple AP classes don't deny the stressful workload; in fact, they acknowledge that it does affect them in ways, including cutting significantly into their free time.

"The workload on weekends is especially rough," Maxim said. "There isn't much time to relax on the two days that there's no school."

Senior Paige Meneses takes AP Biology, AP Calculus AB, AP World History and AP English Language.

"The most stressful times are in preparation for winter finals, and for AP exams in May," Meneses said.

The intense workload is felt especially when exams and projects factor into the schedule.

AP's force you to extend yourself academically. You discover a corner of academia that you never thought you'd love.

Paige Meneses  
Senior

Senior Daniel Shore is in AP Biology, AP Calculus BC, AP English Literature, and AP U.S. History.

"There seems to always be either a test or a paper due," Shore said. "There really hasn't been any kind of break so far this year."

The steady flow of work is necessary to qualify the classes as college level, and no one is arguing the workload is unfair.

"It is a matter of doing what is necessary if the course is to achieve its stated purpose," AP Physics teacher Rex Rice said. "That purpose is typically to replicate the college course for which AP credit would be given."

Rice, an experienced teacher of one of the most difficult AP classes Clayton has to offer, believes that AP classes must deliver college level credit so the workload must be appropriate; therefore, it will not be unfair.

These classes help prepare students for the level of work they will experience in college.

"Taking rigorous courses is important when trying to set yourself up for success past high school," said Maxim about the ability of AP's to prepare for college level education.

AP classes offer more than hard work and college credit though.

"I wouldn't cutback on any of my classes," Maxim said. "While they may be difficult, all of my classes are very interesting."

The interesting material they offer trumps the workload and competitive titles of AP classes. Most students take AP classes to expand on their love of learning and find new academic interests.

"AP's force you to extend yourself academically," Meneses said. "You discover a corner of academia that you never thought you'd love."

Some students solely look for the credit AP's can potentially give them, and the ability to pad their résumés. The desire for college credit going into college often leads some students to take the AP exams without actually participating in the class.

"This would be virtually impossible to replicate without taking the course," said Rice about the lack of knowledge gained. "I haven't met many students who were willing to put in the necessary effort on their own to be adequately prepared to sit for the AP Physics exam."

If students are willing to work hard enough to score well on their AP exam without taking the class, they are wasting valuable time where they could be acquiring knowledge.

Students don't argue with the fact



Jessica Shen

Rex Rice and students in the AP Physics class. AP classes teach in-depth curriculum and prepare students to take the AP exams in the spring. Rice, an experienced teacher of one of the most difficult AP classes at Clayton, believes that a heavy workload is required in order to deliver college level credit.

that they are obviously looking nice in the college admission process.

"Although a love of learning is a factor, AP's are necessary to play in the admissions game," Meneses said.

Along with gaining valuable knowledge, the AP classes give students the perk of looking good to colleges by presenting a challenging schedule.

"BC Calculus is the most difficult class I take," Maxim said.

Shore agreed with that analysis: "My most difficult class is BC Calculus," Shore said. "It goes really fast and forces us to learn most of the math on our own."

BC Calculus is one of the most challenging AP classes, and often draws the most dedicated CHS students.

Dedication is a definitive plus when taking AP classes. "I am soon going to be a second semester senior suffering from

senioritis," Meneses said. "And four AP classes doesn't exactly cater well to that profile."

Meneses and other seniors who are taking multiple AP classes have been working hard their whole high school careers. Often second semester becomes the most difficult to handle with such a challenging schedule as college admissions roll in and senioritis kicks into full swing. ☹



Jessica Shen

Highly active students looking for a quick energy boost often reach for energy drinks. However, an immediate energized euphoria often is followed by hours of anxiety and restlessness.

## Energy drinks provide boost, not without price

Hannah Callahan  
Reporter

Imagine this: a student sits at his desk under a lamp's yellow light. He taps his knee with a pencil as the clock ticks, 12:15 a.m. The remainder of hours of homework and a biology test lingers over his shoulder, so what is he to do? According to many students at CHS, the answer is an energy drink, sometimes containing a caffeine level equal to 14 cans of Coca-Cola.

Clayton students are not alone. In 2007, energy drink sales were estimated at \$3 billion, increasing 16 percent from 2006. Ironically, their arcane ingredients are ignored by consumers, looking for hours of energized euphoria. However, this ecstasy is often followed by hours of restlessness, shaking, anxiety, insomnia, rapid heartbeats, and in rare cases, death.

For Sophomore Sarah McAfee, keeping up with friends sometimes involves consuming two cups of coffee, a Mountain Dew, and a Red Bull to stay awake. McAfee said, "I was past the point of hyper; I just felt sick. I couldn't talk correctly and felt almost too tired to move, but I couldn't sit still. I started

shivering."

In 2007, in a survey of 496 college students, 51 percent reported having an energy drink in the last month. Of the energy drink consumers, 29 percent reported "weekly jolt and crash episodes," like McAfee, and 19 percent reported heart palpitations after drinking energy drinks.

In a story in The New York Times last September, Roland Griffiths, a professor of behavioral biology, said, "the caffeine amounts are often unlabeled, and few include warnings about the potential health risks of caffeine intoxication."

"The problem with any energy supplement is that once you don't have it in your system anymore, you feel more tired than before," McAfee said.

Energy drink Red Bull and Monster are the most popular. Monster, interested in narrowing the gap with Red Bull, has hired extreme sport stars like supercross racer Ricky Carmichael to advocate the neon green-colored can.

Energy drinks, called the crack of the 21st century, are often marketed to kids and young adults, who shy away from tradi-

tional caffeinated drinks, like coffee. Consumers are drawn in by their saccharine flavor and brightly colored fluid; however, it would be difficult to find anyone who drinks them solely for their taste.

According to Alex Wipperfurth, author of Speed-In-A-Can, The Red Bull Story, Red Bull tastes terrible and costs eight times more than a can of Coke. Why, then, has it become a household name? Wipperfurth said, Red Bull grew because of urban legend - when it was first made in the 1990's in Austria, people would smuggle it across the border to Germany claiming it was liquid amphetamine."

Our society longs for bedazzlement; Red Bull represents a legal and trendy way to become euphorically energized.

McAfee said, "I drink Red Bull and Starbucks double shot espressos. When I can't get either of those, I go for Mountain Dew, but it's not the same [as Red Bull]."

Health concerns or not, for energy fans like McAfee, Red Bull is the pause that refreshes for a long night of partying with friends. ☹

## 5 Steps to minimize final exam stress

Dawn Androphy  
Staff Reporter

**1** Students should be sure to exercise and maintain a healthy diet. "It's important to take care of yourself," psychologist Steven Till said. "All students should pay careful attention to their eating habits and make sure that they maintain a balanced diet." Although many students will be inclined to eat more junk food while they prepare for their final exams, Till maintains that eating a balanced diet is a key to success. "Unhealthy foods will not keep your body in its best physical shape," Till said, "and exercise is just as important."

Not only does exercise allow a great opportunity to take a break from studies, but also it releases endorphins that eliminate stress. A study at the University of Liverpool showed a strong correlation between exercise and lower stress levels.

Since a healthy diet and exercise aren't likely to have any negative effects on studying, it wouldn't hurt CHS students to try visiting the Center during study breaks instead of snacking.

**2** Spending too much time alone doing homework and studying will wear anyone down. To avoid dealing with their stress alone, students should try studying in groups with friends. "Studying in groups can definitely help students deal with their stress issues," said Till. "If a student is too overwhelmed it is very important that they seek help from friends and family." Till recommends taking study breaks with friends between long study sessions if students prefer not to study in groups.

**3** Students need to get some sleep. No one functions at their highest level when they haven't gotten enough sleep. Not only is studying while sleep-deprived less effective, but also students are more susceptible to stress when they get less sleep. "Sleep is one of the most important factors in reducing stress" Till said. "Getting some sleep will help benefit a student's stress level." A few nights here and there without a lot of sleep won't ruin teens, but several consecutive all-nighters will likely manifest themselves in their stress level.

**4** Students should try meditation and breathing exercises. As corny and clichéd as this may sound, meditation exercises will lower student heart rates and provide a quick fix to their stress problems. Even taking a few deep breaths with closed eyes can help. However, if students really want to commit, there are several books on the subject and most University websites have a section on meditation exercises.

**5** Students need to manage time wisely. This may be the most important and effective method for managing stress levels. According to The University of Texas at Austin Counseling and Mental Health Center, "One of the greatest sources of stress is over-commitment or poor time management." By spreading out exam studying over a longer period of time, there will be less work to do the weekend before finals start. If there is less work and studying to stress about, then students won't be in a mad rush and completely overwhelmed in the final days of the semester. Try making a calendar out a few weeks before finals with specific goals to accomplish each day so that the entire preparation process can be taken in small steps. Sometimes the best cure is prevention. ☹

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# Varsity girls' basketball faces new challenges

Christian Thomas  
Reporter

A new Missouri High School Activities Association rule moved the practice times back a week for winter sports. The lost time had mixed reviews among members of the girls' varsity basketball team.

"I don't think the lost time really affected us," junior forward Maggie Lanter said. "We still were able to get into shape and learn our new offense."

Senior center Mary Barber said the team suffered from missing that extra week.

"We had to work extra hard with the time we got," Barber said. "Coach held us until about 6 o'clock during preseason to make up for lost time."

The Lady Hounds have had their share of ups and downs, and currently boast a 1-2 record.

"We made a lot of silly mistakes and had too many turnovers which ultimately cost us two winnable games," Barber said.

On a brighter note, the Hounds are a more complete team than last year's squad.

"Our starting five is very balanced," Lanter said. "Michelle Cooper and Diane Martin are great ball handlers and shooters. Darcy Sanders is good at driving to the basket as well as rebounding. Mary Barber is a scoring and rebounding

machine and is a great defender. I am the best defender and most aggressive of the bunch."

Barber's 17 points per game lead the Suburban East Conference while her 13 rebounds per game rank her at #5 in the Metro Area.

"I want to play basketball in college so I worked really hard in the off season on my game," Barber said. "Off the bench we have a lot of talent. Erin Bax and Jaclyn Poe have really accepted their roles despite being sophomores. Junior Sonja Peterman is another good ball handler and positive leader. Junior Becca Swarm is a great shooter, and juniors Taquera Walker and Chelsea Grandberry contribute on the defensive end."

The Hounds return Head Coach Steve Lanter in hopes of helping build Clayton into a well-respected basketball program in the St. Louis area.

"Having my dad as a coach really doesn't bother me. He knows everything about the game and is respected by my teammates. Those are two things I look for in a great coach," Lanter said.

Barber agrees that Coach Lanter has been good for the team.

"Coach Lanter is really trying hard to boost the Clayton basketball reputation," Barber said. "He has moved our style of play into more of an up-tempo game which will give us more opportunities to win in the future."

The two agreed that Coach Lanter

makes basketball enjoyable in both games and practices, and that this is the reason why he is so well liked and respected throughout the team.

"This year will most likely be a building year for the basketball program," Barber said. "We have a lot of young players on the varsity level that are still trying to adjust. I expect for us to cut down on turnovers and mistakes as the season progresses."

Lanter expects the team to be even more successful this season.

"We have great coaching, good leadership in our captains (Maggie, Mary, and Diane), and great players. Those are the tools necessary to be successful," Lanter said.

Both players agreed the Ladue game on will be the most exciting this season.

"We are fairly evenly matched and it will be fun playing them for the last time in my high school career," Barber said. "Westminster is another key game since they beat us in districts last year to end our season. They are not as good as last year since they lost most of their team to graduation. I expect us to beat them this year."

Lanter said she really loves her team this year and is excited for further success with the Hounds.

"It is good we are able to laugh and joke around in practice at times, however we can still focus when we need to," Lanter said.



photo credit to Julia Reilly

Senior Diane Martin attempts to gain possession of the ball from an opponent as sophomore Darcy Sanders watches on from the side

# CHS alum find college sports rewarding, beneficial

Fontasha Powell  
Senior Managing Editor

Although sports at CHS might seem like the height of success, many CHS alumni have gone on to play college sports, and are even playing at Division-I schools. One, Jarius Byrd, is even being looked at to go to the NFL.

College sophomore Keely Brooks graduated from CHS in 2007. That same year, 2007, she was the high school Missouri State diving champion.

She dived at San Diego State University her freshman year, and is now diving at the University of Missouri, an NCAA Division-I diving school.

Brooks said that she switched schools this past year because she thought Mizzou's diving program is more tailored to her needs.

"San Diego State was more of a party school and I wanted to improve my training," Brooks said. "They are both great programs, but Mizzou is just a better fit for me."

"I've been diving for the past 12 years," Brooks said. "I was able to dive in college because I was recruited by schools."

Brooks said that being recruited by Division-I schools across the nation was a unique experience.

"When you are recruited by a school, they pay for everything," Brooks said. "Usually they fly you up, and the first day is spent in meetings with academic advisors and coaching staff. You also watch a practice. They have team events on recruiting weekends like going to a comedy club and a party after."

Brooks said that the point of a recruiting trip was not only to determine if you liked the school, but also if you fit into the team dynamic.

"You stay at a teammate's house and there are plenty of team meals," Brooks said. "It's a great time but it's also scary because there are the people you will possibly be spending every day with for the next 4 years."

College sophomore Stacey Lawrence graduated from CHS in 2007 and has been playing basketball since third grade and this is her second year playing NCAA Division III women's basketball at Greenville College in Illinois.

The best part about college ball is traveling," Lawrence said.

"But it also kind of stinks with classes. I love spending time with my teammates, we get really close. Also, overall feel of the game is more competitive and more skilled."

College sophomore Barissa Ford was Lawrence's teammate and graduated in 2007 as well. She played NCAA Division-II basketball at Henderson State University and currently plays at University of Missouri-St. Louis, also an NCAA Division II school.

"I received a scholarship to play basketball in college," Ford said. "The best part about playing in college is being with a team and being able to travel."

College freshman Parker Rawdon graduated from CHS in 2008 and plays soccer at Columbia College, an NAIA Division I school.

"I tried out for the team, and the coach gave me a scholarship, so I took it," Rawdon said. "I love playing soccer, the team is great and it is an all around fun time."

Brooks agreed with Lawrence. She also thinks that bonding with her team is an excellent aspect of college athletics.

"The best part about participating in college athletics is that it's like I have a family at school," Brooks said. "Here at Mizzou, I spend pretty much of all my time with my teammates. It's like being in a sorority or fraternity, but better."

However, the 4 athletes universally agreed that the worst part about participating in college athletics is that it's time consuming.

"The worst part is having to wake up at 5:30 every morning to go to practice," Brooks said. "It's very time consuming and I don't get to have the 'normal college experience.'"

In college a lot of people get to go out during the week and party whenever they want. I'm limited to Saturday nights. I also mostly socialize with athletes because they understand and experience the same limitations."

Lawrence said that training was extremely time consuming.

““  
Playing a college sport is time consuming but so much fun, if you have the chance, you should do it.”

Parker Rawdon  
College Freshman

"Off season training never really ends," Lawrence said. "And having two-a-day practices 6 days a week sometimes sucks. I have to be more careful about how much sleep I get, and I have to prioritize homework differently than other students."

Rawdon rarely got days off from practice.

"It's very time consuming, there are many weekends where we are not able to even go out," Rawdon said. "I was surprised at how time consuming it actually was. Over the whole season, I only got 4 days off. I had to change a lot of things to play soccer in college. I had to change my schedule so that I had time to go to school, practice, eat and do homework."

"Managing my time, playing basketball, doing having a full time job can be stressful at times," Ford said. "Your social life is affected because you don't get as much free time to do social activities. With classes, practices, games and studying, social time is limited."

For some athletes, being an underclassman on the Varsity team had its disadvantages.

Lawrence found it a bit difficult to strike a balance between spending time with her fellow freshmen and her mostly upperclassmen Varsity team.

"Last year was a hard year because only me and 2 other freshmen were on varsity, so we didn't get to play much with our class members," Lawrence said. "Because I was a younger member on Varsity, most of the players had already established solid friendships, so I felt in between, in no man's land."

Rawdon didn't face such big issues, but he did say that the underclassmen had to do trivial chores.

"Underclassman always have to do the labor work, like moving goals and stuff," Rawdon said.

Still, the underclassmen managed to have sports success.

"This season I've had 4 goals and 4 assists and I started about 5 games," Rawdon said.

Lawrence too had success.

"Last year we were 18-9 and we ended up getting 3<sup>rd</sup> in the conference," Lawrence said. "Getting to see minutes my

freshman year was exciting and getting to start as a sophomore has been a huge accomplishment. So far this season, I am the season leading scorer."

Lawrence said that when she first started playing college basketball, she was surprised at the body type of many of the athletes, and the pace of the game.

"I was most surprised to find that college girls are slower than high school girls," Lawrence said. "But all college girls are like 10 times taller and stronger. I'm about 5'3 and I find that 9 times out of 10, I'm the smallest person on the court."

All of the athletes said that their sports careers in high school contributed positively to their success in college athletics.

"My sports career at CHS helped me learn time management and balance between school work, diving and a social life," Brooks said.

Lawrence agreed with Brooks. She also thought that it taught her fundamental life lessons about basketball.

"My team in high school prepared me a ton for college ball," Lawrence said. "I learned about teamwork and sacrifice for the sport."

Ford thought that CHS contributed in a good way to her basketball experience.

"My sports career at Clayton helped me mature as a player and gave me the confidence I have now," Ford said.

Lawrence said that all CHS students are welcome to come watch her Greenville College womens basketball team play in local games.

"Greenville plays in the area of a lot!" Lawrence said. "We play Fontebonne, Maryville and Webster, so come check us out!"

Both Brooks at Rawdon said that they would recommend other students to play sports in college if presented the opportunity.

"Playing a college sport is time consuming but so much fun, if you have a chance, you should do it," Rawdon said.

Brooks agreed. She thinks that the advantages of being a college athlete outweigh the disadvantages.

"Although my lifestyle is different, I think it's worth it because only a limited number of people get to experience a Division-I athletic lifestyle." ☺



photo credit to Abby Eisenberg

Junior Sam Jacus plays in a recent hockey game, Jacus has high hopes for this season and encourages fans to attend games and cheer on the team

# Hockey team hopes for success

Caroline Stamp  
Reporter

Ice hockey is arguably one of the most popular sports at CHS. However, with the team losing many key players and many new players, they have had a few rough games.

"We have seven freshmen playing," junior Sam Jacus said. "Some are very new to hockey, but they are learning."

With the set back of losing the seniors of last year, the team also lost a very important member of their team; the goalie.

"We lost Michael Vishnevetsky as our goalie," junior Jordan Stern said. "He moved to Russia to play semi-pro hockey."

With the loss of Vishnevetsky, the team had to get two new goalies. The team is adjusting to the new players and learning different strategies.

"It's difficult," Stern said. "We have to play more defensive instead of offensive. We also have to be more mindful of who is on the ice."

The two new goalies have both had hockey experience before this season, but neither of them attends CHS.

"The two new goalies don't go to Clayton," Jacus said. "One goes to Brentwood and the other goes to Ladue."

Clayton hockey is allowed to have these boys play for them because it is a club sport, so you don't have to go to the school that you play for. But, there are some setbacks to it being a club sport.

Since it is not sponsored by the school, all of the players have to cover their own expenses.

"Hockey can get really expensive," Jacus said. "With paying for sticks, gear, and ice time, it's around \$1100 per season."

To help bring down the cost, the hockey team practices before school from 6:30 am to 7:30 am. Ice time is cheaper in the morning than after school.

"The morning practices are ok because it's only twice a week," Jacus said. "It's really weird though. It's dark outside when you go in for practice, then light when you come out."

With new goalies and morning practices, the team has high hopes for the season.

"I want to beat MICDS, but they are really good so it's going to be tough," Jacus said. "I also want to beat Priory, because we haven't beaten them while I've been in high school."

At the end of the season, the team goes to a tournament based on how well they did during the season. "I would really like to make it to the Wik Cup," Stern said. "Last year we only made it to the Founders Cup."

The hockey team is gearing up to win more games and hoping for lots of support from fans.

"It really helps to have fans at the games," Stern said. "It helps us get into the game. And we will have a good rest of the season." ☺



# Basketball Hounds start season on high note

Evan Green  
Editor

The Clayton boys' basketball team is off to one of the best starts in recent team history. The Hounds are 3-1 with their lone loss coming in a back and forth, high paced nail biter against the much larger Hazelwood Central Hawks.

The Hounds began the season against Soldan in a first round match up at the Vianney tournament. The team was lead by senior Syd Warner who had 20 points and 10 rebounds, as well as sophomore Christian Thomas who poured in 16 points and grabbed 16 rebounds, leading the Hounds to a 69-58 win.

After the victory, the Hounds played the top seed in the tournament, Hazelwood Central, two days later. Even though the team lost 61-59, they proved that they could play with any team in the area.

"I learned from that game that the team is a lot tougher than I had thought," varsity boys' basketball head coach Ryan Luhnning said. "It was an intense physical game and we matched them blow for blow."

The game also showcased the team's pure talent. Warner lead the Hounds with 27 points and 10 rebounds, his highest personal point total in a high school game.

"The Hazelwood game was by far my best so far on the season," Warner said.

Junior guard Devonte Bell added 15 points and four assists to the team effort.

In the third place game, the team recovered by beating Fort Zumwalt South 55-52 as Bell and Thomas paced the Hounds with 14 points apiece.

