

Heath Ledger found dead in his apartment  
**HEATH LEDGER / NEWS / PAGE 4**

Meet them *Before They Were Seniors*  
**BEFORE THEY WERE SENIORS / ENTERTAINMENT / PAGE 7**

Meet Ms. Cecelia in the Teacher's Lounge.  
**TEACHER'S LOUNGE / FEATURES / PAGE 5**



# The St. Clairion

Volume 9, Issue 4 - February 2008 - Upper St. Clair High School- Pittsburgh, PA 15241

All the news that fits...And then some!

## Perfect no more: New England Patriots fall short in Super Bowl XLII

By: Dallion L. Townsend  
Staff Writer

In the modern era of the National Football League, the New England Patriots are considered by many as one of the greatest dynasties of not only the new millennium, but perhaps NFL history. The Patriots have been crowned World Champions three times in the last seven years and looked to make it four times under highly scrutinized coach Bill Belichick and future Hall of Fame quarterback, Tom Brady. They went into the biggest game of the year with poise, confidence, and something that hasn't been achieved since the 1972 Dolphins: a perfect record.

The Pats were the biggest favorite for a Super Bowl victory

in league history. They broke record upon record, including most points by a team in a season, most touchdown passes by a quarterback, and most receiving touchdowns by an individual player. Despite the team's involvement in one of the most news-worthy events in sports history with the Spy-Gate scandal, the Patriots completely dominated the league, making them the first team to go 16-0 in the regular season since two more games were added to the season schedule. The Patriots were favored to stake claim of the Lombardi Trophy by Week 7 by ESPN analyst Sean Salisbury with Brady taking home the MVP honors.

Then came along a young quarterback who wanted to spoil per-

fection and tamper with what could have been a miraculous accomplishment. Eli Manning not



only drove away in the Cadillac Escalade given to the Super Bowl

MVP, but he silenced the murmurs of sports writers everywhere who were bold enough to say that the 2007-2008 Patriots were the best team in the rich history of the NFL. He also ensured that the '72 Fins would remain the only team to go undefeated throughout the regular season and postseason.

Brady is still considered to be the greatest gunslinger in the league, but there was little he could do against the Giants' strong, tough defensive line that led the league in sacks and showed why on Super Bowl Sunday. The New York defense racked up four sacks and countless knockdowns on golden-boy quarterback, Tom Brady. Randy Moss, who only totaled two catches in the first two games of play-

offs, caught four passes including a touchdown in the Super Bowl loss. Holding Moss to one score is a feat in itself for the New York Giants' defense. Brady was under constant pressure and threw only one touchdown pass, not the best showing of his eight year career.

Brady may have the numbers and the perfect regular season record, but Eli and the G-Men scored big by beating arguably the best team in the league. Terry Bradshaw made the point that capped off Super Bowl XLII, "Super Bowl losers are usually forgotten, but this Patriots team will probably still be remembered for a long time." Former Steelers quarterback, Bradshaw, now a Fox analyst, sealed off the night, but the Pats couldn't seal perfection.

## The Great Debaters argues its way into audiences' hearts

By: JP Gooderham  
Sports Editor

*The Great Debaters*, released December 25, 2007, has wowed audiences with its reflection on academics and social issues during the 1930's. The film, which stars Denzel Washington, focuses on the inter-collegiate debate team from Texas's Wiley College.

The debate team, led by four students, begins their season by defeating many top-ranked teams hailing from historically black colleges. However, Washington's character, Melvin B. Tolson, is able to convince Oklahoma State, a school for white students, to face his team in a debate. From there, the film demonstrates the adversity and successes the team faces, culminating in a debate against Harvard College for the national title.

While much of the story is fictional or based on real events (for example, Wiley College actually faced the University of Southern California for the 1935 title), some components of the story's plot were taken directly from

actual events. Aside from Tolson, James Farmer Jr., a fifteen year old member of the team, was truly one of its members. Moreover, Farmer, who would go on to become a leader during the Civil Rights movement in the '50s and '60s, influenced the film deeply



(www.Newsweek.com).

While many enjoyed the film, some were critical of the film's stock "sports movie" plot. Roger Ebert, writer for the *Chicago Sun Times*, complains, "The debates themselves have one peculiarity: The Wiley team somehow draws the "good" side of every question.