Following the tournament, the Hounds traveled to Lutheran South to take on the Lancers. The team pulled out the victory 59-48, with Bell racking up 22 points to lead the team to their current 3-1 record.

Several keys to the season so far have not just been since the season started, but rather the team's approach to the season. For the first time, the team held two-a-day practices every other day.

"In the morning we were able to do a walk through, which set us up to be able to hit afternoon practices intensely," Luhnning said.

While the extra practices have been helpful to the team, there is nothing like actual game experience in order to deter-

mine your team's actual strengths and weaknesses, which the Hounds believe they have.

"We have gelled a lot more this season, we have good game intensity, and we can really push the ball," Bell said.

While the team's recent quality play, much emphasis has been placed on their strengths, but they do know that they have weaknesses.

"We need to play hard defense and box out on every possession," Warner said.

Other than just team play, a trio of individuals has really stood out for the team thus far.

"Syd, Devonte, and Christian have been our key players, but really we have a lot of contributors," Luhnning said.

In order to strive to reach certain milestones, some players have set personal goals for themselves before the season started.

"I would like to average 18 points, five assists, and two steals per game," Bell said.

Thus far, Bell is averaging 16 points per game, which leads the team.

The off-season plays a key part in setting up players for success during the season.

"During the off-season, basically I just played a lot, which kept me in shape for the season and allowed me to continue to work on my skills," Warner said.

His hard for in the off-season is probably a large reason that Warner is averaging 15 points and eight rebounds per game.

As for the third part of the team's trio of stars, Thomas is averaging 14 points a game, while his nine rebounds per game lead the team.

Other than talent, it takes good team leaders in order for a team to be successful, and the team definitely has good leadership.

"The captains are Syd Warner, Devonte Bell, and [senior guard] Andrew Kiplinger," Luhnning said.

The team also has several intriguing upcoming games on the schedule and would love for as many possible fans to attend. On Dec. 19 the team will be facing a tough Whitfield team at home, and after winter break, the Hounds will be playing an extremely talented Jennings team at home on Jan. 9.

With such a large amount of raw talent, leadership, and dedicated players, the team has certainly set itself up for an immensely successful season. ☺



Senior forward Syd Warner shoots over sophomore forward Chirstian Thomas and senior guard Brian Fleischer, while seniors Andrew Kiplinger and Louis MacIn watch in a recent practice. The Hounds are off to a 3-1 record and have been lead by Warner, Thomas, and junior point guard Devonte Bell thus far.



## Balancing Act: Athletes struggle to balance sports, school, family, friends

Sam Muslin  
Reporter

At Clayton High School there are 22 officially sponsored sports teams, several club teams, and hundreds of athletes. Virtually all of these athletes lose sleep to meet school deadlines while practicing every day between the end lines.

Student athletes tend to have something in common: they all find ways to balance academics, sports, families and friends.

Sophomore Kyleigh Smith plays two sports, field hockey and lacrosse, and still maintains a high GPA. She said she works hard to manage school, sports, friends and family.

"It gets pretty difficult to balance all four at the same time," Smith said. "There are many times I have to prioritize and decide what I need to focus on the most. During the season that I play a varsity sport, I usually only get about five hours of sleep each night, which is definitely not enough."

Smith said deciding the priorities isn't always easy.

"Schoolwork takes precedence, but I never miss a practice or a game, and I always find time to hang out with friends and family," Smith said. "Even though I put schoolwork first, I sometimes save it for last causing me to have to stay up till as late as 3 A.M. (and I have even pulled a few all nighters) in order to finish it all."

Smith said spending enough time with her family probably suffers the most.

"I get overwhelmed sometime," Smith said, "but I've gotten used to everything now and seem to find time to do everything."

Sophomore Josh Goldstein plays soccer and lacrosse, and also does well in school despite the demands of varsity athletics.

"It's all about school first, sports second," Goldstein said "I love sports, but I have to do well in school and that requires a lot of sacrifices."

Sophomore Gabe Nicolazzi, who plays football and lacrosse, agreed.

"I put school first, but my involvement in sports limits the

amount of time I have to complete my schoolwork."

Nicolazzi continued, "If there were thirty hours in a day, it would be a lot easier to manage all of the things that I have to do."

Junior Anna Copilevitz plays field hockey and soccer and also maintains a busy academic schedule. She said, "I guess when field hockey season comes around, I get the most stressed because it's the beginning of the school year and being on varsity takes up a lot of time doing team activities and dinners outside of practice," Copilevitz said.

"Usually, it's my family that gets pushed out by my sports teams and schoolwork," Copilevitz said. "By family, I mean family chores and being around the house to help out and baby sit."

Despite the hardships of participating in varsity athletics, Copilevitz acknowledged that playing on varsity sports teams had important benefits.

"I've always been athletic and liked sports," Copilevitz said, "so just the fact that I love playing them makes it worthwhile. It keeps you in shape, too."

Clayton sophomore Monica Gierada plays field hockey and soccer and is also an excellent student. She said that she is able to handle the workload, despite the challenges.

"It isn't that difficult for me overall," Gierada said, "but sometimes I have pretty difficult days. For example, if I have a ton of homework, a STUGO meeting, and a sport all on the same night, it's difficult to balance, but once it's over I have time for other things like family and friends."

Gierada said that she often has to put sports ahead of academics.

"Sports usually take precedence," Gierada said, "You don't really have a choice whether you go to practices and games unless you want to lose playing time. This makes school suffer because there isn't as much time to do homework and study."

Despite her demanding schedule, Gierada feels that participating in sports is still a valuable experience.

"It's worthwhile," Gierada said. "By getting involved, I feel better about myself. Friends and sports are fun, which help relieve stress from school." ☺

## Unusual winter sports fill time

Figure skating, horseback riding, indoor tennis, and skiing are just a few non-school sponsored sports that provide students with out of school activity and fun

Simone Bernstein  
Editor

Looking for a solo winter sport to keep active during the frosty season? You might consider figure skating, indoor tennis, skiing or horseback riding. Although these sports may not be officially sponsored by the high school, many students still take time to compete, practice and hone their skills.

Students experience many advantages when playing or performing in an individual sport. Equestrian club and substitute teacher coordinator Meg Flach feels there are many learning experiences that arrive from these types of sports.

"The benefits of participating in an individual sport like horseback riding are that it's a true measure of your skill," Flach said. "When you're not part of a team, your successes and failures are all your own and you get a much clearer picture of your improvement."

Individual sports allow students to focus on their specific weaknesses and focus on their dedication and diligence committed to their interests.

"I think an individual sport allows a person to focus on themselves and works towards achieving their own goals," junior horseback rider Kelley Dufour said. "You don't have to depend on anyone else."

Lian Lawton and Anna Anokhin are two CHS students who figure skate throughout the year. They became interested in the sport at a very young age. They continue to train in high school with a set of coaches.

"I became interested in figure skating when I was younger," freshman Anna Anokhin said. "I went to an ice rink and loved watching the skaters twirl and jump in the center."

Although the time constraints of high school limit the number of practices the girls can attend, they remain devoted to their sport.

"High school has made it difficult to improve my figure skating," Anokhin said. "I skate less than before because of homework and stress."

Joining a sport that is not affiliated with CHS leads to new friendships with students throughout the area.

"It is really nice to meet other people who have an interest in figure skating," freshman Lian Lawton said. "Figure

skating is a nice way to break away from my life at school."

Since figure skating and horseback riding are year round sports, it is difficult to participate in other school activities at CHS.

"I decided to do both figure skating and cross country in the fall," Lawton said. "It was very difficult to focus on both sports. Although I enjoy skating, I am glad that I did a team sport in high school."

Both figure skaters have high hopes for their future.

"By junior year of high school I would like to go to U.S. Nationals," Anokhin said. "I also hope to attend the world competitions by age 20."

Others hope to compete throughout college on club teams and maintain their heavy practice schedule.

"I plan to ride in college and join an

equestrian club," Dufour said. "Right now I am training about five to six times a week. Hopefully I will maintain my practice schedule and continue to ride after college."

Individual sports like horseback riding and figure skating are costly, time consuming and very dangerous.

"[Since] we're not affiliated with the school, we don't get any sort of budget to help pay for the riding," Flach said. "Horseback riding is an expensive sport. There's all of the personal equipment (helmet, boots, breeches, etc.) as well as the price of the riding lessons. That cost keeps a lot of students from being able to join the club."

Several CHS tennis players compete in the winter at indoor courts across the area. Participating in individual sports independent from the school has huge financial and time constraints

"During the winter I take tennis lesson and clinics, occasionally do tournaments to practice competing," sophomore Elle Jacobs said. "Occasionally I do tournaments to practice competing. I am more prepared during the fall season if I practice on my own during the year."

"Participating in an individual sport really forces you to recognize and work on your weaknesses instead of relying on teammates to compensate," Flach said. ☺

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# St. Louis sports teams fail to continue earlier success

Tom Evashwick  
Reporter

Four years ago, St. Louis was regarded as one of the best sports cities in the country. Each of the three major teams – the Rams, the Blues and the Cardinals – made the playoffs and the Redbirds made their first World Series birth since 1985. Since then, the teams fail to continue the success of earlier in the decade.

The Cardinals boasted the best record in the National League in 2004: 105-57. In 2005, they once again were tops in the league with a record of 100-62.

In that same season, Albert Pujols won his first MVP award after finishing second numerous times to Barry Bonds and Chris Carpenter won the Cy Young Award after missing most of the previous postseason.

The 2006 season ended successfully – with the Cardinals first World Championship in 20 years, but the team won just 83 games in the regular season.

Although the Blues have yet to win a Stanley Cup Championship, the team made the playoffs every year from 1980 to 2004.

The 25-year streak was the longest of any team in the four major sports, 10 years longer than the second-longest streak at the time – 15 years by the Detroit Red Wings. Since the team was sold to SCP Worldwide, the team has entered a rebuilding mode.

Nine years ago, the Rams won the Super Bowl over the Tennessee Titans by a single yard. Two years later, they were once again in the Super Bowl, but lost to the heavy underdog New England Patriots.

Since then, the Rams have only had a winning record once (12-4 in 2003). Gone are the days of “The Greatest Show on Turf” and the Rams’ winning ways.

Fans cite a variety of reasons for the Cardinals’ woes.

“The front office has just failed,” junior Joe Evers said. “There just haven’t been any big moves, and that’s what the team needs.”

While it is true that some big bats have come and gone over the past few



St. Louis Blues goalie Roman Turek, St. Louis Cardinals pitcher Jeff Suppan, and St. Louis Rams player Jamie Martin are members of the three major sports teams that fail to continue their earlier success in the decade.

years, there has been a glaring absence in bringing in pitchers – with the exception of the signing of Kyle Lohse last off-season.

Chris Carpenter was signed before the 2003 season, but other than those two there haven’t been any successful pitchers brought to the team. However, the team’s pitching staff hasn’t lasted through an entire season over the past few years.

The team depended on pitchers recently,” chemistry teacher Mike Howe said. “But injuries have devastated the team.”

In 2006, the Cardinals had three 10-game winners. Jason Marquis, one of the three, had an ERA over 6 and lost 16 games as well. Unfortunately for the team, four other pitchers started over 15 games that year, but no clear fourth and fifth starters.

Mark Mulder was brought in after five great seasons in Oakland, but was hurt throughout his St. Louis career.

“Mulder just flat out didn’t live up to the hype,” Evers said. “He was just injured too much.”

The 2007 season had even more injuries to the pitching staff. Only two

pitchers, Adam Wainwright and Braden Loper, started 30 games – which is considered standard for a full season. Neither of them was particularly stellar, however, both of whom lost 12 games. Kip Wells’ addition hurt the team more than it helped – he lost 17 games with a 5.70 ERA in 26 starts. Anthony Reyes went 2-14 as the fourth starter, and the Cardinals had no clear fifth starter once again; the duties were shared by Brad Thompson, Joel Pineiro later in the year, and Mike Maroth. Their combined record was 9-11.

Chris Carpenter missed his second consecutive season in 2008, yet the starting pitching was the best in the past few years.

“Unfortunately, it seems as though Carpenter may never come back,” Howe said.

Howe agrees with Evers. “The owners are cheap,” Evers said. “It seems as though they are pocketing the money.”

Evers believes that the money is not put back into the team.

“There’s a balance: the owners need to put money in the team for fans to come, and if the fans don’t come, then

there’s not a lot of money.” Howe said. “The Blues haven’t been the same team since the blackout season of 2005.”

Fans have similar opinions on what went wrong with the Blues.

“The Blues used to have very solid players, like Al MacInnis and Chris Pronger,” junior Jack Harned said. “Those players have moved on.”

After the veterans and cores of the team moved on, the Blues were left with young players.

“[The Blues] were built for the old NHL. They had crushing, powerful, big players,” junior Josh Few said. “But the league has changed. Now teams are built around fast, skilled players, and the Blues weren’t built for that.”

The Blues have a very young group of players.

“We currently have a untested roster, which is why the record is bad,” Harned said. “This season is definitely in rebuilding mode. However, the Blues have lost a lot of key players to injury, like rookie defenseman Eric Johnson for the season, Andy MacDonald, Paul Kariya, rookie T.J. Oshie, Dan Hinote and D.J. King. These players are important to the team and without them it’s hard to get going

without them.” Although the team has lost key players, the young players will have a chance to develop in the next few years.

“The owners are smart for not spending a lot of money though,” Few said. “We have a lot of young talent and they will develop over the next couple of years.”

Since the Blues have been the league’s cellar dwellers over the past three seasons, they’ve had high draft picks.

“Looking forward, we have had high draft picks, and we should be one of the better teams in the league looking forward,” Harned said. “David Perron, Eric Johnson and T.J. Oshie are just a few of the young talent we hope to use to build the Blues into the franchise it was in the past.”

With numerous young players, there are high hopes for the team in the future. “In a few years, the team will get better,” Few said. “We could actually bring home the [Stanley] cup.”

The Rams, on the other hand, seem to be getting worse rather than better.

“It’s simply because our line hasn’t been any good. Our defense isn’t good

either,” Alo Onwumere said.

Former first overall draft pick Orlando Pace has missed much of the past few seasons, leaving a gaping hole in the left side of the line.

Junior Matt Militello disagrees. “I think a lot of injuries have held them back over the past couple of years,” Militello said. “Pace and Bulger are the big two, but [Steven] Jackson has been out for a while too. Even Leonard Little has been out for some time.”

Besides injuries, students seem to agree that drafting is a problem.

“We need to do a better job drafting,” Onwumere said. “Jimmy Kennedy was a bust and Tye Hill is a major problem this year – he’s getting burned deep down the field all the time.”

Students agree that there are numerous problems with Tye Hill.

“You could make an argument that Hill was a bust,” Militello said. “But I’ll give him another year. It’s sad to say, but the only way to go is up. When we have players actually playing for a whole season the team has to improve. There’s absolutely no way we could get worse.”

Throughout this season, Marc Bulger’s play at quarterback has been less than great. With a quarterback rating of under 75 the past two years, some say a change must be made.

Trent Green was placed as the starter for two games earlier this season, but new head coach Jim Haslett proclaimed Bulger as the starter for the rest of the year.

“We’ve got to do something about Bulger,” Onwumere said. “We need to pick up a quarterback with one of our top picks as well. Preferably [Florida QB] Tim Tebow. Even if our line is awful as it has been, at least Tebow can scramble and make big plays with his feet.”

With former Atlanta quarterback Mike Vick in prison, talks have swirled about the possibility of Vick in a Rams uniform in two years.

“I think they should pick Vick up. At least he’ll be able to escape the pressure as well,” Onwumere said. “Throw me in the secondary. Then at least we’ll have a chance.”

## St. Louis: beware of bandwagon fans

’Tis the season for more and more of those obnoxious bandwagon fans to mysteriously come out of the closet.

The term bandwagon is defined as a popular trend that attracts growing support. Many casual fans of sports easily become bandwagon fans as they suddenly and randomly support teams that have just started winning. Essentially, people do this mainly to support the popular teams at the time.

And just as soon as people jump on bandwagons, they hop right off as soon as the team is not popular again.

No type of fan is more hated than a bandwagon fan, not even those people who don’t even like sports at all.

Recently, the entire St. Louis area has seen its fair share of this repulsive fandom. The most recent was the Missouri Tigers football team. Once they started winning last year, seemingly every person you saw was a “lifelong” Mizzou fan. Yet now, with the team not doing as well as last year, suddenly not as much

Missouri apparel has been seen around town, signifying that many have jumped off the Tiger bandwagon.

The people most affected by this however are the fans like myself that support the team through the bad AND good seasons.

Other than Missouri, the same thing happened with the Cardinals in 2006.

Even though basically everyone in St. Louis likes the Cardinals, not all fans actually follow the team through the whole season, as concerns are raised that the season is too long or that the games are boring. That entire sort of talk is completely annoying to those who are die-hard Cardinals fans like myself. Then, once the team

made the playoffs, suddenly everyone in St. Louis came out of the woodwork to support the team.

On the other side of the argument, one can say that it is fun to support a winner. However, my argument is that it would be even more fun to support a winning team after you have suffered through the hardships that come with supporting a losing team.

This past MLB season however provided two of the biggest examples of bandwagon fans in recent memory.

The Chicago Cubs had supposedly made all the right moves in the off-season by bringing in outfielder Kosuke Fukudome, manager Lou Piniella, and other big names in baseball, and so it was natural that once the team started winning and the media picked up on it, the Cubs became America’s unofficial team. Therefore, it was only natural that many, many people hop on the Cubs bandwagon.

As the Tampa Bay Rays began their season, they were considered an absolute joke by any serious “baseball man,” a team that had never finished higher than third place in the division; yet at the end of the season, the Rays made a dramatic playoff push to the World Series, and, along the way, almost all of America were suddenly hardcore Rays fans.

For those who had been Rays’ fans through all the losing, their sudden winning must have been so much sweeter than to those who were merely bandwagon fans.

And the true problem with bandwagon fans is that it is a shame that those people will never feel how good it feels to support a team that has consistently lost, but waited through the losing for the sweet smell of victory.

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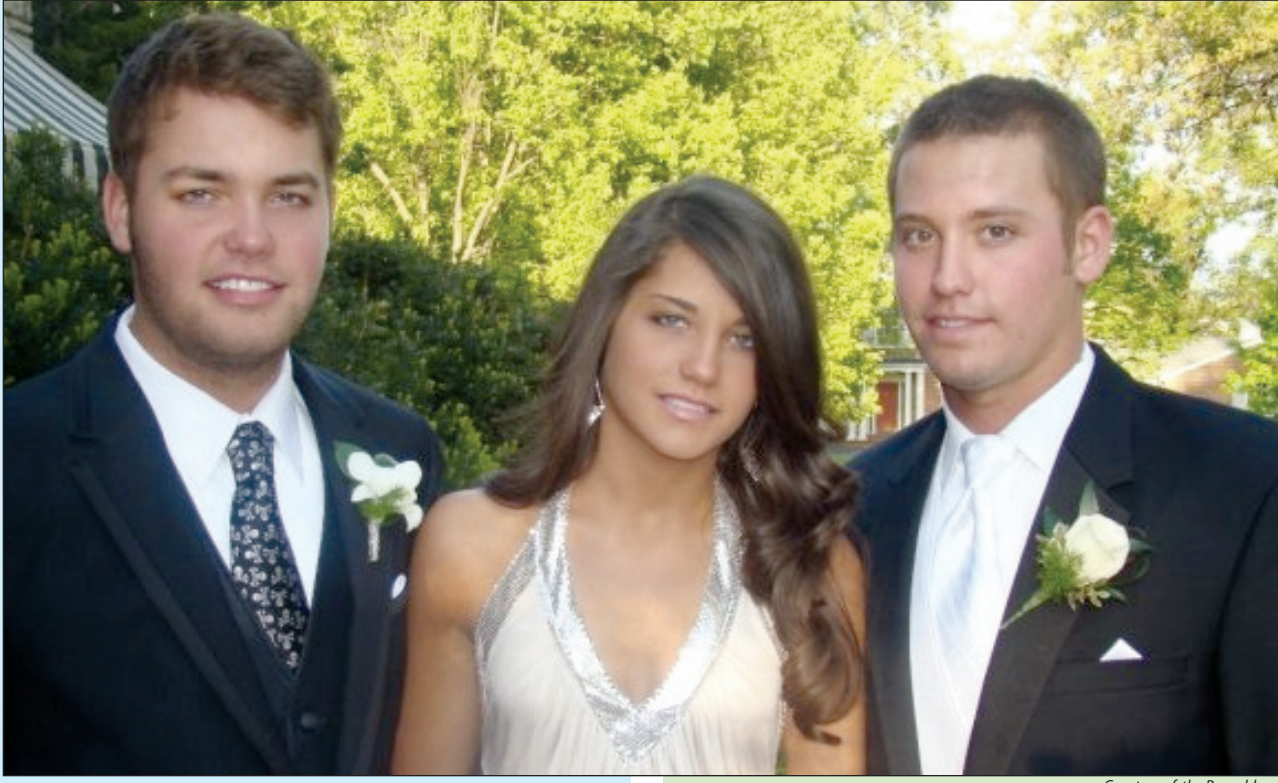
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## mirror יוריימ

Here at CHS, we have 13 pairs of twins and 2 pairs of triplets. Although the siblings look physically similar, they are unique individuals with original personalities and interests.

“It’s like having a built-in friend wherever you go. You have someone to do everything with.”  
Carter Ellston  
Sophomore



Cole, Hayley and Alec Rosenblum pose together before this year’s Homecoming Dance.

“I don’t get sick of her. I don’t under those twins that find their sibling such a burden. I think it’s such a waste of gift.”  
Rhiannon Jones  
Senior



Siobahn and Rhiannon Jones

Other photos taken by Fontasha Powell. Not Pictured: Carlton and Carlise Cooley, Charles and Joyce Du, Devonda and Devonte Bell. All of CHS’s twins and two pairs of triplets pose together. Many of them agree that best part about being a multiple is that they have a “built-in best friend.”



Jared and Javon Allen

Fontasha Powell  
Senior Managing Editor

Twins are quite literally nature’s clones. 25 percent of the US population consists of twins and little more than 8 percent are other multiples. At CHS, we have 13 pairs of twins and 2 sets of triplets. Sophomore Carter Ellston has a fraternal twin, Jack Ellston. Carter enjoys being a twin.

“I think it’s cool having a twin,” Carter Ellston said. “You have someone almost exactly like you. The best part about being a twin is having someone to do everything with. It’s like having a built-in friend whenever you go someplace new.”

Seniors Siobhan and Rhiannon Jones are also fraternal twins. Rhiannon agreed with Ellston. She believes that the best part about having a twin is having a great friend.

“The best part about having a twin is that I always have someone I want to hang out with,” Rhiannon Jones said. “I know my sister is similar enough to me that we always have something to talk about, I don’t have to be nice to her, and she always wants to do the same things that I do. I really like that she always knows what I’m going to say and vice-versa. It really is like having a clone.”

Siobhan said that she can’t imagine her life without her twin.

“I don’t know what it’s like to be a twin because I don’t know what its like to not be a twin,” Siobhan Jones said. “Some people assume things, like because we share a room, it’s like a sleeper every night. I guess they think we sit around and paint each other’s nails and gossip. It’s not really like that.”

Still, Siobhan thinks there do exist disadvantages.

“The worst part about being a twin is when people talk about your twin to you, in a bad way,” Siobhan said. “What do they think I’m going to do, sympathize? Of course I’m going to tell her what you said. Seriously, it’s hilarious.”

Ellston also thinks that there’s a downside of having an ever-present best friend.

“Sometimes it can be annoying to do everything with my twin,” Ellston said.

Rhiannon disagreed with Ellston. She loves having Siobhan around.

“I don’t get sick of her,” Rhiannon said. “I really don’t understand those twins who find their sibling such a burden, or constantly striving to be different. Some of them even resent each other, which I think is such a waste of gift.”

Ellston, Rhiannon and Siobhan all agreed that they argue frequently with their twin.

“We do argue a lot and usually it’s over nothing,” Ellston said. “But we don’t hold grudges very long.”

The Jones’ argue more than the Ellstons.

“Oh hell yes, we argue all the time,” Siobhan said. “We are always bickering about everything. Probably in the way that other people argue, about little stuff. Arguing against someone else, though, we mostly side with each other.”

Rhiannon said their constant arguing annoys their mother.

“It drives my mom crazy,” Rhiannon said. “But what most people understand that it’s not angry or selfish bickering. It’s just our way of getting through problems, and rarely do we ever get truly angry about something.”

The Ellstons and the Jones’ have other siblings with whom they get along very well.

“We get along really well with our older sister, Reynolds, and we also have a little brother, Thomas, who we also get along with,” Ellston said. “We don’t spend as much time with them as we do with each other though.”

Rhiannon also gets along with her other sibling, but she admits that she’s closest to Siobhan.

“We get along really well with our older sister,” Rhiannon said. “But there’s a six-year gap between us and her, so even when she lived at home, we didn’t spend that much time with her. Siobhan and I are a lot closer. That’s to be expected since we live together. But still, I feel pretty certain that I won’t ever be as close to anyone else as I am to my twin.”

Even though the twins said they’re similar, they also said that they share differences.

“We both like to watch sports and play basketball,” Ellston said. “But I like to play more than he does. He also is more in-depth with baseball than I am.”

According to Rhiannon, although she and Siobhan have many of the same friends and engage in the same activities, Rhiannon is a bit more scholarly.

“My sister’s interests run more in the line of sports, while mine are more academic,” Rhiannon said. “She’d prefer to watch a pro soccer game while I would rather read a book. She’s better at math and I’m better at English. This translates to ‘I write some of her papers for her, and she does some math homework for me.’ No, I’m just kidding.”

When asked the stupidest question he’s been asked about being a twin, Ellston said that some people think him and Jack have telepathic communication abilities.

“People have asked if I can read Jack’s mind,” Ellston said. “I’m pretty sure I can’t.”

Siobhan’s experience with outlandish questions is a bit more broad.

“My favorite all-time question is when people ask me ‘How do you know you’re really Siobhan? What if you got switched at the hospital just after you were born?’” Siobhan said. “I always say that I’m still Siobhan. I’m still me, because that’s who I’ve always been. It’s such a stupid question. Sometimes though, they’ll still decide, ‘No, you’re not Siobhan. I’m going to call you Rhiannon.’ And I’m like, what the heck?”

Although each twin is original and unique, whether it be in interests or personalities, Rhiannon said that she still has to accept that most people can’t differentiate between her sister and herself.

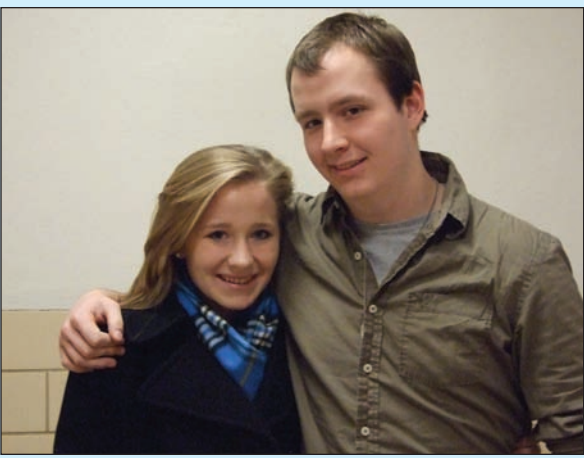
“To 95 percent of people, we are the same person,” Rhiannon said. “Of course I know all the differences between us, but most people never pick up on them. And that’s fine with me.”



Becky and Katie Poplawski



Lisa and Tracy Einstein



Kate and Brigham Wheelock



Sneeha and Preeti Visvanathan



Eco, Aris and Andes Perez-Deskalakis



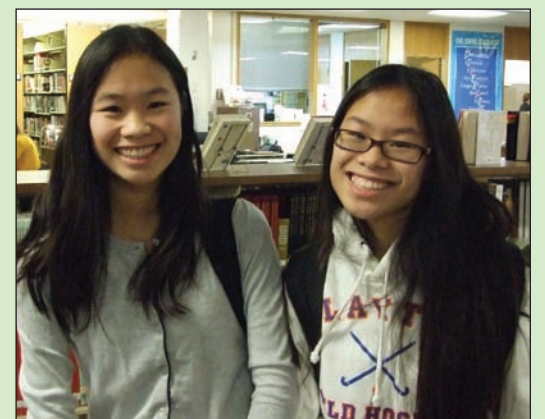
Carter and Jack Ellston



Elizabeth and Emily Garvin



Abby and Sammi Dulle



Zoey and Cleo Copetelli

Courtesy of the Rosenblums

# Life

## Urban Decay

Through stark images of abandoned dilapidation in North and East St. Louis, Senior Andrew Dowd captures a sense of “what was” in his photo essay *Metropolis*.

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December 16, 2008

## Shelley raises the bar

Aaron Prais  
Senior Managing Editor

Ms. Kim Shelley is a percussionist and musician extraordinaire.

Besides teaching at both Clayton High School and Wydown Middle School, Shelley has performed with the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra countless times and has even been accepted to the Julliard School.

Even from her early days, at her own high school in St. Louis, Shelley had a knack for music.

“We had a very good band program in a very small school,” Percussion Specialist Ms. Kim Shelley said. “My graduating class was about 98 students, but our high school band usually had around 110, 120 students. I was fortunate to attend a school with a very strong band program going on, and so that obviously got me interested in music.”

The music didn't stop there though. “Then I started taking private lessons while I was in high school and that got me even more motivated,” Shelley said. “I got into St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra and did the whole St. Louis track procedure where you go from one level to the next level.”

After finishing high school, Shelley had to make the decision about what to do with the rest of her life.

“I went back and forth between music or veterinary medicine,” Shelley said. “I didn't really know which way to go, and all of my older brothers and sisters were pushing me to go to university.”

Shelley ended up going to Mizzou in Columbia for her freshman year.

“After my freshman year I auditioned and got into Julliard, which at that time was the school to get into,” Shelley said. “I was really psyched about that. The problem was there was a big difference between doing that and paying for it.”

Unfortunately, Julliard wasn't going to be an option because of the large price tag attached, yet Shelley found even better opportunities right here in St. Louis.

“I was still studying privately with some of the St. Louis Symphony percussionists here, and they said ‘Look, if your family can't afford to go there then come here,’” Shelley said. “At that point we had a conservatory here

called St. Louis Conservatory of Music, and so I went there and got my bachelors and masters. Now that I look back on that, it was a better experience than going to Julliard. If I'd gone to Julliard I would have been surrounded by really great players and I wouldn't have gotten as much one-on-one attention and focus.”

Even though it wasn't Julliard, Shelley isn't regretful of the experience.

“The other big perk was that I started playing with the St. Louis Symphony as an extra musician,” Shelley said. “It was a real win-win situation out of a really sour situation, because I was very mad that I couldn't go to Julliard. I was basically full time with them for 13 years—it was awesome.”

Besides the symphony, Shelley had to consider teaching lessons or perhaps teaching at high schools in the area.

“I started getting private students, which I really enjoyed,” Shelley said. “A good friend of mine kept telling me

It was a real win-win situation out of a really sour situation.

Ms. Kim Shelley  
Percussionist Specialist



From Right: Senior Brian Fleischer, Ms. Kim Shelley, senior Ben Portner on piano and sophomore Katherine Thompson.

“Kim, you really like this, you should keep doing this, you should make the switch.” And so I did, and I went to a private school—Whitfield—and that's where I started full time as a teacher.”

Beyond this, Shelley's career began to fall into place.

“I did that for like four or five years and then I went out to Arizona and actually got my teacher certification,” Shelley said. “Then I came back here and got my job at Clayton as the assistant band director and percussion specialist. The thing about teaching music is that having only one band director is equal to a P.E. teacher having to teach soccer, baseball, and volleyball all at the same time.”

However, being a teacher between two schools is difficult and very demanding.

“My schedule here is crazy,” Shelley said. “0 hour is jazz band where I'm in charge of the rhythm section. Then first hour I go to electronic music, then second, third, and fourth hours are the high school bands, and there are percussionists in each hour. Then fourth hour is concert band where I'm the director and Mr. Blackmore is the assistant. And then 5th hour I'm off, but I go over to Wydown to grab a bite to eat, and then 6th, 7th, and 8th over there are the Wydown bands.”

Last, but not least, Shelley also enjoys performing for the community with her students.

“This holiday season right now I'm on sleep deprivation,” Shelley said. “Susan Slaughter, who's the principal trumpet for the St. Louis Symphony coordinated

the Holiday Concert at the Basilica Cathedral 17 years ago as a fundraiser. I've been playing that concert for 17 years, and last year she invited our percussionists to play the preconcert. This year, the CHS percussionists were invited back, and the concert was phenomenal.”

Students in the ensemble agreed on the performance and experience.

“This was a rewarding experience because of not only the holiday music, but also the gorgeous cathedral we played in,” senior Yiliu Zhang said.

Either way, Shelley seems to be doing it all. Starting from her own high school band, getting into Julliard, and now teaching many students in the Clayton School District, Shelley has it all covered. Shelley is without doubt a great musician and fantastic teacher at CHS. ☺

## Former teacher begins publishing online

Nick Otten has begun sharing and reviewing books and movies on The Beacon, a local online publication. Though easier to work with, the online publication style can be misleading due to the shifting nature of the Internet.

Meredith Redick  
Editor

In 1776, writer Thomas Paine's “Common Sense” ignited revolutionary interests throughout America. In 1933, President Franklin Roosevelt gained momentum for the New Deal in a series of “fireside” radio chats for Americans. In 1960, presidential candidate Richard Nixon's sallow complexion in the first televised presidential debates lost him needed support for the election.

Following an evolution from political pamphlets to radio to television, the wide world of the Internet has become yet another receptacle for news in the ever-shifting media world. The print genre is increasingly strained by the variety of online news sources that provide easily accessible information.

Former CHS English teacher Nicholas Otten has embraced the shifting paradigm by writing for an online St. Louis newspaper, The Beacon.

The Beacon is a non-profit organization designed to offer in-depth and up-to-date reporting on its website, www.stlbeacon.org.

According to the website, “the Beacon aims to serve and engage citizens by creating a distinctive new news medium.”

Otten believes that the new format is practical in many ways.

“The primary difference is that space limitations are minor issues online, as opposed to space limitations in print-on-paper publications,” Otten said. “Also, deadlining is simplified. I submit by e-mail to my editor, she posts the material, then I call her and make corrections. Easy.”

The Beacon is free and constantly changing. The online newspaper provides opportunities for readers to stay more up-to-date on news. The Internet identity, however, also comes with a stigma.

“People very foolishly believe what they see on the screen, in my opinion,” Otten said. “Wikipedia, for example, is not only often wrong, it sometimes changes for the worse day by day. The word ‘authority’ used to mean that you could reasonably trust the quality of information that was presented by an ‘author.’ Even then, you often had to be careful. With online info, you must constantly question everything.”

Despite drawbacks, it remains a fact that online publications offer a more dynamic side of news.

“Do online publications ever show a different side of news?” Otten said. “They definitely ought to. If not, shame on them. Since a major online advantage is that no physical space on a page of paper is involved, then why not create some new kinds of stories?”

Still, Otten believes that a shift in medium for news does not mean an entirely new type of news. Critics like Marshall McLuhan have postulated about the changes in media.

“When one medium overtakes another, it takes the previous medium—that it just cannibalized—as its content,” Otten said. “For example, the first television material was old movies. Probably, electronic media will keep using print media as its content.”

Otten's online column, called “Nick's List,” is a commentary that details his experiences with various books and movies. Since The Beacon began production in April 2008, Otten has averaged 6-7 commentaries a week.

“Some years ago, I decided to keep a list of all the books I read and all the movies I watched in a year,” Otten said. “I gave myself the goal of reading 50 books and watching 100 movies a year, just because my experience is that a little goal-setting works well for me. The list definitely worked. I now read and see way more than 50 and 100 a year. When The Beacon asked me if I had any writing ideas that I'd like to try, I simply said that I would like to do for them what I already did for myself. Inevitably, I have expanded my commentaries into longer pieces for publication.”

He hopes that his commentary encourages readers to see movies and read books.

“My primary goal is to talk to readers in my own voice about what I liked and why, and to get them interested in seeing movies and reading books that I

found interesting myself,” Otten said. “Unquestionably, the fun is that I get to do what I did anyway — but for publication and for money. They pay me to read books and watch movies! When I was teaching fulltime, I almost never got to go to movies at the St. Louis International Film Festival because it all happened during the week in the middle of November. This year I saw 12 of the movies they showed, all for free.”

Otten's work at The Beacon is only the most recent step in a long writing career that has included poetry, short stories, educational textbooks, and even two yet-to-be-published novels.

“I have published a small, steady trickle of work over the last 40 years — so small that I could reasonably be called nearly unpublished,” Otten said. “Nevertheless, I have written and written, usually with no prospect of publication. That long experience has given me two satisfactions: I am very practiced in writing as I please, and any kind of publication seems like getting a Pulitzer to me.”

Otten's devotion to writing is more laudable because of his background.

“Neither of my parents ever finished elementary school,” Otten said. “I can only remember one book in our house when I was a child, a coffee table book about Australia, which was given to my dad by the Army because he was stationed there in World War II. Sometime in the 7th grade I knew something was happening to me, and I started asking for bestsellers for Christmas presents. As for the writing, I started writing poetry in college, got published with the first poem I submitted to a literary magazine, and then won 3rd prize in campus-wide poetry contest judged by a professional poet. I have wanted to be a writer ever since.”

In 2005, Otten retired from a long teaching career that ended at CHS. His classes included Honors American Literature, Creative Writing, and Film in American Society.



English teacher Nick Otten who now publishes Nick's list in the Beacon.

In addition to sponsoring several clubs, Otten created a literary magazine at CHS called The Works, which won Best of Show in its first year.

Retiring from teaching provided a welcome opportunity for Otten to focus on his writing.

“I have wanted to do more writing for publication all my life, but my attention has always had to be directed at teaching,” Otten said. “For me, teaching and writing come from the same creative juices, so I have tried to keep them separate over the years. I used to write on weekends and in the summer. Now I can write almost all I want to because I only teach one course a semester at Webster U.”

Working as a part of The Beacon has been rewarding for Otten.

“The best experience so far has been that a woman sent me a message at Nick's List asking if I was the Nick Otten who used to be a teacher who had a father named Valley Otten,” Otten said. “I answered that I was the one. Then she sent me a long e-mail explaining in detail how my dad had done a secret good deed for her dad when nobody else would help the man, who was himself old and lonely. Let me tell you, that got to me big-time.”

Having lived in both the world of print and the world of electronic media, Otten believes that both are important to understanding communication.

“I've found that if you flag a word [in an online dictionary], you get kind of a punk definition,” Otten said. “In a print dictionary, you get four or five entries above and below that hint at the root of the word; there's much more detail. I

believe that anyone who wants to read a dictionary deliberately will want a print dictionary. It's the same with poetry. You can't read poetry on a screen. Poetry is something you just need to dwell on.”

The ephemeral world of news, however, is different in some ways from creative writing.

“I get *Time* Magazine and *The New Yorker* weekly and read them cover to cover,” Otten said. “Frequently, though, I just read headlines online and go to follow-ups that interest me.”

Depending on whether a work has lasting literary value, Otten believes that categorization by medium is appropriate.

“If it's something you're going to want to save and look at later, it's better in print,” Otten said.

The bottom line? Electronic media is to be used judiciously.

“If you can anonymously put up stuff and look up stuff on the ‘net, people are going to take advantage of that,” Otten said. “You can't make people think.”

The value of the general media as a tool for communication and understanding, however, is indubitable.

“We live in a global world, which moves fast and in crazy ways,” Otten said. “I hate having things happen that blindsides me. I like to see trouble coming if I can. Sometimes, not always but sometimes, if I can predict the coming trouble, I can sidestep it.”

Otten's method for staying aware of the world is effective even through the tumult of American media evolution that has occurred over the centuries.

“I read and I view and I listen,” Otten said. ☺

## News Briefs

### CHS earns Silver

CHS was recently honored by “U.S. News & World Report” with a Silver Medal. CHS earned the highest college readiness index of any Missouri school in the listing, with a score of 56.2. This is the second year that CHS has made the America's Best High Schools listing, part of which is based on the degree to which students master college-level material.

### Finals Schedule

Finals this year will be taking place from Dec. 17 through 19. Wednesday Dec. 17 will begin with English at 8:20 and science at 10:20. Thursday will be history at 8:20, followed by science at 10:20. Math and then career technology will be the finals on Friday at 8:20 and 10:20, respectively.

### Food Drive

Laurence Maroney, running back for the New England Patriots are representing St. Louis in this nationwide campaign and would like to collect non-perishable food donations. Drop off the food at the Students Activities Office. All donations will go to the St. Louis Area Food Bank. The deadline is Dec. 19.

### Speech and Debate Success

The speech and debate team performed well at the Independence Winter Classic tournament. In Varsity, Scott Jeffrey and Dylan Cockson took 1st and 2nd respectively in storytelling; Ian Miller took 6th in Dramatic Interp; Ian Miller and Mariah Smith took 5th in Dramatic Duo Interp; Ikshu Neithalath took 6th in foreign extemporaneous speaking; Kathleen Naccarato and Will Schedl took 3rd in Champ Policy Debate; Becca Steinberg and Ikshu Neithalath finished 3rd in public forum debate; Anca Grindeanu and Brett Downey advanced to Congress Super-Session.

## Concerts entertain in various venues

Katherine Greenberg  
Reporter

Clayton students are always looking for something fun to do. In St. Louis there are many places that host bands. A lot of Clayton students take advantage of the numerous concert venues in St. Louis. A few popular places are the Scottrade Center, Missouri Botanical Garden, the Pageant, Verizon Wireless Amphitheater, Chaifetz Arena, Fox Theatre, and the Family Arena.

"One of my favorite things to do at night is to go to concerts," junior Nate Townsend said. "A lot of times it doesn't even matter who's playing I just love to watch live music."

Sean Brown, a junior, has been to sixteen concerts in the past year. He has been to concerts at the Pageant, the Biliken Club, Bluebird, LEMP, and Vintage Vinyl.

"The LEMP is probably my favorite venue because you feel really close to the musicians," Brown said. "I think it's because the musicians are on an equal level and the people that attend LEMP concerts are very dedicated to the musicians."

Junior Scott Morrison has attended five concerts in the past year. He has attended concerts at the Verizon Wireless Amphitheater, Creepy Crawl and the Pageant.

"My favorite place to see concerts is the Creepy Crawl," Morrison said. "It is a smaller venue and the bands are less known."

The Pageant is also a favorite venue of many Clayton students. Juniors Jeff Bader and Graham God agree that concerts are much more enjoyable at the Pageant. "I always have a lot of fun at the Pageant," Gold said. "The last concert I saw there was The Raconteurs, it was amazing. I felt so close to the band and I love that there is open seating."

Joseph Evers had been to six concerts in the past year. "My favorite venue is the Pageant because of the open seating," Evers said. "The open seating gives people a chance to be very close to the great bands that the Pageant hosts."

On June 12, 2008, the Pageant hosted the Raconteurs.

"The last concert I saw at the Pageant was the Raconteurs," Evers said. "Seriously, it was the best concert I've ever seen. I bought a ticket for thirty-five dollars; it was definitely worth it though."

The prices of concert tickets vary but the Pageant offers much cheaper prices. At the Pageant tickets for general admission are 20 to 25 dollars. Lawn seats at Verizon Wireless Amphitheater lawn seats are thirty dollars and ticket prices increase in seats closer to the stage.

"Over the summer I went to the botanical gardens a couple times for concerts," junior Jennifer Golden said. "I really like going to the botanical gardens because you don't need to plan that far in advance to go and there's always room to go with a lot of friends."

"My favorite concert this year was Radiohead," junior, Anna Copilevitz said. "It was just a flawless performance."

"My favorite space for a concert is the Pageant because it is a smaller space and everyone is there for the music," Copilevitz said. ☺



Elliot O'Dea

## One student's perspective: Music of our generation

Jessica Lefton  
Editor

What type of music defines our generation? When asked this question, my immediate response was, "Indie rock! No, alternative! Maybe R&B...or is it pop?" My own taste in music aside, I realized that defining an entire generation with one or two genres of music would prove difficult, maybe even impossible.

First I turned to the internet; the largest source of music for our generation. There were countless blogs, MySpace pages, charts and lists; it was all so overwhelming. Each site I visited had something new to say, every person commenting had their own two cents to add. There were so many voices, so many types of music. And with that, I came to my conclusion; the genre of music that defines our generation is indefinable.

One blogger said it best. "I think the music of our generation is all [types of music], because it is so available to anyone," says Navig Khoulereires, one of the many people debating this topic on Yahoo! Answers.

With the widespread use of technology and the internet, it is no wonder that our generation has trouble defining its borders; we've gone global. We now have

literally a world of music at our fingertips. On my own iPod alone I have over 100 genres of music, and at least 300 artists who are from other countries. And I'm not the only one.

"A lot of popular bands are from foreign countries." Says senior Nichole Burton. "I personally think it's awesome, I don't think it's [popularity] is at its height, I think it's going to grow in the future."

Others argue that the trend is going the other way.

"I think we've had a bigger influence on international music" Says senior Matt Johnson. "Just because of iTunes and all these different PCP programs. It really helps advance the flow of trends and music."

But whether the influence comes from outside or within, it is clear that the borders have been blurred. Many popular artists from the US sing in other languages, and musical groups from as far away as Japan or China sing songs in English.

Where our music comes from has changed in more ways than just its country of origin. As mentioned before, the internet is a great tool in finding new music, with sites such as last.fm,

MySpace, Rhapsody, and others having a great influence. The impact of iTunes alone has been monumental in the past few years.

"[The internet's] had a huge impact on the music industry in general." Says Burton. "Your average teen doesn't go and buy a CD, they download off of iTunes. iTunes also helps people find out what everyone else thinks is popular. It's mostly pop."

So, in the end, where do we stand? When we have access to this vast amount of musical diversity, what do we actually listen to?

Burton's view is slightly pessimistic. "I think that our generation's really into pop and hip hop. I think most of it's pretty useless. I wish people would start listening to music that talked about real issues. A lot of music, especially hip hop and rap, talks about fighting, and women as objects. We need to listen to music that will influence us in a more positive way."

So, as we near the final years of the decade, let's all hope we can show the world just how great our generation's taste in music is. Let's listen to something meaningful, worldly, and new. After all, we have the resources, so why not? ☺

## Current music self-expressive, innovative

Popular music deviates from typical love songs, leading students to the conclusion that music is not dead.

Ijeoma Onyema  
Editor

Pop, Hip-hop, rock; many music critics claim that music is not as innovative as it used to be, or that music is "dying"; however, CHS students say otherwise.

Freshman Henry Zimmerman believes that some music is dying.

"Some [genres of music] wither away as the generations change and age, but new genres emerge to replace them."

Senior Caitlin Bladt, who is welcoming to all types of music, disagrees that music can't die.

"People are being melodramatic when they say that; just because music is changing does not mean it's dying," Bladt said.

Lewis Kopman does not think that music is dying, but he believes that popular music is getting less mainstream.

Music is becoming more about selling albums instead of expressing one's emotions," Kopman said.

Bladt enjoys rap, and think that people don't appreciate because they're closed-minded to other options.

"Music doesn't always have to be deep to be enjoyable," Bladt said.

As time passes, different genres of music move in and out of popularity. Kopman believes that the rock music is currently in a good spot.

However, his feelings differ when it comes to rap.

"Like I said before, [music] is about doing what sells even," Kopman said. "Rappers are now doing what rock and pop were doing in the nineties. I can't think of a decent nomination for a Grammy for a Rap Artist."

Zimmerman thinks that rap and hip-hop are popular today because of the generations shift "that just what happens

when the attention towards one type of music shifts to another," Zimmerman said.

Many CHS student consider the music form the sixties and seventies to be classics, and consider the current era lacking classics when it comes to music.

"There are no real classics today," Bladt said. "People are just building off what others have done; you just can't choose a classic in this generation"

Junior Brooke Nicholson agrees with Bladt.

"[Rap] is really original; that's why it is so popular and will continue changing," Nicholson said.

Music has been building off work that was already made, but Zimmerman is optimistic about its future.

"By exploring old and current music, new and different music can be created," Zimmerman said

Bladt believes that in the future, music will continue to reflect current culture and follow the development of time. Lesser known bands will become more accessible to the masses via the internet as technology improves. Bladt also has a specific theory to how music changes throughout time.

"There's a natural progression in the way music changes through time and it always follows that progression," Bladt said. "As for current masterpieces, I don't know if we have any; it depends on one's preferred genre and their definition of 'masterpiece' or 'classic'."

Though music may be dying elsewhere, it's most certainly not dying here at CHS.

"Music will never die because it's not about the standard love story anymore," Kopman said. "Music is now been rejuvenated as a statement about self-expression." ☺



Helen Wiley

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## She is... Sasha Fierce

Beyoncé explores new genres, and another side of her personality, in her new album.

Rachel Nevels  
Reporter

Think futuristic; a Jane Jetson style mixed with an urban flare – the kind of girl you would see driving a flying car in a year far away from this one.

This only begins to describe Beyoncé's new style, to match her new and uncharted sound on her latest album, *I am...Sasha Fierce*. Beyoncé Knowles is well known for her heavy live band sampling in songs such as "Crazy in Love" and "Déjà vu," both featuring her newlywed husband Sean Carter, or "Jay-Z", as most people know him. But in her latest album, *I am...Sasha Fierce*, Knowles takes a drastic turn towards a heavy pop-urban sound.

Much like many great artists before her, Knowles has once again changed her image with the release of her latest work.

Her debut album, *Dangerously in love*, and first solo album without her Destiny's Child band mates, Knowles first explored the live band, heavy R&B sound, and then again with her sophomore album, *B'Day*, only with a modern pop twist. But with her current project, Knowles completely changes directions – and takes a step into many different worlds, including European techno, new age hip-hop, and heavy alternative, something many hip-hop/pop artists, such as Kanye West, Ciara, and Ne-yo, are toying with this year.

While many fell in love with Sasha Fierce upon the release of the Single Ladies (Put A Ring on It) classic dance video, it is fair to say that this album is not a classic, rather a step closer to Knowles coming into her own.

Knowles does her best to showcase how much she has grown since her last album, *B'Day*, especially since her April wedding to her boyfriend of six years, Sean Carter – which many speculate has a lot to do with her more mature, grown-up choice of style. Although she has toyed with many different styles as far as lyrics, sound, look and feel, this is an experiment nonetheless.

On one side of the album, Knowles introduces her alter ego, Sasha Fierce, an

up beat, no mess taking, hip-hip queen, full of vibrant life, and independence. On the Sasha Fierce side, she plays on her boldness with songs with super racy lyrics such as "Ego" and "Videophone," or songs sung with different tempo on an odd staccato such as "Radio" or "Hello."

On the other side, the Beyoncé side, Knowles expresses her true personality with countless slow to mid-tempo ballads, all about the up's and downs of being in love. Many songs talking about the wonders of finding a great love, such as "Halo," "Ave Maria," "Smash Into You" and "Disappear," while other songs talk about trials and tribulations when experiencing lost love, such as "If I were a Boy" and "Broken-Hearted Girl." Between both sides of the CD there are so many different genres of music, Knowles' direction is quite uncertain.

In making her latest album, Knowles does great collaborations, ranging from people like Rodney Jerkins to Jim Jonsin. On songs like "Diva" Knowles takes heavy inspiration from the likes of Lil Wayne's "A Milli" implying "A diva is a female version of a hustler."

While other tracks such as "Radio" and "Disappear," with their ultra pop-crossover sound, make you think you are listening to something off of Rihanna's new CD instead of Beyoncé's. Knowles also explores a more grown-up alternative sound, think Céline Dion meets Whitney Houston, with songs such as "Halo" and "Broken-Hearted Girl". She also experiences a more sexy grown up sound in songs such as "Ego" where she suggest, "It's too big/ It's too wide/ It's too strong/ It won't fit/ It's too much/ It's too tough/ He talks like this /Cuz he can back it up," or the song "Videophone" where she talks about a guy videotaping her instead of just watching her in curiosity.

All in all, Knowles has once again outdone herself. Although it is not a classic, this will be an album to remember for years to come, especially with the birth of her alter ego Sasha Fierce. I am more than sure fans anticipate seeing what else Fierce is going to bring to the table after *I am...Sasha Fierce*, which sounds more like *I am...lost*. ☺

## Fratellis' second album lively

With a more-produced sound, Scottish trio the Fratellis produces another album full of catchy tunes.

Carol Iskiwicz  
Chief Copy Editor

Britpop-obsessed, take note.

The Fratellis, an alternative rock/indie trio from Scotland, reenergized the scene this past summer with the release of their sophomore album, "Here We Stand." Fans of their 2006 debut album, "Costello Music," may be disappointed to find less toe-tapping, hum-along hits on this record, but the Fratelli brothers have not lost their ability to write a catchy hook or tell a silly story.

The Fratellis' apparent target audience, lively pint-lifters, has a couple of tracks to slur along to, such as the smooth, memorable "Acid-Jazz Singer," about meeting a girl while lying in a gutter.

One of the star tracks of the record is "Mistress Mabel." With a memorable chorus ("Tell me where all the days have gone/ When you rocked my cradle/ Tell me Mabel") and big bar-rock sound, this song comes close to the excitement of the standout hit from their first album, "Chelsea Dagger."

Overall, this record contains less immediately likeable, catchy songs as their first. But it is not inherently lower qual-



ity, and in many ways it shows the Fratellis' progression into a more mature, lasting sound. These songs are less prone to give you a headache if listened to on repeat.

However, even one of my favorite tracks, the piano-driven "A Heady Tale" stays pretty clear of meaningful lyrics. This is one aspect that remains constant between the Fratellis two albums. There are the occasional thought-provoking or cute lines, but for the most part the album is comprised of simply silly lyrics ("Won't you please forgive me/ But you know cold-blooded women make me sneeze.")

My overall opinion of the record is that it is good for listening to in the car, with friends or to get your blood flowing during a study break. If you want the most high-energy, shake-your-head beats though, check out the Fratellis' first album, "Costello Music."

So, if you looking for catchy tunes and quality instrumental, but are not picky about lyrics that are meaningful or even make sense, the Fratellis new album may be what you are looking for. It may be dump pop music, but it is at least intelligently made. The fun the Fratelli brothers (yes, there is actually a reason behind the name) had making it is contagious. Happy listening! ☺



27 Dresses  
Maddie Harned

## Holidays ring in joy of materialism

The sun barely peeks over the horizon as a foreboding chill creeps through the frosty air. It is barely six in the morning on this seemingly mundane Friday, yet the entire city seems to be buzzing with anticipation. The day is black Friday – the official marker of the coming holiday season, not to mention the most chaotic shopping day of the year.

Those who dare to venture out on this day must be willing to face the swarm of shoppers, a pulsating mass of materialism, coach wallets in hand ready to buy, buy, buy, all in the name of the holiday season.

Nevertheless, while many look down on capitalism's grasp on the holidays, I strongly beg to differ. Without a doubt this time of year is praised as the season of giving and selflessness, while the materialistic aspects of the holiday season are criticized for taking away from the "true meaning" of Christmas (or Hanukkah, Kwanza, Buddha day, Ramadan or whatever floats your boat).

The main problem with the anti-materialism backlash that rolls around every year is that the majority of those who criticize it actually participate in the ever-popular capitalist Christmas.

As noble and unselfish as it is to take a stand against being materialistic and self-interested during the holidays, I find it extremely unbelievable that all those who proudly drop selfless jargon such as the oh so common, "I really wish people would care less about getting this year and more about giving to others," or, "This time of year isn't supposed to be about material wants and getting things," actually follow through on those statements.

The fact of the matter is that people especially want the unnecessary things that make perfect gifts during the holidays. You don't need that other pair of jeans, new video game or pair of shoes, but there's no denying that there is a vast amount of material entities you want other than the necessary food, water and shelter needed to survive. Since when did having material wants and desires take away from one's ethics, integrity and thoughtfulness? Answer, they don't. ☺

## 'Four Christmases' combines sugar, spice

Gabrielle Lachtrup  
Reporter

Eggnog with a bite. That's the best way to describe "Four Christmases," director Seam Gordon's romantic comedy that blends the syrupy sugar of Reese Witherspoon and her nose-inkling ingénue with an at-times bitter shot of satire aimed at carols, megachurches and parental responsibility.

Madly in love with both each other and the soft, white sands of Tahiti, couple Brad (Vince Vaughn) and Kate (Witherspoon) shun familial gatherings every Christmas in lieu of vacationing in various exotic locales, under the guise of helping malnourished Darfur/Burmalian orphans get HPV shots.

"You can't spell 'families' without 'lies,'" Brad fervently declares. Evidently traumatized by their parents' respective divorces, Kate and Brad slavishly model their life together in opposition to parental tradition, forgoing children for bar-hopping and marriage for couple's dance lessons.

However, after a series of events transpires, ending with them being stranded at the airport on national television, the pair find themselves journeying to all four houses in order to fulfill their three years' worth of prodigal family duties (thus, the movie's title) and, hopefully, learn a little something about family and holiday spirit themselves.

But mostly they get hit by projectile vomit by family members' babies.

The movie weaves together several tired comedy clichés: gun-toting rednecks who think aerosol cheese is fine cuisine, lascivious Southern housewives clad in airy pastels, a hippy cougar mother happily wed to Brad's childhood friend,

The story is redeemed, for the most part, by a collection of excellent performances, particularly by the supporting cast. Tim McGraw and Jon Favreau make an impressive effort as Brad's sadistic cage-fighting older brothers, with Dwight Yoakam's barmy Pastor Phil being similarly memorable.

Both Witherspoon and Vaughn rise to the occasion, but the two look so mismatched, both in script and physical features (Vaughn's the Times Square Christmas tree to Witherspoon's slender baby Spruce).

At times, the movie's wit proves to be razor-sharp. In a scene in which Brad and Kate are entreated to fill the Nativity roles of Mary and Joseph in a church performance, the sight of Brad show-boating through his part smacks as particularly hilarious, given both the rapturous response of the audience and the supposed nod to Vaughn's own penchant for stealing the show. Yet, in many places the script falters—the aforementioned vomiting in only the beginning in a long succession of



Brad (Vince Vaughn) is very uncomfortable holding a baby in New Line Cinema's romantic comedy, "Four Christmases," distributed by Warner Bros. Pictures.

Will Farrell-style slapstick jokes that are neither funny or inspired.

Ultimately, the plot is resolved in typical Hollywood fashion: Brad and Kate are duly chastened into holy matrimony by their families' peculiar breed of wedded bliss, and eventually produce a bile-spewing package of joy for their very own. Sweet, to be sure, but the cornball ending seems a tad forced after 76 minutes of pratfalls and passive aggression. Both fluffy holiday cheer and a nasty nip of dysfunctional family, "Four Christmases" straddles two worlds, only to flounder slightly in both. ☺

## Fox performance of 'The Color Purple' a moving experience

Caitlin Kropp  
Staff Reporter

I did not know what to expect when I walked into the Fox Theater. The play I was about to see was not familiar to me. I had heard of it in passing, but I had never taken the time to familiarize myself with the plot.

As I took my seat, flipping idly through the playbill, I speculated on what was to come. The lights dimmed, the crowd hushed, and the curtain rose. And, with that, I began to watch the musical "The Color Purple".

"The Color Purple" is a musical adaptation of Alice Walker's Pulitzer Prize winning novel of the same name. Set in the early 1900s, the play chronicles the life of Celie Johnson, an African-American woman struggling with the prejudices that were common in that time. As Celie grows up, she faces an

insanely large amount of hardship, using her faith and love to help her emerge stronger. The play ran from Oct. 21 to Nov. 2 at the Fox Theater, and I was lucky enough to attend one of the performances.

First of all, the play was stupendous. The acting and singing were first rate, and it was easy to sympathize with the various main characters. "The Color Purple" effectively dealt with the hardships of the time, such as the poverty that was persistent throughout the play, and the happy ending was truly inspirational. Overall, the musical was very well done.

Particularly impressive was Jeannette Bayardelle, who played the main character Celie Johnson. Bayardelle's performance was heartfelt and original, going well beyond what one would expect for such a difficult role.

Her singing was strong and soulful, and only helped to further portray the emotional setting of the play. When she sang

her solo song, "I'm Here", I found myself unexpectedly crying. The way she sang the song, with such power and emotion, overwhelmed me.

Also worthy of note was Rufus Bonds, Jr., in his portrayal of Mister, Celie's abusive husband. When one is first introduced to Mister, it is easy to hate him. In fact, most of the play is spent with particular loathing towards Mister. The way he treats Celie is repulsive, and his entire being is horrid and aggravating.

However, when the play was drawing to a close, a different side of him was revealed, one that was surprisingly compassionate and remorseful. Bonds was amazing in his performance, at times both evil and abusive, and at other times warm and caring.

I would give the play five stars without a second thought. I had no idea what to expect, going into the theater, but I

came out rewarded. This play is truly special. However, certain themes addressed in the course of the play may not be entirely suitable for younger audience members. "The Color Purple" got quite intense at times, dealing with the difficult subjects of sexual abuse, teen pregnancy, domestic abuse, racial violence, and lesbianism. My younger sister, who also watched the play, was confused, and, honestly, a little scared by the play. It takes a certain kind of maturity to deal with such an intense play, so bringing along younger children is not advisable.

The tagline of the musical claims that it is "the musical about love", and I would agree with that. However, I would say that it goes beyond. "The Color Purple" is not only about love; it is about much more. This musical is about love and hate, hardship and struggles, faith, and the triumph of the human spirit. I simply can not wait until "The Color Purple" comes back to St. Louis. ☺

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Rachel Borson, M.D.  
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# 'Twilight' an unrealistic venture

Kara Kratcha  
Reporter

With dashing vampires, perfect gentlemen, a clumsy heroine, and heart-throbbing romance, *Twilight* is the ultimate teen chick flick. Sure, Bella (played by Kristen Stewart) may be a bit of a Mary-Sue, but that just allows viewers to put themselves in her place as they watch her and Edward (Robert Pattinson) on-screen. It's no sophisticated foreign film, but everyone entering the theater to see the latest craze among high school girls must be well aware that *Twilight* is a fun, harmless piece of fluff, which is exactly what *Twilight* is... right?

Well, maybe not. Don't get me wrong—*Twilight* had some very cool visual images. Oregon state itself, where the movie was filmed, is absolutely breathtaking. The scene in which the Cullen family plays baseball had me on the edge of my seat with the sheer awesomeness of a group of people needing a thunderstorm because of the huge noise ball hitting bat creates when one of them takes a swing. Plus, the whole idea of people (or people-like beings) having super mind powers gets me really excited; it's like something out of a comic book.

Unfortunately, visual images are where the movie goodness ends. Overall, the plot line is unoriginal and so are the main characters. I've already used the one word, aside from pretty, available to describe Bella—clumsy.

Apart from that, we as the audience have no idea about what Bella likes to do, what her talents are, or what she believes in. As soon as the plot is established (Bella moves to her dad's house from her mom's Arizona; Bella is stuck in lonely Forks, Washington, the rainiest place in America), Edward enters, and all chance of the viewer getting to know Bella better soar out the window as her obsession with Edward Cullen grows.

As far as characters go, though, Edward is much worse. Sweeping into the high school cafeteria (in slow motion) to awestruck looks from girls both on-screen and off, Edward is a mystery from the very start. The only information we



Kristen Stewart (left) and Robert Pattinson (right) star in the thriller "*Twilight*," a Summit Entertainment release. The movie '*Twilight*' evolved from the popular book series by Stephenie Meyer.

glean about him is that he never dates. One would expect to learn more about the leading male as the movie goes on, but alas, it is eventually revealed that Edward is nothing more than a stereotypical chivalrous male...who happens to want to suck human blood.

Finally, after Edward comes in with his very expensive car to save Bella and then warns her to stay away from him, Bella uses her powers of Google to uncover what Edward really is (spoiler— he's

a vampire). Ah, yes, it is now revealed why Bella is special enough to deserve a whole movie about her: she has managed to snag the undateable boy! This wouldn't really be a problem, I suppose, if Bella had some other redeeming qualities or focused on something other than Edward. Since she doesn't really display any other talents or convictions, though, *Twilight* sends a very unhealthy message to the teenage girl—in order to be a worthy of attention, she must have a suitable

male at her side.

What makes Edward Cullen so attractive? Okay, so Robert Pattinson is gorgeous, but there are plenty of attractive actors playing lead male characters out there. Besides, Edward had a following even before pictures of his movie self were released. Yet, the *Twilight* book didn't actually provide much of a description of Edward. It's not his looks nor his personality girls are attracted to, at least, not completely. Edward's allure

comes from a very old idea—Edward is the forbidden fruit. Without that quality, *Twilight*'s plot would be nothing. If it was the norm in Forks for humans and vampires to be interbreeding, then Bella would not have a problem. Of course, even without the knowledge of Edward's true nature, Bella is told that she cannot have Edward and therefore she ends up having to.

But, you might say, Clayton girls are smarter than that. Clayton girls are tal-

ented and know their own high worth. Sure, on the surface they might, but the teenage years are a time of insecurity, especially for girls. Any negative influence, especially such a popular one, can have a great effect.

Aside from the subtle psychological effects of *Twilight*, the movie does present another objection. The Bella/Edward relationship is grossly unrealistic and an awful model for teens to be basing their own relationships on. When they first meet, Bella and Edward do nothing but stare at each other with an awkward intensity (a phrase which, by the way, aptly describes the whole movie) for a whole class period, at the end of which Edward runs out of the room in apparent pain.

The couple goes from this nonrelationship to inseparableness in a very short amount of time, probably in about a month, although it is hard to tell in the movie. Before whisking Bella off to another state without her parents' knowledge, much less permission, Edward mutters the melodramatic line, "Bella, you are my life now." That may seem to describe many teen relationships, but in this case, Bella wants to risk everything to become a vampire and live with her new boyfriend forever.

The problem here is not Bella's infatuation with Edward, but the way it is portrayed in such a nonthreatening light. Although Edward refuses to turn Bella into a vampire, it is not because he believes that their relationship would not continue to work for all eternity; he hesitates because he believes his is a cursed life and does not want to subject Bella to it.

So, what's the verdict? For people who have read and enjoyed the *Twilight* book series, the *Twilight* movie will probably be an enjoyable experience. To anyone else, the movie is probably not worth your \$8. Just remember: *Twilight* is a fantasy series not only because it portrays fantastical beings such as vampires, but also, more importantly, because it glamorizes unrealistic relationships between stagnant characters. ☹



Marty the Zebra, Alex the Lion, Gloria the Hippo and Melman the Giraffe have to stick together when they find themselves washed ashore in a strange land in the first '*Madagascar*' movie. The sequel details the characters' adventures in Africa as they attempt to return to New York.

## 'Madagascar' sequel lighthearted, humorous

Maddy Bullard  
Reporter

*Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa* is certainly one of the lighter films of the year. With several returning characters from the first installment, including Alex the Lion (Ben Stiller), Gloria the Hippo (Jada Pinkett Smith), Melman the Giraffe (David Schwimmer) and Marty the Zebra (Chris Rock), and several new ones, the film is sure to please both kids and adults.

The movie begins with an attempt to escape Madagascar and return to New York aboard a plane built from wood and vines. Needless to say, the attempt fails, and as the title of the film implies these four New Yorkers end up in yet another foreign setting—this time, mainland Africa.

The film explores a bit deeper into Alex's past, with added scenes explaining how he ended up in the New York City zoo. Alex, it turns out, was always more interested in dancing than in fighting other lions, much to his parents' disappointment. His father, Zuba (Bernie Mac), lost track of him while fighting off another lion, Makunga (Alec Baldwin). After scampering off the reserve, Alex was caught by hunters. His box ended

up falling into the river, and he floated to New York City.

When the quartet arrives on the reserve, everyone is delighted—at first, that is. When Alex is reunited with his parents, all is well until he finds out he must fight another lion to earn his place in the reserve. Marty fits right in with all the other zebras. In fact, they are so alike that Alex can't tell which one is Marty. This leads to a fight between the two friends, but the circumstances are so laughable that one cannot really take it seriously. Melman suffers from unrequited love, and, ever the hypochondriac, worries about a mysterious disease which he seems to have caught. Gloria catches the eye of the handsomest hippo around. This leads to a few funny exchanges, as Gloria's new beau is not the sharpest tool in the shed. In fact, he compliments her multiple times on her size—"Girl, you huge!" Then she gets in a fight with her best friend and undeclared lover Melman, who, in a sweet, heartwarming scene, tells her how he really feels about her.

Of course, appearances are made by favorites from the first movie. The tough old granny who beat up Alex in the first film ("bad kitty!") returns and steals almost too much screen time. The pen-

guins also return, and spend the movie trying to rebuild their plane. Lemur king Julien (Sacha Baron Cohen), Maurice (Cedric the Entertainer) and even Mort (Andy Richter) return, delivering a satisfying dose of crazy, hyper antics.

Overall the film was satisfyingly funny, but perhaps not quite so funny as the first installment. The acting was good, especially Cohen and Chris Rock. Memorable scenes, like when Melman goes to a "dying hole" and Julien convinces him to profess his love to Gloria, make up for a few unnecessary side plots, like the grandma and her tourist survival group. The fast pace and constant flow of jokes leave no room for any real message of value, which, considering the basis of the story, is fitting. The movie doesn't try to be a classic kid's film with a sappy message, and it works; viewers won't get terribly bogged down with clichés. The animation was also good, though not the best—*Wall-E* and *Ratatouille* were noticeably better, especially considering the more difficult characters they portrayed (robots and a furry mouse and redheaded teenager, respectively).

This movie is sure to please those—both children and their parents—in the mood for a fun, lighthearted romp through the jungles of Africa. ☺

# The World Without Us

Alan Weisman's most recent book predicts the evolution of a world no longer inhabited by humans

Grace Cohen  
Reporter

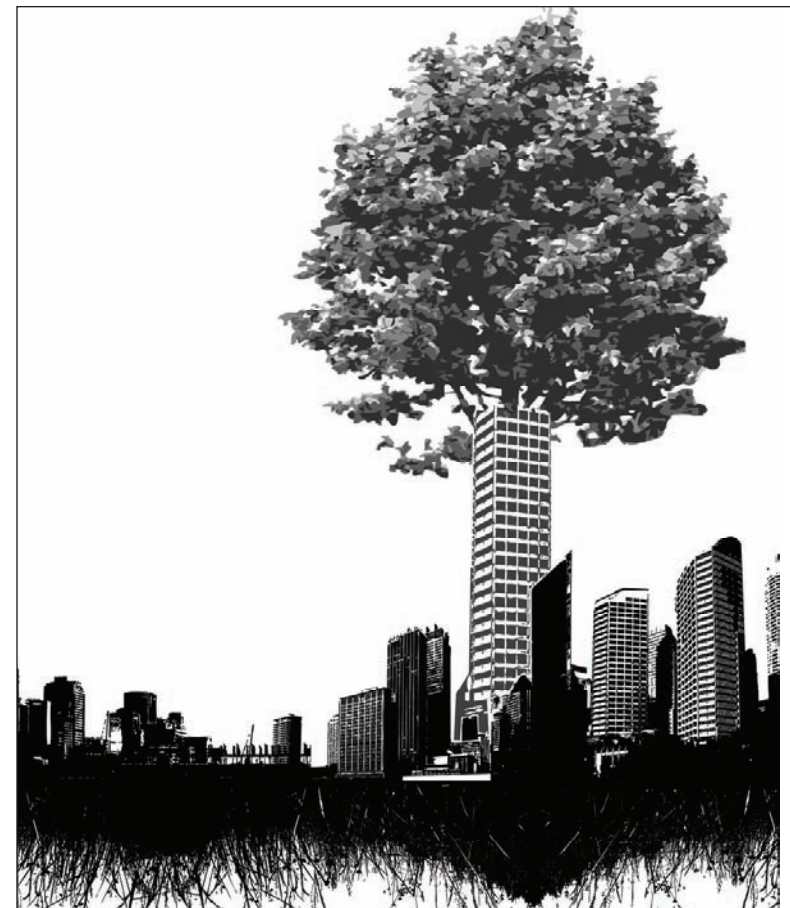
Imagine a world without us. Buildings no longer tended to, bridges no longer repaired, most everything crumbling. Animals taking over, Nature eating up everything humans once made. What will last? Which species will thrive, which will die? What lasting traces of humans will remain? Answers to all these questions and more are featured in an intriguing book, "*The World Without Us*" by Alan Weisman.

Weisman explains on a grand scale of what will happen if humans were to suddenly disappear, how concrete jungles would be replaced by real ones and how long it would take.

One of the first things Weisman predicts is what will happen to New York City. In just two days the subway tunnels and sewers will flood. Causing the foundation to crumble. Leaf matter and other materials would clog the sewer grates creating a moist environment for trees and other plants to grow. The roots of the plants crack the asphalt and a constant melt thaw causes buildings to topple. Within twenty years the steel columns will collapse. As Lexington Avenue caves in, it becomes a river.

If this happens so quickly in New York, what is to become of our humble houses? Weisman describes in great detail what is first to go, and what, if anything, will remain. It all starts with the wood framing and roof. "Nature's revenge", as Weisman calls it, is waterborne. Leaks and water under the shingles will be one part of the house's demise. Termites, mold and rust all take care of the rest. Weisman predicts that without humans, these houses will only last fifty years, one-hundred at the most.

In the world without us, Weisman explains, most animals would be better off without humans, although domesticated animals wouldn't do so well. For example, dairy cows who depend on humans to give them food and water would die. These animals would then become food for everything else. Pets would have to get out of houses or they would die. African elephants would do extremely



According to Weisman in his book '*The World Without Us*,' an apocalypse would mean the rebirth of nature in a world haunted by the vestiges of humanity.

well without us poaching them into extinction and clearing their habitat.

In addition to many other topics, the book talks about what will last. It's surprising how powerful and fast nature is in recovery. Nature's quick recovery leads to a rapid disposal of almost everything left by humans. Note the almost. There is one thing that we take for granted that may be here for nearly forever: plastic.

The chapter on plastic can make anyone's blood boil. Humans are now contributing to a huge problem in the ocean's "great pacific garbage patch." By 2005 it was ten million square miles, nearly the size of Africa. Weisman explains its massive effect on ocean life and what will soon be our lives.

Weisman uses the skillfulness of vari-

ous scientists, artists and philosophers to paint a picture of the predicted fate of the world.

While the book is lengthy, for the most part it is extremely interesting. It can be a bit dry in parts, but Weisman does a spectacular job of providing a full insight to the impact of humans on the earth.

This book is written in a very imaginative way. The detailed description of crumbling cities will transport readers to that destination, making them feel as if they are there. The book makes emotions rise seeing what humans have done to the environment, however, as Weisman shows us, over time Mother Nature still remains the most powerful force of all. ☺

# Amazon Kindle provides convenient way to read books electronically

Caroline Kennard  
Staff Reporter

Imagine you're on a boat with the urge to read. You have read all the books on the boat and are dying for a new one. With the Amazon Kindle, you can buy a book and read it anytime, anywhere.

The Amazon Kindle is a wireless reading device that can hold up to 200 books. It has an electronic paper display so it looks just like a book.

On November 21, talk show host Oprah endorsed the Amazon Kindle.

Known writers also endorsing the Kindle such as Toni Morrison, Michael Lewis, Guy Kawasaki, James Patterson, Neil Gaiman, Daniel Handler, and Anita Diamant.

"It's like paper and it's very interesting. It's very, very crisp. Very functional. Very readable," said Neil Gaiman, author of the novel "Stardust."

Amazon has made over 190,000 books available to purchase on the high-speed network called EVDO.

Oprah has called it her "new favorite gadget" on her TV talk show.

She looks at it as an environmentally friendly device that "will pay for itself. The books are much cheaper, and you're saving paper."

All books are under \$9.99. The price of the kindle is \$359. "I know it's expensive in these times, but it's not frivolous because it will pay for itself," Oprah said.

Users can also subscribe to top U.S. and international papers as well as 1,000 of the most popular blogs for business, technology, sports, entertainment, and politics.

"If you are obsessed with blogs that are constantly updated, this is a no brainer," Guy Kawasaki, author and blogger said.

The Kindle weighs 10.3 ounces and is 7/5 inches by 5.3 inches by .7 inches, easy to pack away in a purse or book bag.

"It's lighter, I can carry it," said Toni Morrison, Nobel Laureate and author of "Beloved."

Despite its convenient size and many benefits, some people would not want a kindle. Some Clayton High School teachers say they prefer reading actual books to electronic text.

"I would not want one. I like the feel of a book in my hands," Clayton health teacher Doris Smith said.

"I like books, to turn the pages of books. I like paper books or audio," said English teacher Rebecca Taylor.

Despite its flaws, the Kindle is a major step forward in the technology world.

"People are going to flip over this thing," said James Patterson, bestselling author of "You've Been Warned." ☺

# Restaurant in downtown Clayton offers satisfying Asian cuisine

## Bobos is located in a popular location near CHS

Martha Burke  
Reporter

In a narrow venue by Kayak's coffee, Zoë Robinson has found home for her new restaurant. After opening many other popular restaurants such as Clayton's I Fratellini, Robinson has opened Bobos, which features Asian cuisine.

The noodle house offers a small sit down area for diners but also carries out. The restaurant is located on 278 N Skinker in University City. It provides a small sleek area for diners and friendly service, even though one orders food at the counter.

The limited menu includes a small appetizer section, with dishes like shrimp summer rolls, where diners can find options other than the typical flash fried dish. The menu also includes a limited salad section along with main dishes separated into two main courses: pho and wok/grill.

The grilled curried chicken with roasted chili peanut sauce served over seared egg noodles had a perfect amount of spiciness and was not too heavy on the sauce. I even managed to finish the whole meal using chopsticks. A lover of Asian cuisine can also find dishes with udon and rice noodles.

The restaurant only offers three light deserts, including

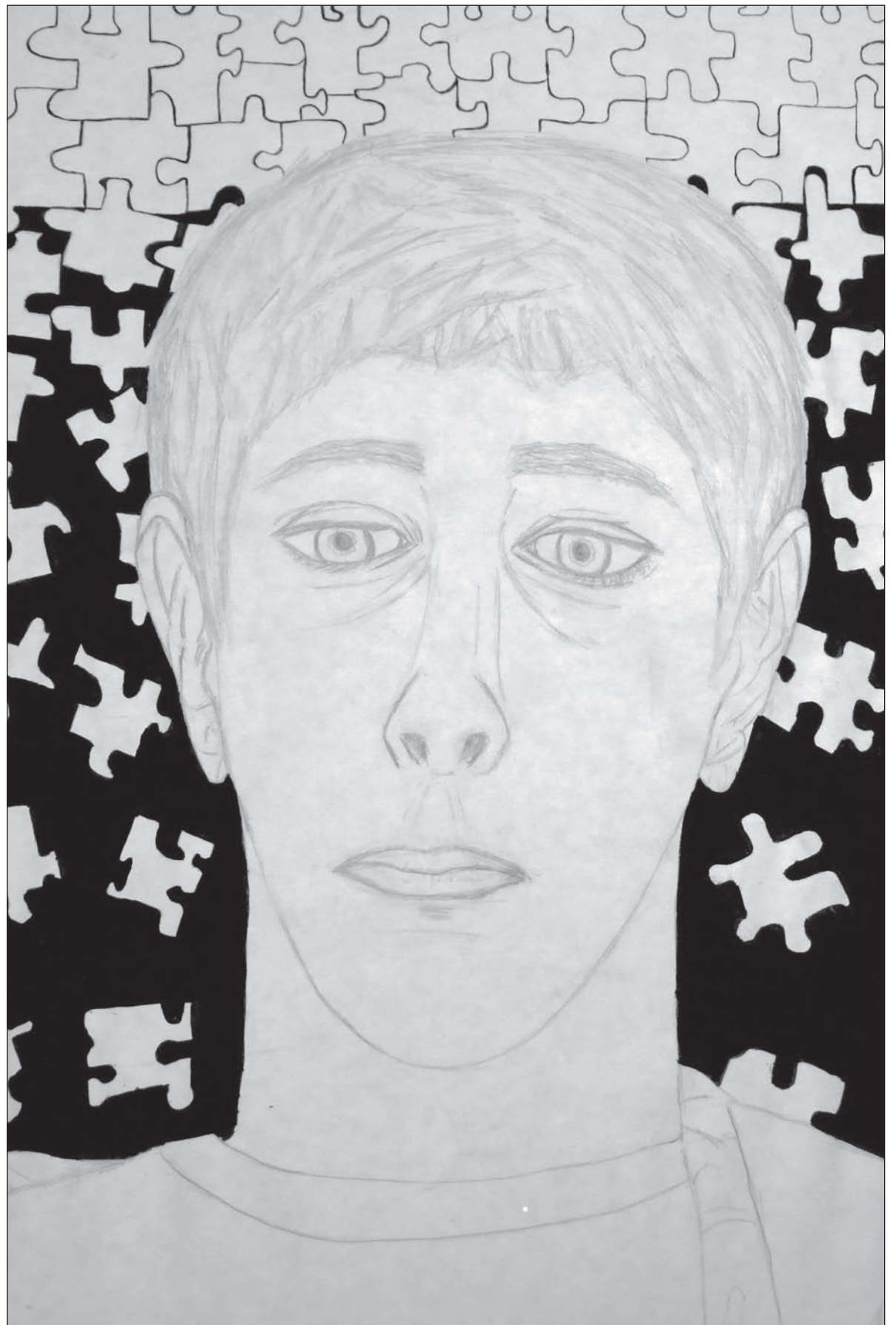
chocolate coconut ice cream sandwich, and I recommend trying the Thai iced coffee. All prices on the menu range between \$2 for a small desert and \$12 for a seafood dish. The portions are manageable and well done, avoiding the greasiness of many typical Chinese restaurants.

This restaurant offers a casual option that is family friendly, and very personal. While I was dining, Robinson floated from table to table making sure diners were enjoying their meals. Bobos has a warmer atmosphere than many chain restaurants, and is decorated with a modern style that is the opposite of industrial.

Bobos provides a new alternative to restaurants like San Sai, and the employees do not look like they are in pain while taking your order.

I would recommend this for numerous occasions including going out for a quick dinner with friends, to a quiet weeknight dinner with family. Be prepared though, the restaurant is rather small and lines can even stretch out the door. However the newly opened restaurant has fast and efficient service.

Bobos opens at 5 p.m. and the kitchen will close between 8 and 9 p.m. Monday through Saturday. The casual friendly atmosphere and delicious food is sure not to disappoint. ☺



Tom Maxim

# Depression commonly afflicts teens, some students at CHS

Colleen Layton  
Reporter

One in eight teenagers in the United States suffers from depression. Think of your eight closest friends. Even if none of them suffer from the disorder, chances are you know at least one person, best friend or not, who does.

Depression is a highly prevalent mental disorder in both the American and international community. Those who suffer from the condition tend to feel increased moodiness, often a great deal of sadness accompanied by abnormal amounts of fatigue and stress. The disorder can be caused by a serious of factors, depending on the person diagnosed. It can pass down from generation to generation, be triggered by other health related concerns, and form from major, life altering events. Whatever the cause, a chemical imbalance in the brain keeps the sufferer from leveling out his or her emotions.

"Depression is more chemical than just perpetual sadness," said student Jane Duncan\*. "There is nothing that I or anyone else could have said or done that could change what happened."

There is a sort of stigma attached to the word depression. Many stereotype those with the illness as being "emo" and characterize them as the type to sit in a corner, brooding and writing poetry of lost hope. Everyone feels they must be cautious around those with a mental state which some would consider "unstable". The truth is though; the face of depression doesn't always have to come attached to a scarlet letter.

"I tried to hide the depression as best as I could," Duncan said. "Even my closest friends could not tell that I was suffering."

First hand depression isn't the only way teenagers are affected by it. According to statistics found by the Australian government, everyone will encounter depression at some point in their life, if not by having the disorder, than by knowing someone with it. Just as how happiness is considered contagious, the feelings of sadness associated with depression are easily noticeable and can take a toll on more than the sufferer.

"The biggest thing about living with a parent who has depression and anxiety is, for me, the panic attacks," said Katrina Smith\*. "Often when my mom has a panic attack she gets headaches or becomes really tired, sometimes forcing her to stay in bed for a few hours at a time. My entire family's mood can be affected by my mom's. If she's not feeling well, then we all have to work harder do everything we can to make her feel better and to make sure things get done that need to get done."

The effects of the depression can take a toll on nearly any-

one who is connected with it, which is everyone. Physical aches and bouts of sadness are mild in comparison with the amount of suicides that occur each year. Everyday, approximately 80 Americans commit suicide. The most common reasons one takes his or her own life is due to a loss of hope, emotional agony and sadness, depression. With over 80% of people with depression currently living without treatment, it is important that adolescents are aware of the signs and symptoms of depression in order to get proper care for themselves and/or others before it is too late.

“Those who suffer from the condition tend to feel increased moodiness, often a great deal of sadness accompanied by abnormal amounts of fatigue and stress.”

"I found myself to start experience depression when this sort of fog type feeling started to mask my feelings from myself," said Duncan. "Because of this I started feeling a never ending sadness, and sought out professional help. From there I was diagnosed with depression and have been on treatment ever since."

Although chronic sadness is generally a clear indicator, there is not one set of symptoms that automatically yields to a diagnosis of depression.

"Everyone has their own indicators for when things are getting bad, but there are some universal signs," Smith said. "Things like abnormal sleep patterns and disinterest in things that used to interest a person."

In the end, a proper diagnosis is better than living life naïve to what is going on to cause the effects associated with depression. In fact, such a diagnosis can often

bring a sense of peace to those who have lived so long, unsure about why they can't just be happy.

"Depression is a serious illness," Duncan said. "You can't talk yourself out of it, or try to pretend it doesn't exist. Tom Cruise doesn't know what he's talking about. Before I knew for sure that it was depression, I was worried that something was seriously wrong with me. After I found out about this however, I felt relief because I knew what was wrong with me."

The battle doesn't stop once a person has been diagnosed with depression. It is only the first step in a long recovery. It can take from months to years to a lifetime for a person to finally feel at peace with their condition and for the symptoms to go away. Medicine such as Lexapro, Prozac and Zoloft helps with the physiological aspects of the imbalance while other, more therapeutic methods help to rid of emotional damage. Diaries, therapists and exercise are all considered excellent ways to rebuild strength in happiness when one is depressed. Smith says the best way to help a friend with depression is to lend an open ear.

"The best thing you can do is try to be understanding and listen," said Smith. "If the person wants to talk to you, then be a good listener and let them. If they don't want to talk, then be understanding, but make it understood that you'll be there if they change their mind. Always respect boundaries--prying isn't helpful, especially in a case of already diagnosed depression." ☺

# CHOICES

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# 007 grapples with eco-terrorism in 'Quantum of Solace'

Preeti Viswanathan  
Editor

Aston Martins and exotic locales were staples of the new James Bond movie "Quantum of Solace," just as they are in almost every Bond film. However, the plot was a direct continuation of the previous movie "Casino Royale."

Bond (Daniel Craig) is on a quest to find the truth behind Vesper's betrayal. He captures Mr. White, the villain, and questions him in his boss' M's hidden office in Siena, Italy. M's bodyguard, who turns out to be a member of the secretive Quantum Organization, shoots Mr. White before the questioning ends. Bond chases the bodyguard to his apartment and follows a lead that points to another Quantum agent named Slate who lives in Haiti. A fight ensues between Bond and Slate, and Slate dies. As Bond leaves, he meets Camille Montes (Olga Kurylenko), whom Slate had been hired to kill.

He finds that Camille is the girlfriend of Dominic Greene (Mathieu Amalric), head of an environmental company known as Green Planet, and learns that a Bolivian General Medrano is plotting a coup d'etat in Bolivia in exchange for a piece of seemingly barren land.

Bond tracks Greene's activities and

eventually finds himself in La Paz, Bolivia, where he and Camille rent a plane to observe the desert land. However, the plane crashes after it is shot down by Bolivian fighter jets, and, after walking through the desert, Bond and Camille find that Greene has taken over Bolivia's water supply by collecting underground stream water.

It is here that Bond learns that Camille wants to kill General Medrano to avenge the death of her family, who were murdered in an earlier coup attempt. Camille and Bond find their way to Greene's fuel-cell-powered hotel in the desert, and amidst exploding hydrogen cells, Camille finally kills Medrano and Greene dies in an intense fight with Bond.

The movie deals with the very contemporary theme of eco-terrorism, which was a refreshing change from the older movies, which involve Cold-War plot lines. The acting in "Quantum of Solace" was credible; Craig personifies the classic cold-hearted secret agent, although the fact that the plot of this movie was based on Bond's personal motives slightly undermines his ruthlessness.

Kurylenko also had a more substantial role in this film compared to the nominal role that Bond girls have had in

previous 007 films. Mr. Greene was not forthrightly villainous, but Amalric portrayed him in a way that implied his cruelty and the wickedness that simmered beneath his composure.

The action sequences, on the other hand, were disappointing and poorly filmed. The opening scene, for instance, was a very choppy, seemingly random car chase. Many of the other chase and stunt scenes were short, arbitrary segments of violence rather than the prolonged and classy chases that were demonstrated in other Bond movies. The characteristics of the action made this movie a little more like the Bourne movies and less similar to the classic style of Bond.

The chemistry between Bond and the other characters was good, particularly between Bond and M. There wasn't too much chemistry between Bond and Camille, perhaps because they were both too vengeance-minded to build their relationship.

Also, compared to "Casino Royale," this movie had a more complex plot — Quantum's aims and methods were not always clear, which made the plot more difficult to follow than "Casino Royale."

"Quantum of Solace" lived up to my expectations, but as a sequel to "Casino Royale," it didn't surpass them. ☹



James Bond, played by Daniel Craig, stays on his guard as he attempts to track down eco-terrorists during his adventures in Bolivia.

## Spin off classic movie, 'This wonderful life' charms

An innovative one act, one actor play, is based off of 'It's a Wonderful Life.'

Colleen Layton  
Reporter

"Every time a bell rings, an angel gets its wings."

The Christmas classic "It's a Wonderful Life", released in 1949 by director Frank Capra tells the life story of a young man named George Bailey. Burdened with a kind heart and a good head, his lifelong aspiration to travel the globe and go to college are diminished when he is forced to take over the family loan business. When his uncle loses a great deal of the business's money to a local miser, Bailey questions his importance in the world. He only comes to realize how much he is valued when a wingless angel named Clarence shows him what life in his town of Bedford Falls would be like without him.

I know of families who sit around the television together every year and watch this film. They say it's simply wonderful. They say it's a classic. They say it's one of

life's necessities.

Before I went to the Repertory Theatre on November 30th, I had never seen it. In fact, I only really knew three things about it.

- 1) It was a must-see, amazing, fantastic Christmas classic.
- 2) A guy wonders what the world would be like if he had never been born.
- 3) Apparently, every time a bell rings, an angel gets its wings.

"This Wonderful Life" filled me in on all of the rest. Playing at the Repertory Theatre in Webster Groves from Nov. 26 to Dec. 28, this one act play is, in a nutshell, "It's a Wonderful Life". Although, in this play, every role is acted out by one man (Mark Setlock) Watching it, I began to forget that there was a sole actor on stage, as he captured the role of each character so splendidly, giving them each a voice and realistic mannerisms.

At first, I was a little unsure of how the play was going to work out. I didn't

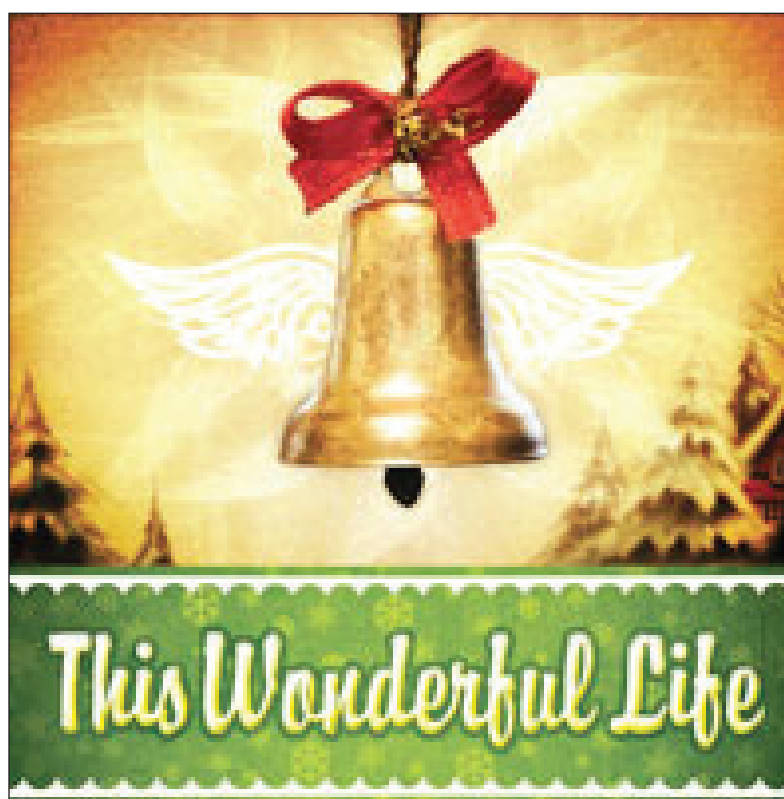
want to sit and watch a reenactment of a film I could just as easily rent and watch at home. The one man endeavor made me even more tentative but also more excited. By the end of the evening, an apprehensiveness I had felt was completely washed away. Setlock had a strong stage presence with a seemingly infinite stamina. If he ever lacked in his energy, he didn't show it all the while simultaneously ensuring that the audience was fully engaged by adding his own snarky commentary on the original movie and cracking witty gestures to liven his character.

Another engaging feature of the show was the magnificent set designed by James Wolk. The Loretto-Hilton Center's theatre is small and intimate, with only enough stage room to allow for what fans of huge productions might consider a minimalist set. Even before I entered the hall I heard wonderful things about the scenic designs that awaited me

indoors. On stage was the exterior of a cinema, with a marquee, poster display and bar. This one piece set would in turn become a home, an office, the exterior to a boarding home and business, a bar, a taxi, a bridge, a living room and heaven. In two adjectives: it was simple yet breathtaking.

The lighting played another important role in the play. A few small changes created a completely different mood or scene. Pinpricks made for an illuminating starry sky while faded lighting sated a darker tone. On Christmas, everything was lit and the theatre once again felt jolly.

Sure, it may not have been created on a huge budget like the original movie and I still plan on renting the original movie one holiday evening, but "This Wonderful Life" provided the perfect blend of cheer, humor and feeling in a production that I would recommend to anyone who enjoys a nice night out at the theatre. ☺



Courtesy of the Repertory Theatre of St. Louis

Repertory Theatre in Webster Groves presents 'This Wonderful Life' from Nov. 26- Dec. 28. Following the plot of 'It's a Wonderful Life' closely, the play tells the story of George Bailey in his discovery of self worth and the value of family during the Christmas season.

## Education leads to overcoming circumstances

Bianca Vannucci  
Reporter

Teachers aren't often asked where, what, or why they are teachers. Debra Wiens teaches World/U.S. I, AP U.S. Government and Politics, and American Government, but she could probably tell you a thing or two on how to milk a cow or drive a truck. Wiens grew up on "a struggling Iowa farm," but she was always more responsible than the average kids.

"I learned responsibility at a very young age," Wiens said. "At three-years-old, my dad was driving a giant load of hay on the truck when a clutch went out as we were going up a hill in the middle of nowhere. My dad told me to get down on the floor and hold that pedal as he got under the truck to fix the problem. He told me that if I let go of the pedal my daddy would die. I held that pedal, and when my dad got back in the truck, he said 'Well done, now don't tell mom!'"

Wiens didn't have a lot growing up. "One summer in elementary school I begged my mom to let me get a summer reading magazine, a subscription, she said I could for one time in my life," Wiens said. "I got Ranger Rick, a magazine about nature and I remember running to the mailbox to see if the magazine had come."

"I was reading about a scientist and I was so sad," Wiens said. "I thought I would never get to meet a scientist. I'm married to one now."

Getting this far wasn't easy for Wiens. "I decided I did not want to live hard on the farm, despite being proposed to by many farmers," Wiens said. "I wanted to get a good education to get far."

Over the years Wiens had worked hard on the farm. "I built fences when I was 4 years old, I tended animals, I cleaned up. I was never paid for any of my work," Wiens said. "At one point I asked my dad to pay for college and he said yes, my dad went in debt to put me through college. After getting my degree I moved to Chicago and started a school with two friends in a poor neighborhood where most of the kids were Mexican, African American and Polish. Then I got married, and my husband was offered a job at Washington University."

Wiens told her husband she wasn't going to let him go to St. Louis unless she found a job teaching here. "Out of the blue, Clayton offered me a job," Wiens said. "They wanted me to come here and teach!"

Wiens started teaching at Clayton in 1984. Ever since then, Wiens' life has been on an uphill slope. In 2005 she took a sabbatical in Australia and tutored kids from all over the world in a public school for nine months.

"I love traveling, so far Egypt is my favorite country," Wiens said.

Wiens then goes on to tell of an Egyptian girl who has a crush on her son, as Wiens is able to keep up with these gossips as well as with teaching. Balancing family and work isn't easy, but Wiens manages to do both well.

Wiens became a teacher and now gives other the opportunity for education that she was so convinced she should get when she was younger. Her motivation made her dreams come true. ☺



Ken Zheng

Below, history teacher Debra Wiens spends an afternoon along with her sister and father on the family farm that she grew up on.



Courtesy of Debra Wiens



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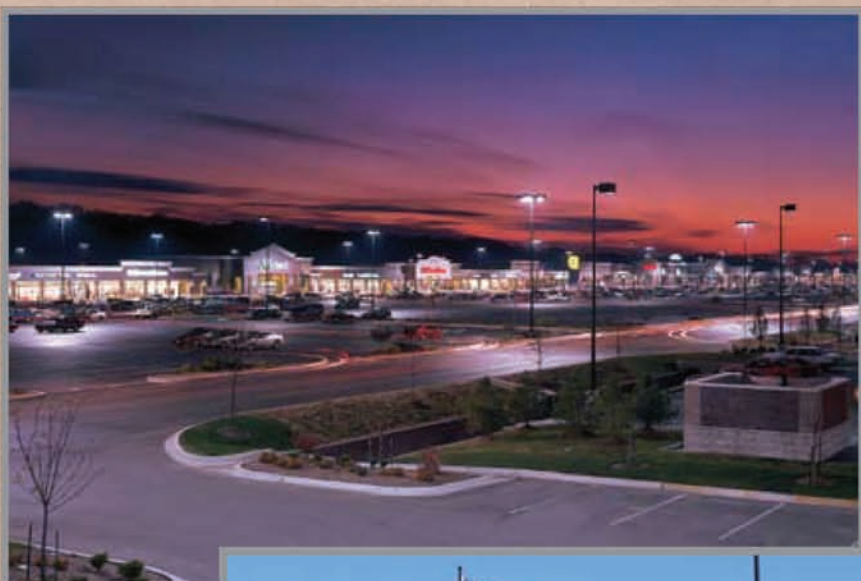
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- World Market

# Holiday shopping gone wrong

I'm sure you've heard the term "shop till you drop" before. Whoever coined this clever rhyme probably didn't mean it literally.

However, a scene linking shopping and dropping occurred in New York on Black Friday of this year. An unsuspecting temporary maintenance worker was accidentally trampled to death by a crowd of aggressive shoppers that day.

The victim, Jdimytai "Jimbo" Damour, fell to the crowd after trying to control the mob of impatient shoppers.

"Fists banged and shoulders pressed on the sliding-glass double doors, which bowed in with the weight of the assault," The New York Times reported. "... (Suddenly), the doors shattered, and the shrieking mob surged through in a blind rush for holiday bargains. (Damour) was thrown back onto the black linoleum tiles and trampled in the stampede that streamed over and around him."

The scene is painful to imagine.

It sounds like a made-up death used in the game Mafia: trampled to death by a pack of feral shoppers during the holidays. It is a bizarre, creepy, disgusting way to die.

Although the immediate reaction to such an event may be disbelief, I assure you that this tragedy is very real. It is not a joke. Someone died as a direct result of greed, apathy and inattention.

Now, because the true murderers cannot be identified with security cameras, Wal-Mart is getting blamed for this worker's death. The multi-

million dollar company is targeted for lack of safe crowd control at that Wal-Mart store.

## Staff Editorial

That is why people are casting about for blame—they need to make logical sense, to have a cause and effect. Unfortunately, an incident like this has no definitive culprit.

You could argue that the culprit per se is American materialism, the American dream itself.

Capitalism, however, isn't the problem either. It's generally a good thing, and if Americans or most other modern populations didn't have a relatively free market, there would be a revolt.

The problem is that the people at that Wal-Mart store in New York lost touch with the value of human life. They were distracted about buying things to the point that they didn't notice a man dying beneath their feet.

Or maybe they didn't even care—in a YouTube video taken from a cell phone of the death of Damour, laughter can be heard in the background. It doesn't matter whether those people were laughing at the death or at something else, they were obviously oblivious and apathetic to the situation.

“You can argue about Wal-Mart's employee benefits or the problems with American materialism, but we must always respect life because it's the one thing we share. We should never want a material possession so much...that we ignore the importance of human life.”

Agree **100%**  
Disagree **0%**

Nor did the death of Damour deter Wal-Mart shoppers; after the store reopened on Black Friday, the store was full again within minutes.

You can argue about Wal-Mart's employee benefits or the problems with American materialism, but we must always respect life because it's the one thing we share. We should never want a material possession so much—no matter what the price—that we ignore the importance of human life.



Courtesy of MCT Campus

Wallace and Gromit dink mugs above. The British clay-animation series has been a personal favorite for many young and old people alike. The series and movies are praised for their "endearing originality."

## Wallace and Gromit inspires, entertains

What do these things have in common: an evil penguin, a skeptical dog, wensleydale cheese, and a flock of sheep?

All of these appear in one or more of the adventures of Wallace and Gromit. The British clay animation series, which centers on a quirky inventor and his intelligent dog, was created by Nick Park.

The first film Park made was Wallace and Gromit's first adventure, a "Grand Day Out." The pair has become very popular, especially for a clay-animated series; this Christmas a new film is being released on British television called "A Matter of Loaf and Death."

Although many people were well aware of the films early in the '90s, I was oblivious of the Wallace and Gromit phenomenon until I entered the double-digits.

My sister received one of my favorite films featuring Wallace and Gromit, "The Wrong Trousers," for her birthday one year.

I had never heard of the duo, nor had I had much experience with British humor.

Although I thought it looked strange at first, as most British comedy does, once I watched the film I was enchanted.

I loved Wallace's strange and arguably counter-productive inventions and Gromit's cynical responses. One especially intriguing character was the evil penguin in "The Wrong Trousers," who "transforms" himself into a chicken by placing a red rubber glove on his head.

One of the things I love most about Wallace and Gromit is its endearing originality. I also appreciate Wallace's corny puns; he manages to get in the phrase "hunted down like a dog" in both "The Wrong Trousers"



Ellie Bullard

“I was oblivious of the Wallace and Gromit phenomenon until I entered the double-digits. My sister received one of my favorite films featuring Wallace and Gromit, "The Wrong Trousers," for her birthday one year.”

Ellie Bullard  
Senior

In an age where most animation films can't decide whether they're targeting children or the children's parents, it's refreshing to see a film that so obviously is just being itself. Part of the film's originality stems from its unique production process.

Clay-animated movies take an abnormal amount of time to make.

However, the animation of Wallace and Gromit is seamless, and not without cost; Nick Park's latest film took about 16 months to shoot.

Most movies take less time to film, and much

Patience is essential when it comes to creating clay-animated films. If the stop-motion technique is being used, 24 frames create only one second of film.

That means that making just one minute of film takes 1440 frames.

Park averaged 30 frames per day in most of his films; each second of the films that he created took one day to film.

This is why the creation of Park's feature-length film, "The Curse of the Were-Rabbit," took five years to create. It's also why Park has consistently turned down offers to create a regular television series; it would just take too much time and effort.

Although I have never actually attempted to create an animated film, from watching Wallace and Gromit it seems that it would be a grueling experience, especially since I am a very impatient person.

Every time I watch Park's films, I am amazed at the work that he must have put into them.

Finally, I love that Park values quality over everything else. He sacrifices money and profit for his work.

This, above all, has ensured his success, and has enabled him to create two unforgettable characters—Wallace and Gromit.

## Obama continues First Dog legacy

Their names range from things like "Drunkard" and "Satan" to "Fido" and "Checkers." They have bitten reporters, written memoirs, created web pages and inhabited the president's home almost continuously since George Washington took office. They are a lucky group of canines who, amidst political scandal and international crises, have comforted the president and his family in the office of first dog.

It's hard to imagine a president without a first dog. Although there have been presidents with other types of pets (John Quincy Adams apparently owned silkworms and an alligator) and presidents without any pets at all (Arthur Chester, Andrew Johnson), the first dog has come to be a symbol of the "Americanness" of a president.

Nowadays it's inconceivable that any president could serve without a dog—so much so that the first promise of the president-elect Barack Obama in his election night speech was to buy a puppy for his children.

However, the apparent necessity for the first family to own a first dog is questionable.

Malia Obama, the eldest daughter of the president-elect, is allergic to dogs, and were the Obamas to choose a dog bred for its hypoallergenic qualities, it might violate the newest prerequisite for the presidential dog: the president should set an example and adopt the first dog from a shelter.

One should note, of course, that it isn't impossible to get a hypoallergenic dog from a shelter.

But what in the end makes the first dog worth all the promises, expense, and potential suffering? Despite the silliness of the "office" and the tradition-bound

demand placed upon the first family, the first dog is ultimately a symbol that makes the first family resemble our family. Without the first dog, the first family could no longer function as the ideal American family.

The office of president is certainly not that of a king—Americans don't expect a president to make a White House menagerie (although some presidents have come close). Thus, it seems fitting that the most important presidential pet is the dog, a creature whose humility and nobility are intrinsically wound up in its very connotations. A dog is man's best friend, and is loyal to the last: a dog may be the only supporter of the president in hard times, but its fidelity to its master demonstrates the ideal of true American patriotism. In a way, a dog who works hard and loves faithfully is the ideal American itself.

The first dog of the United States is an animal who is a little bit bigger than him or herself. The first dog is a living, breathing symbol of what makes American identity.

That said, this doesn't exclude the first dog from being a foreigner. The Peruvian embassy has offered the Obamas a Peruvian hairless breed, who would not bother Malia's allergies.

To accept the gift could be an act of diplomacy, and to deny it could lend potential to a foreign policy crisis.

Unfortunately, the looks of the Peruvian Hairless Dog don't really compare to those of the more popular presidential breeds (Scottish terriers and Cocker spaniels), and the Obamas would probably do well to look back in history at the number of presidents who have owned multiple dogs—from George Washington's six to Herbert Hoover's nine.



Madeline McMahon

“It's hard to imagine a president without a first dog...the first dog has come to be a symbol of the "Americanness" of a president.”

Madeline McMahon  
Senior

## Future first dog

The Obama family's new puppy will be adopted in the spring.

### What dog to pick?



Goldendoodle puppy

- Favors a rescue dog
- Must have hypoallergenic coat because of Malia Obama's allergies
- Malia has said she wants a "goldendoodle," a golden retriever-poodle hybrid

## Top adopted dogs

In Washington D.C.

■ Hypoallergenic

1. Labrador retriever
2. Yorkshire terrier
3. Poodle
4. Shih tzu
5. Golden retriever
6. Boxer
7. German shepherd
8. Boston terrier
9. Pug
10. Rottweiler

Source: AP, American Kennel Club  
Graphic: Melina Yingling

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Courtesy of MCT Campus

The Globe is a public forum. As such, we welcome the voices of all. We accept letters to the editor provided they are signed; under very few circumstances will we publish an anonymous letter. Due to space constraints, we reserve the right to edit submitted material.

# Book offers humor through sequence of questions

When meeting somebody new there are a lot of things you ask in order to get to know them. What's your name? Where did you grow up? Are you a dog person or a cat person? But what if you stop asking these simple, mundane questions to learn more about them, and instead ask questions that help you realize if they are even *worth* knowing?

We need a test, a set of questions, that we ask every new person we meet and then based off these answers we can decide whether they are worthy of our attention. And I happen to think that Chuck Klosterman has the magic 23 questions, all in his hilarious book *Sex, Drugs, and Cocoa Puffs: A Low Culture Manifesto*. I won't bore you with all of the questions (though I highly suggest you read the book and this chapter for yourself), but I will discuss some of them.

Here's a situation: Genetic engineers at John Hopkins University announce that they have developed a «super gorilla». The animal cannot speak, but it has a sign language lexicon of over 12,000 words, an I.Q. of almost 85, and a vague sense of self-awareness. The creature is fascinated by football and ESPN analysts speculate he would be virtually unblockable and would average six sacks per game. The gorilla states he would never hurt anybody. Here's the question: You are commissioner of the NFL: Would you allow the gorilla to sign with the Oakland Raiders?

Well, to be honest I don't really know anything about football, but my initial thought is that while a gorilla can claim to never hurt anybody, if he is 700 pounds somebody is going to die. Although, the sadistic side of me would love to see cocky football players like Tom Brady try to fight a 700 pound gorilla. Quite a dilemma.

Ok, here's the next question: You meet a wizard in downtown Chicago who tells you he can make you more attractive if you pay him money. When you ask how he does this, the wizard points



Writer Chuck Klosterman holds cooking items in his apartment located in Akron, Ohio. He is one of the many 20-somethings who live out of takeout food and boxed macaroni and cheese. Now however Jane Snow is about to teach him how to make meatloaf. This is the first of several cooking lessons to come during a period of six months when Snow is going to Klosterman, and her readers, how to find their way around the kitchen.

to a random stranger on the street. The wizard claims to make this person \$1 more attractive. He then waves his magic wand and even though the person does not change at all they are undeniably slightly more attractive and vaguely sexier. The wizard has a strange rule though being that you can only pay him once and cannot keep giving him money until you're satisfied. So how much cash do you pay the wizard?

To me, this question probably reveals more about character than any of the others. If the person is honest you can tell if they are insecure, modest, confident or cocky. Qualities that I find most important in terms of liking somebody. Inevitably, somebody will state that they would not pay the wizard anything, thank you very much.

They are probably lying, they are most likely the insecure people who would pay thousands of dollars. Somebody else will reveal their insecurity and admit they would pay thousands of dollars, but are really trying to just show you that they are honest. So, is there a good way to answer this? Can I unearth their ultimate motivation? Personally, I would just give the wizard whatever cash I had in my pocket and move on with life. But more importantly this wizard would probably replace the Bronze Cowboy as the coolest Chicago streetwalker.

Let's say you have won a prize. The prize has two options, and you can choose either (but not both). The first option is a year in Europe with a monthly stipend of \$2000. The second is ten minutes on the moon.

I think that this question reveals a lot about somebody. Are they going to choose the experience that almost nobody gets to do or will they go with a common experience that is guaranteed

to be good. Personally, I go with the moon. In Europe I will get like \$24000, but with the exchange rate that is not even that good and it costs like three trillion dollars to go to the moon. What is so special about Europe anyways? Plus, «I spent 10 minutes on the moon» is an awesome conversation starter.

So let's say you met a rudimentary magician who can do five simple tricks: he can pull a rabbit out of his hat, he can make a coin disappear, he can turn the ace of spades into the Joker, and two others that are a lot like those. These are his only tricks and he can't learn anymore. But this is REAL magic and not a trick. He truly is magical, but he is limited in his powers. Is this person more impressive than Albert Einstein?

My initial reaction was that heck no this person was not more impressive than Einstein who pretty much discovered everything about 20 century science. And who needs more bunnies anyways? But then the more I thought about it I real-

ized that if this person really is magical then he is negating a lot of what Einstein discovered. So Einstein would have been wrong and this magician invalidates his work. In that case, the magician is way more impressive. It's all very logical when you think about it.

Now let's say that you have a brain tumor. The good thing is that you can and will be saved by an operation. But this operation has a drawback: it takes a brutal incision to your frontal lobe. As a result, after this operation you will no longer be able to understand complex ideas. The surgery is in two weeks. How do you spend your final 14 days?

My first idea was what everybody says: I would make a video tape or write everything down about who I am now so I will always know. But then I realized that I would not be able to understand anything that I had made. My mind would definitely not be able to comprehend that I used to be a different person. That is too complex. So instead, I will follow the advice of a friend. I would count all of the things that would no longer be of importance or annoyance when the surgery is over. I will never again have to question how the electoral college works or if God exists. Whether there is an afterlife or why life is meaningful will no longer bother me. And some people claim that these questions are worth thinking about I will probably be happier in my more simplistic form. It's depressing, but I'll try to be positive.

All of the questions are like this: weird, not particularly realistic, and somehow quite revealing about a person's character. Klosterman himself never gives his opinions and I have a sinking feeling he might decide he cannot love me if he read this column. But I don't think that you have to agree with a person's answer to love them. In many ways I would probably judge you if you agreed with my viewpoints. But I think Klosterman has a point. In general people are either too harsh and write others off based on looks or are too accepting and give everybody a chance. But with these 23 questions in hand you can figure out everything you need to know about a person and then make an informed decision about whether it is possible to love them. And it is fun to watch them try to answer.

## Global Perspectives



Sarah Horn

# Rwandan hero strives for peace, worldwide diplomacy

“If people use words to do evil, why can't they use words to do good?”

Paul Rusesabagina posed this question to me, and his iridescent words are still resonating through my mind like drumbeats.

Mr. Rusesabagina was able to save more than 1,000 lives during the 1994 Rwandan Genocide. Since that time, Paul Rusesabagina has traveled the world to tell his story, to say never again to the atrocities of genocide, and to preach his message of diplomacy.

The tragedy that occurred in Rwanda in 1994 was drenched in history and ethnic tension.

There had always been anxiety between the two Rwandan groups; the Hutus and the Tutsis, but Belgian imperialism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century intensified this animosity.

The Belgian government that controlled Rwanda starting in 1916 explicitly distinguished these two groups. The Belgians favored the Tutsi minority, who were offered privileges including better jobs. Hutu resentment existed throughout Belgian colonial rule, and when the Belgians gave up power in 1962, Hutus took control of the government.

Hutu resentment towards the Tutsis, however, was not relinquished. A catalyst for the Genocide was the death of President Juvenal Habyarimana in April 1994 when his plane was shot down. The suspects of the murder were members of the Rwandan Patriotic Front, a Tutsi refugee group, which had come into conflict with the president in the past year, but his killers were never identified.

Goading Hutu retaliation was a radio show that had called to “exterminate the Tutsi cockroaches.” The radio station supported acts of violence for some time before the death of President Habyarimana, but this event served as the breaking point for mounting Hutu fury. The Rwandan government provided machetes and weapons to Hutu civilian soldiers, who subsequently slaughtered Tutsi citizens and Tutsi sympathizers indiscriminately. Paul Rusesabagina identified himself as a Hutu, but his wife was a Tutsi, and this posed a serious threat to his family's safety. At the end of just 100 days of carnage, 800,000 people had been killed.

During these 100 days of terror, Rusesabagina was able to shelter 1,268 people by using his influence as manager of the Mille Collines hotel in Kigali, Rwanda.

I was fortunate enough to hear Mr. Rusesabagina speak in the Maryville University Speakers Series on November 4 and to meet him on November 7 at the Missouri History Museum. On both occasions, he pressed the importance of verbal communication.

“Words are very important,” Rusesabagina said. “It takes one person to stand up.”

During the 1994 Rwandan Genocide, Paul was that person.

“People, killers held guns to my head, and I just spoke to them and no one in my hotel was killed,” Rusesabagina said.

Mr. Rusesabagina did not need machine guns, or machetes, just his words. As Rusesabagina continued to speak,



Novack and Ruseabagina meet at the Missouri History Museum for an event honoring the author of “Strength and Compassion”, Eric Greitens. Ruseabagina has traveled around the world, promoting peace and the eradication of hateful speech and actions.

I began to contrast his ideologies with those of President George W. Bush. Bush made a major contribution to United States foreign policy with the Bush Doctrine.

Bush's policy, conveyed through speeches and documents such as the National Security Strategy, included not only preemptive war, but also *preventive* war. The stark difference between the terms “preemptive” and “preventive” is that a preventive war describes the attack on a nation without an imminent threat on United States safety. In other words, any nation that seems to be posing a danger could be invaded, as the 2006 National Security Strategy stated: “even

if uncertainty remains as to the time and place of the enemy's attack.”

I don't know how great the stamina of Bush's imposed philosophy will be and how it will impact the future, but I think President-elect Barack Obama's foreign policy signifies a new era of diplomacy as a major priority.

An indication for me is Obama's statements in his book, *The Audacity of Hope*: “The painstaking process of building coalitions forces us to listen to other points of view and therefore look before we leap. When we're not defending ourselves against a direct and imminent threat, we will often have the benefit of time; our military power becomes just

one tool of many...to influence events and advance our interests in the world.”

Mr. Rusesabagina holds similar ideas. He wrote: “Without continuous dialogue, one does not know what the other is thinking, and that is the perfect opportunity for anger and resentment to grow and boil within a person until he or she bursts. For peace to be possible, we have to acknowledge the past and see each other clearly and with love.”

Paul Rusesabagina has seen the horrible potential of hateful speech, for his country and his people were the victims of it. But Mr. Rusesabagina also knows the positive power of what words can do to make a difference in the world.

# Student advocates school-wide inaugural celebration

On January 19, 2009, our nation will pay tribute to one of the great voices of our history—Martin Luther King Jr.—when we celebrate the holiday named in his honor.

When MLK was shot in 1968, the Birmingham schools had been integrated for a little over a decade. The Civil Rights Act was only three years old. It had been two years since Vernon Dahmer, leader of the NAACP, was killed in a firebombing by the Ku Klux Klan. Racial tension continued to rage in cities throughout the south.

It is appropriate that we remember Martin Luther King, the man who led African-Americans on their journey to

equality, the day before we inaugurate the first black president of the United States.

The inauguration's proximity to MLK day helps to remind us what a truly monumental moment we will witness on the 20th. 45 years ago Dr. King told America that he had a dream for its future, a future in which his children would be judged not by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

In one month we will confirm just how far we as a nation have come since MLK spoke of that dream.

Since this inauguration is so pivotal, dynamic, thrilling and foundational, Washington D.C. is expecting an absolute inundation of people. Practically every hotel room in town is already booked, “rush hour” is expected to stretch from before dawn until well into the evening, and about 10,000 charter buses are expected to converge on the city. Undoubtedly, January 20 will be a day to remember.

Accordingly, it is the responsibility of the CHS administration to build time into the school day to accommodate a viewing of the inaugural address. Due to its political nature, viewing cannot be mandated, but it should certainly be encouraged. This is, after all, a moment that transcends partisan politics.

Cutting every class by a few minutes, as is done on late start days, in order to set aside enough time to view the inauguration is a feasible and fair solution to the problem of time. The more pressing concern is with space. Televisions should be set up in the auditorium, the Commons, and various classrooms so that there will be enough space to provide for anyone who wants to watch Obama.

I cannot stress enough that the need

for a formal dismissal of class is imperative. Simply telling teachers to pause class and turn on the TV is inadequate because there will inevitably be the teacher who schedules a test for that day. This is a speech which should be witnessed in a crowd amongst our peers, not in a row of desks during a class.

I must admit that I have never watched an inaugural address live. I couldn't bring myself to listen to Bush gloat, and I was too young to care about Bill Clinton.

Obama is a different story. His address marks a turning point in American history and politics. Let's celebrate it accordingly.



Hannah Novack



Jeremy Bleeker

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# Audition experience teaches life lesson



Zach Praiss

Senior Aaron Praiss practices solo repertoire for an upcoming lesson. Praiss, concertmaster of the CHS Symphonic Orchestra, has been a part of the Missouri All-State Orchestra for two years, and was awarded a leadership position as principal second violinist last year.

Everyone has been there...or almost everyone.

It has either come in the mail, been posted on-line or even come in a phone call. You wait, and wait. Sometimes a few hours, sometimes a few months. The anxiety is clear in your face.

Rejected.

Not what you expected, right?

Everything seemed so expected. Everyone assumed things would turn out exactly as thought. Before you knew the result, you felt like it was already over, already won.

As stressful as auditions can be, this one seemed calmer and together. I was number 7. Lucky, right?

Wrong.

Nothing was right. As a matter of fact, everything that appeared to be right was in fact, wrong. I was rejected from an orchestra that I thought I was already in. Could it be true, I asked myself? Is this the final verdict? I'm really not in?

The "what if" questions raced like mad. What if this? What if that? How about this?

Nothing worked though.

The reality was true, and I was not going to be in the Missouri All-State Orchestra my senior year. I was rejected. Even though I had been in the orchestra in previous, one year with a leadership position, I was rejected this year.

Life is unexpected.

Life will always be unexpected.

You can't win every audition in life. This isn't my first or last time being rejected from an orchestra or other goal, but every time, it still hurts.

Every time, I wonder what I needed to do to be better. What did I do wrong? What did the invisible judges think?

I think I could have dwelled over each and every issue for days, if not months. I could have moped and been grouchy,

taking my rejection out on everyone else. I could have protested and even whined.

Instead, I rented a ridiculously over-the-top comedy, and then watched my favorite TV show of all time: Saturday Night Live (SNL).

Around 11:30 at night, about halfway through SNL, I began to smile again. Nobody can resist the temptation to laugh at Kristen Wiig advertising her Pony Express mail service. I laughed out loud, forgetting all of my misery from before.

No longer did I worry about the "what if's" of my audition. Rather, I moved past it and realized laughing is a lot more fun and even productive.

It isn't that I don't care about the audition results; I just quickly realized that my life is still moving on, not waiting for me to preoccupy myself in the intangible "what if" questions. It would be great to be in the orchestra, but it really isn't the end of the world to not be in the orchestra. First of all, there is more to life. Second, there will always be another audition, and if I work even harder, possibly an acceptance.

I will never know what happened behind those magical judging screens, so why bother worrying about it? Instead, I will practice to the point where I know that no matter what goes wrong in an audition, I will still stand out.

You can't change how other people do in an audition; you can only change your own playing and talent. Focus on making yourself the best possible, and beyond that, don't dwell in the "what if's."

If you know you did your best, there is honestly no more you can do. Rejection happen, and when it does, it's important to move on and focus on the positives. Focus on the hilarious sides of life (SNL Digital Shorts) and trust that you did your best. ☺



Aaron Praiss

## CHS Senior explores rap medium to express scholastic side of life

The recent activity of local rappers at CHS has inspired me to share my love of rap with the world. Recently, I have taken on the alter ego, F Prime, commonly abbreviated as 'f', and will shortly be realizing my first album, titled "Geek Hustle," in the next few days.

Becoming a rapper was quite arduous and unexpected road. Initially, I'd simply write my raps in the back of my hole-punched red composition book. However, after hearing me spit my sick rhymes, some friends urged to me to solicit my CD to a few record companies. Pi Records liked my CD so much that they asked me to sign an exclusive contract, which included a world tour this summer, spending a total of three weeks in Japan and China alone.

Indeed, listening to "Geek Hustle" will not only enlighten you about the nerd lifestyle, but also get you crunk while you're being studious and doing your math homework.

One of my favorite songs on the disc, "Don't mess with the TI" is a heartfelt narrative about the strong attachment I have to my vintage T.I.- 83 calculator and the math problems we've faced since 8th grade. The ballad ends sadly

with T.I. getting owned by a rival gang, the 89s, who are much faster at calculating, and can even FOIL on their own by symbolic manipulation.

"Oops! I Forgot to Make It Negative" is another great song, its chorus being:

"Oops! I, forgot to make it negative/I didn't distribute/The negative sign on the outside of the parenthesis/Oops I, got a square root of a negative number/This can't be the answer/No, please no imaginary numbers."

The album also offers variety. "Take it to the Limit" is an aggressive, angry song, full of loud bass and percussion, urging a possibly bloody Math-Off between rival math scholars to solve as many calculus problems as possible in 1 minute and 5 seconds.

Similarly, "Translate Your Curves" is a high-quality club hit. With fast reggae undertones, any nerd will be compelled to throw off his glasses and proceed to do the Lawnmower or the Running Man. The opening lyrics are: "Drivin' in my whip at 186,000 miles per second/ It's not just a good idea, it's the Law/I accelerate, yeah, and I do it UNIFORMLY/ Then all the hos try to hop up in my whip/You be the enzyme, I'll be the sub-

strate/And I'll Turn You On."

"Entropy" existentially explores the illusively meaningless Geek world in a postmodern flow of conscious about why disorder in the universe tends to increase. Other hits such as "Sin" reveals the wild, underground party scene of nerds on Saturday nights and the hours they spend analyzing art and aimlessly picnicking in Forest Park.

"Always Balance Your Hs and Os," is another dance hit, explaining the fundamental key to solving chemical redox reactions. Other chart topping hits such as "Latex" asserts the need for safe science in our society while romantic songs like, "Love like the Limit of Infinity" and "Thanks For the Trigonometry" never fail to get you in the mood.

Quintessentially, "Geek Hustle" swears to ensure rap success: "Grams to moles, moles to moles, moles to grams." The procedure is not limited to solely stoichiometry, if it is followed at any time, accurate and efficient results are guaranteed.

"Geek Hustle," not only serves as a good stocking stuffer for Christmas, but also can be used to review for final exams.

While driving, pop in the newest f' CD and prepare to ace your finals and be able to recite pi to at least the 168th digit. ☺



Fontasha Powell



Fontasha Powell

A tentative design for the cover of CHS rapper F Prime's debut album, "Geek Hustle." The CD includes songs such as "Take it to the Limit."

## Be 'Green' for the holidays

With the endless stream of commercials proclaiming the best deals, enticing store window displays overflowing with new products, and the ever present, jingly holiday music in the background, it is hard not to get swept away by the "stuff"-centered atmosphere.

The holiday season tends to be a time when people fall into their annual pattern of shopping, traveling, and eating, without stopping to think about the effects of their actions. When the winter holidays comes to mind, I, as well as many others, think of shopping in bustling stores, food and candy galore, and a mound of presents beneath a tree adorned with lights. Lately, I've caught myself day-dreaming about the hypothetical laptop I might receive, or my family's annual Christmas feast, and I have begun to realize how easy it is to get carried away with material things.

Between Thanksgiving and New Year's, Americans throw away about 25 percent more waste than during any other time of the year. The additional waste from the holiday season totals approximately one million extra tons of waste per week.

According to a Use Less Stuff report, the approximately 2.65 billion Christmas cards sold every year in the U.S. is enough to fill a football field 10 stories high.

"If we each sent one card less, we'd save 50,000 cubic yards of paper," said the Use Less Stuff report.

In addition, too focused on what gifts to buy for whom, we often forget the effect we have on the environment when we make our purchases. Each year, thousands of paper and plastic shopping bags fill landfills around the nation. To reduce the number of bags thrown away, the U.S. Environmental Protec-

tion Agency's website (epa.gov) suggests bringing reusable cloth bags for holiday gift shopping or telling store clerks you do not need a bag for small or oversized purchases. The website also recommends sending recycled-content or electronic holiday cards, as well as recycling any paper cards you receive.

A significant contributor to the waste produced each holiday season is undoubtedly the Christmas tree.

According to epa.gov, approximately 33 million live Christmas trees are sold in North America every year. After the holidays, the website suggests looking for ways to recycle your tree instead of sending it to a landfill. To help prevent waste from cutting down and disposing of live trees, you can buy a potted tree and plant it after the holidays.

Also, buying a smaller and locally grown Christmas tree will help save energy because there is less to dispose of and less gas required to transport it.

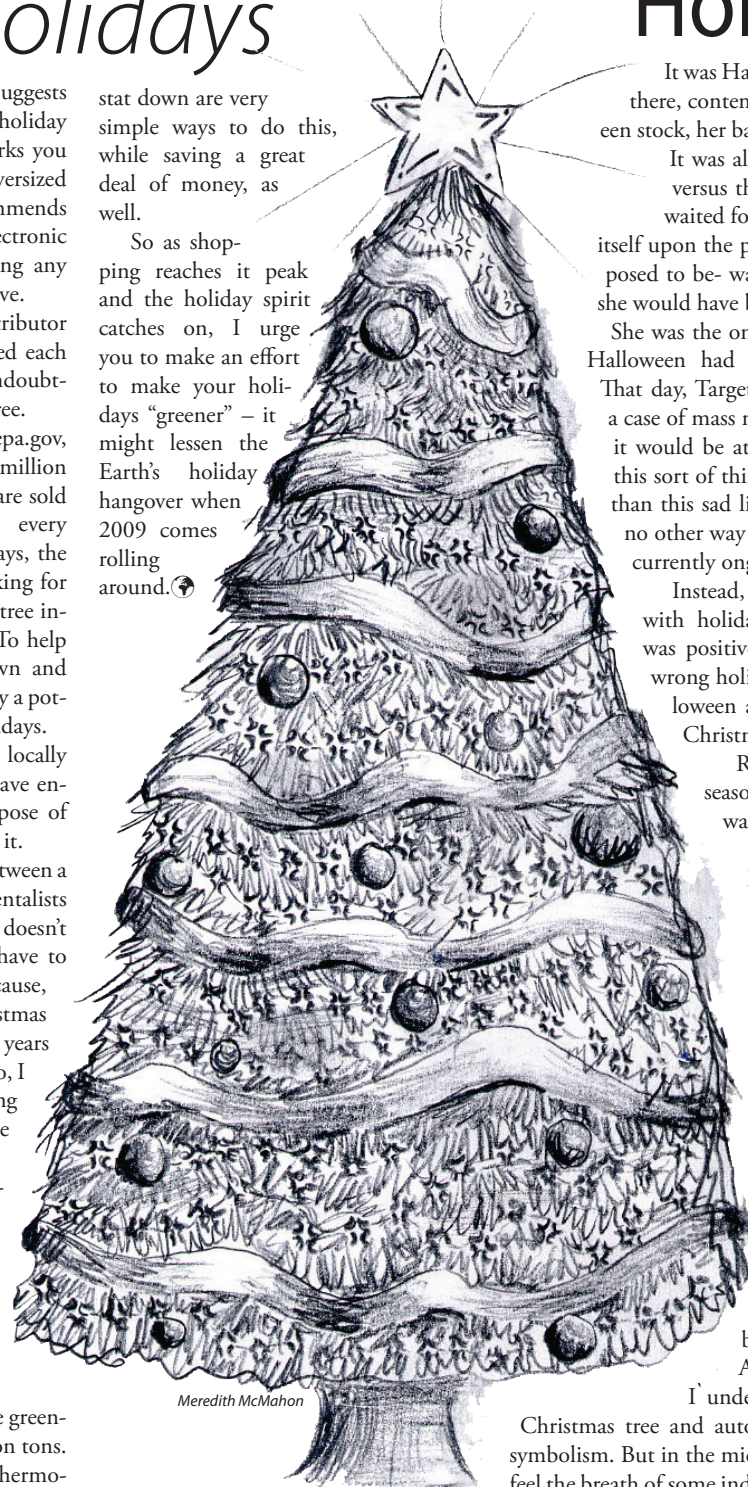
When it comes to choosing between a real or fake tree, many environmentalists recommend a real tree because it doesn't have to end up in a landfill. I have to somewhat disagree with this, because, in my family's case, our fake Christmas tree has been reused for over 30 years and is still in pretty good shape. So, I think the choice between recycling an actual tree and using a fake one is really up to you.

In addition to waste production, gasoline consumption reaches high levels during the holiday season.

According to a Use Less Stuff report, if each family reduced their holiday gasoline consumption by one gallon (about 20 miles) we would reduce greenhouse gas emissions by one million tons. Limiting travel and turning the thermo-

stat down are very simple ways to do this, while saving a great deal of money, as well.

So as shopping reaches its peak and the holiday spirit catches on, I urge you to make an effort to make your holidays "greener" - it might lessen the Earth's holiday hangover when 2009 comes rolling around. ☺



Meredith McMahon

## Holidays lose significance

It was Halloween, and the young woman stood there, contemplating the remnants of the Halloween stock, her back to a vast array of Christmas lights.

It was almost comical: one lone Halloweener versus the Christmas season that hadn't even waited for one holiday to pass before thrusting itself upon the public. She - or whatever she was supposed to be - was out of place here, on the only day she would have been viewed as normal.

She was the only sign I could see that Halloween had yet to actually occur. That day, Target's Halloween stash was a case of mass markdowns. You'd think it would be at least a week later that this sort of thing happened, but other than this sad little sale area, there was no other way to tell that autumn was currently ongoing.

Instead, the store was packed with holiday merchandise - but I was positive that there was some mistake. The wrong holiday, indeed. They'd rushed past Halloween and Thanksgiving and gone right to Christmas.

Right there in October, the holiday season was in full swing, with more than a wall of string lights to prove it.

Since then, I've driven past countless "Holiday Sale" signs, banks sporting green-and-red wreaths, and, just a few weeks ago in mid-November, even a couple lots filled with Christmas trees for sale.

The holidays have long been a sort of "jackpot" for industries, but I believe that in the recent years, as the holidays magically appear earlier and earlier, it's all been taken too far.

Sure, there's nothing wrong with pandering to holiday shoppers with a few sales, but such desperate measures as setting out the sales and blow-up Santas before December are absurd.

As a Christmas celebrator myself, I understand that people rarely look at a Christmas tree and automatically think about the religious symbolism. But in the midst of autumn, it's hard not to almost feel the breath of some industry on the nape of your neck as you

pass the abundant holiday storefronts. One can't walk into any place where something - anything - is sold and not see a hint of some false, manufactured holiday cheer.

Why are the winter holidays the only ones that stores jump the gun on? No one sees Easter eggs for sale in January. How can Christmas, as much as people love it, be justified enough that it graces display windows long before many even begin to think about it? The answer is simple enough: follow the money. Somehow we as consumers transmit the message that the earlier and the more rigorous the advertising, the more we will spend.

Companies know that we are, in essence, addicted to the holiday season. People like giving and getting and nothing short of an apocalypse would change that. We like the holidays too much.

Something deep inside, I believe, stirs in indignation. If a religious holiday can be perceived as only another moneymaking scheme, and we the consumers as merely pawns to be won in bulk, who are we to play into some manufacturing be-

hemoth's hands?

We are human. We knowingly play the game because we don't care that we are simply cogs in the great Holiday machine; thus, we encourage those who stand to gain. Malls are presently packed with holiday shoppers, blithely swinging bags of merchandise destined for other friends or family, bustling to and fro. Caught in the rush, we simply don't care that it's not Christmas that industries care about, but our pocketbooks. We buy more than we usually buy, eat more than we usually eat, and are too absorbed in the thrill of it all to see that we have turned perfectly good holidays into a time of extreme gluttony.

"We're not greedy!" the skeptic exclaims, "We're giving!" News flash: you expect to get something in return. It's now common etiquette to reciprocate gifts when given. And as this seems logical, reasonable, just, fair, et cetera, something intangible changed along the line where you not only expected the gift; you (implicitly) requested one. No; you not only requested one but you were disappointed if the gift you got back was less than what you expected, and embarrassed if it was more.

Gift giving has become a black art of sorts; the holidays, its vessel. We forget to remember the reason for giving, because we're caught up in the commercialization of it all. Nowadays, the message is that if you have the proper holiday spirit, you give. Furthermore, the more expensive the gift, the more we think the recipient appreciates it. Thus, the web of who gave to whom becomes almost something like a small-scale independent economy. The practice has lost its significance, its novelty, and has become something close to an over-bloated state of consumerism.

And let's not even get into re-gifting. ☺

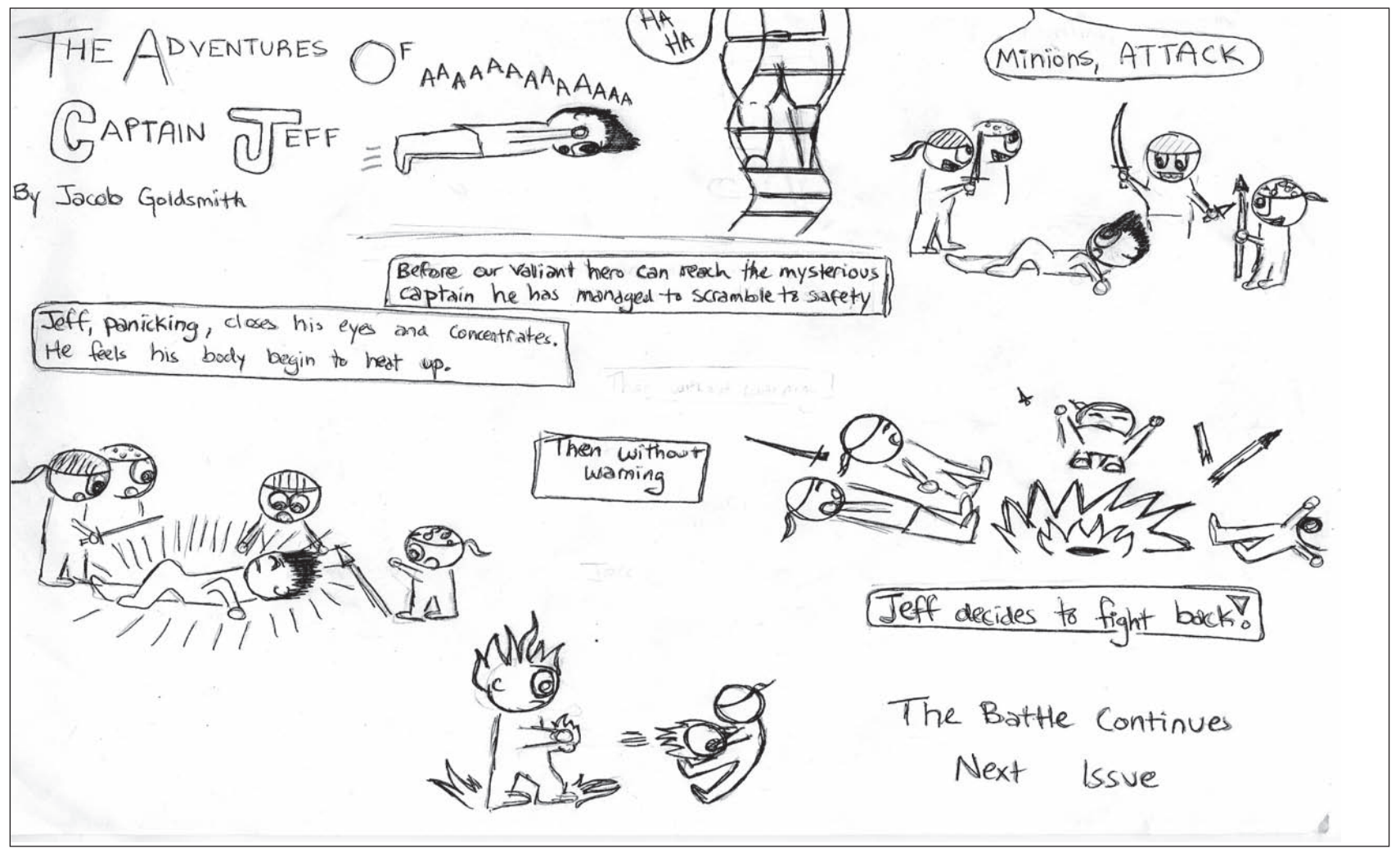


Jackie Leong



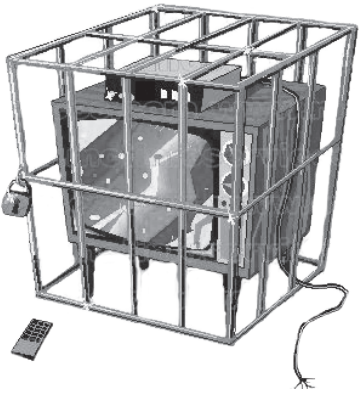
## Wolfgangsvault.com

Wolfgangsvault.com is a website where you can hear stream recordings of some of the best rockers from the 1960's and 70's, including The Stones, Hendrix, Bob Marley, Janis Joplin, and many more. You can also purchase vintage photographs, T-shirts and posters!



Sarah Horn's **Line of Infamy**

## TV Censorship



Italian state television cut a sex scene out of the Academy-award winning film "Brokeback Mountain", and a section in which the lead characters kiss. While RAI TV claims they cut the scene "by accident", it is pretty obvious that this would never happen with a heterosexual love scene. For such a romantic place full of men with leather pants, it is pretty ironic that a gay love scene would be cut from the television.



## Fluorescent Light Bulbs

Fluorescent light bulbs use around 75 percent less energy and last 10 times longer. You also save about \$30 or more in electricity costs over each bulb's life-time and they produce 75 percent heat.

## Tyra Banks

This week in narcissism: Tyra Banks compares her life journey to Barack Obama. Somehow this woman is able to turn absolutely any major event in the world to be about her. So when Barack Obama won the presidential election and made history as the first black president, she made a tearful video pronouncing her excitement and joy at this historical event. Except the video was not about Obama winning-- it was all about her. The momentousness of Obama's victory is only matched by one thing: Tyra Bank's ego.



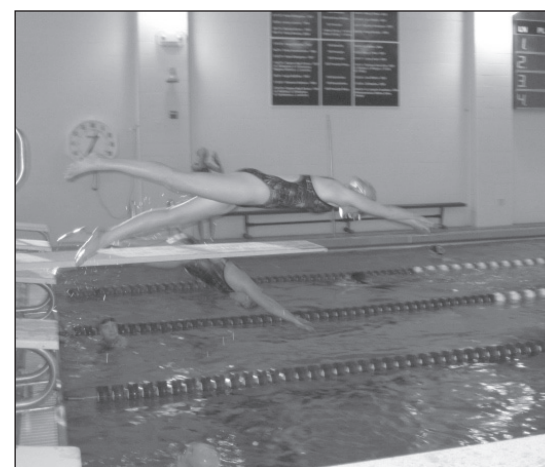
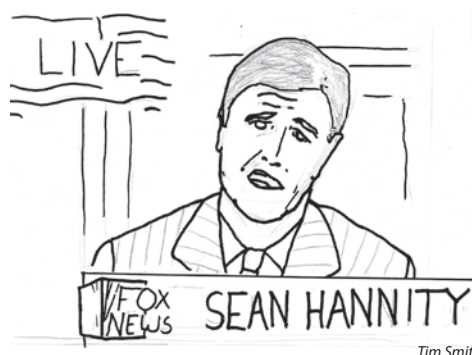
## Rod Blagojevich

Governor Rod Blagojevich and his chief of staff, John Harris, were arrested for a stunning amount of corruption as they attempted to sell Barack Obama's Senate seat. With 55 senators and Obama demanding his resignation, he still refuses. He should have gone to Oprah. Who would pay more for Obama's seat? Oh wait...she would totally refuse that if she were ever offered.

## Photos of the Month:

Sean Hannity, of Fox News Station and Hannity and Colmes, has always been known as a radical conservative newscaster. However, lately he has been under fire for attempting to connect Obama with Rod Blagojevich in the recent scandal. He claimed: "I wonder if we're starting to see what we suspected of Barack Obama...he's all over this document. The word President-elect is mentioned 44 times." Oh no! The word "President-elect" was mentioned 44 times. Clear evidence of wrongdoing. Barack Obama really just shouldn't be allowed to be President.

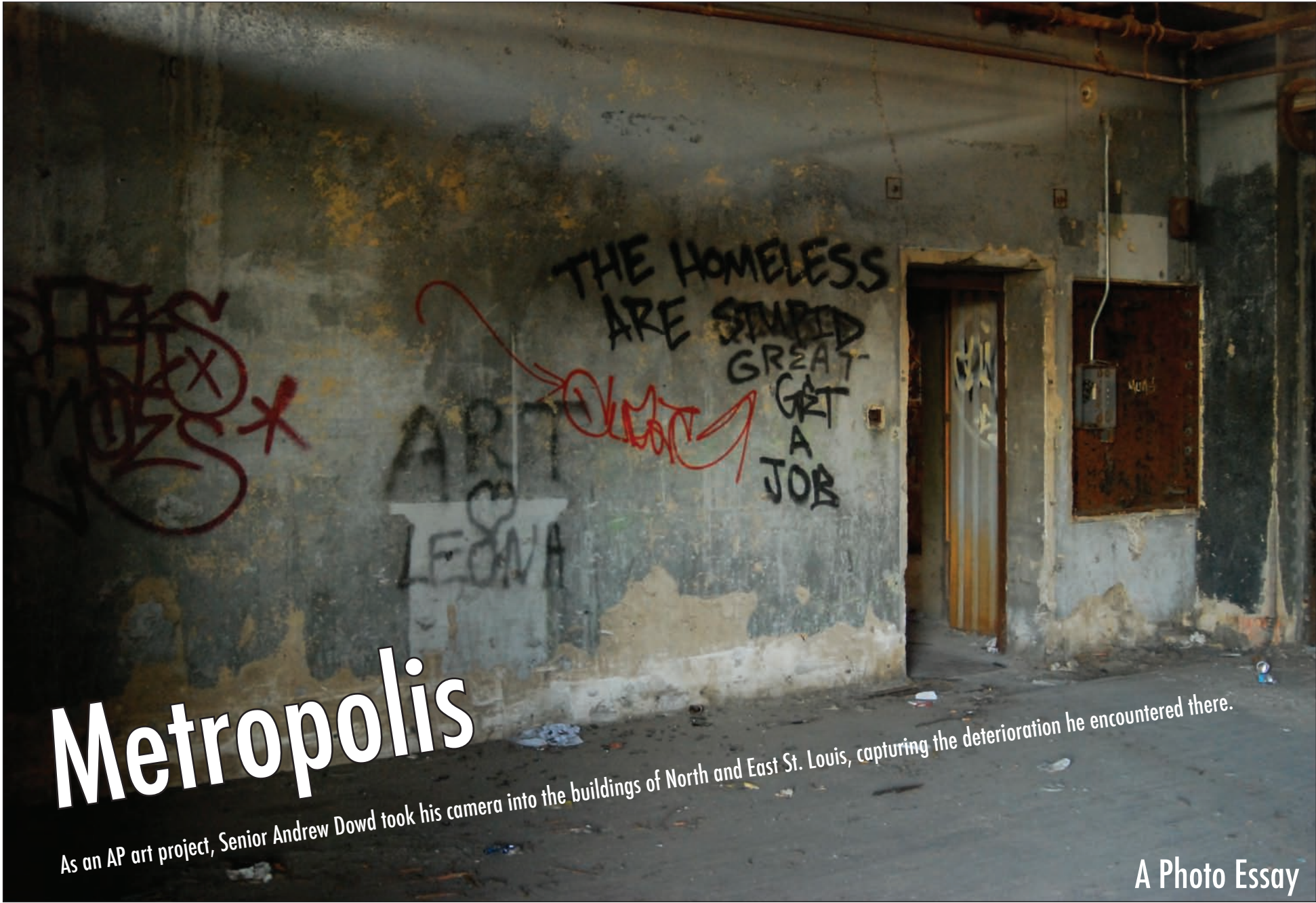
## Sean Hannity



Top left: Senior Julia Hartel springs off the board during a swimming practice. Hartel is Co-Captain of the swim team.



Right: Senior Paige Meneses jumps off the diving board. Meneses is also Co-Captain of the swim team and a top diver.



## Metropolis

As an AP art project, Senior Andrew Dowd took his camera into the buildings of North and East St. Louis, capturing the deterioration he encountered there.

A Photo Essay



Beyond Clayton, and beyond our insulated and protected pocket of the upper-middle class, there is another world. In some of my recent photography work, I ventured into this alternate reality in extremely poor sections of north St. Louis and East St. Louis. I went into abandoned and condemned buildings, attempting to capture the broken structures that lie there.

Among this metropolis of rubble, I saw how alone the people who lived here were. There were blankets in some of the corners, surrounded by some ragged clothes and small amounts of food in Styrofoam soda cups. The buildings that had once been immense and glamorous in their grandeur of decades past now were home to people just barely hanging on. I have been to third world countries, and the state of our city was no less impoverished or saddening.

However, I attempted to photograph and communicate something different from politics of our city, for I found something else. In these derelict buildings sagging into the ground, I found memories of past life. There were washed-out Polaroids lying on the floors, books caked shut with water damage. It felt like wisps of people long gone from these places, like shimmering ghosts wandering the halls of these places. I attempted, through my photos, to evoke a sense of "what was."