Since debaters are supposed to defend whatever position they draw, it might have been intriguing to see them defend something they disbelieve, even despise."

While the story does seem to follow the path of overcoming adversity, represented even by the positions the Wiley team must defend, Ebert still concludes, "This is one of the year's best films."

The film was able to draw audiences during the holiday season with a nomination for a Golden Globe in the "Best Motion Picture – Drama" category (www.IMBD.com).

Owen Gleiberman of *Entertainment Weekly* agrees, commenting, "Washington tends to carry himself with brisk man-of-the-world ease, so it's refreshing to see him play an intellectual dandy. Sucking on a pipe, with wisps of gray in his hair, he gives Tolson a vaguely British cadence and a stick-up-the-back posture, and he's not above standing on a chair to regale his class with high-minded quotes from Langston Hughes."

## "Wii" have a success!

By: Greg Schlosser  
Staff Writer

This past holiday season, there was much scratching, clawing, and fighting over one gift: the Wii. Nintendo's version of the next-gen console, Wii's intuitive controls have won millions of fans over.

The controls are what set the Wii apart from the other two next-generation consoles, the Xbox 360 and Playstation 3. During games, such as Wii Sports, the users actually pretend like they

are hitting a golf ball or throwing a baseball, using controllers that mimic the motion. This feature is new to many gamers, who are used to button mashing. For that reason, the Wii has a huge advantage over the PS3 and Xbox 360.

Developers are now taking the new advancements made to the controls and making their games more interactive, such as with EA Sports' Madden, FIFA, and Tiger Woods. Of course, this has lured owners of the Wii to buy these sorts of games due to a change of pace from all of the button mashing done in the past.

The Wii also has fantastic titles, such

as Super Mario Galaxy and Guitar Hero 3. Super Mario Galaxy has been getting fantastic reviews, mostly because of its tight gameplay and its vast areas to explore. IUP.com rates

the game highly, saying that, "In Galaxy, Nintendo finally makes good on its grand ambition this generation (with only a few small snags): to create a game that anyone can play, but laden with enough depth and intricacy to satisfy its hardcore fans."

Naturally, Wii's success has translated into wonderful sales. The

number of consoles sold has totaled 5.46 million units (www.iht.com). The Xbox 360 has sold 17.7 million units, and Microsoft's console came out a year before the Wii (www.iht.com). The 360 has had some freezing problems, which have turned people away from it. In Japan, where Nintendo is the king console, Wii has only been out a year, and already 3.67 million units have been sold (www.iht.com).

The Wii has given the Xbox 360 and PS3 a run for their money with its motion sensitive controls and lovable characters. It has had many players say, "Wii have a success!"

Panther  
Predilections

If you could have one  
superpower, what  
would it be?

“ To PERFECTLY imitate  
my cousin, Liv.”  
-Caroline Cherup  
Freshman

“Power to have all pow-  
ers.”  
-Alex Park  
Sophomore

“I’d be ChameleonGirl  
with my sidekick,  
AquaGirl.”  
-Jenny Wehan and  
Chelsea Ciolli  
Juniors

“Come back from the  
dead.”  
-Marissa Pierson  
Senior

By: Alivia Kandabarow  
Photography Editor

Desk of the Editor

By: Kelsey Short  
Editor-in-Chief

As the world ushered in the new year, people reflected on the events of the past year. Students remember 2007 as a year marked by headlines about tragedy, scandal, and innovation.

The Virginia Tech Massacre affected schools in a way that had not been experienced since the shooting at Columbine High School in 1999. The terrible tragedy brought the nation together as students, staff, and family members of the victims held midnight vigils, and mourners erected makeshift memorials. The shooting was the deadliest in U.S. history and became a bond between college students and graduates from across the country.

Tragedy struck the nation again on August 1, 2007, when the I-35W Mississippi River Bridge collapsed into the Mississippi River, killing 13 people and injuring countless others (www.cnn.com). Again, the

nation came together and set a rescue and recovery mission into motion to recover those who were either trapped or killed by the collapse. Countless civilians, hospitals, volunteers, and agencies took part in the rescue efforts.

Throughout the year, sports heros fell from their former grace as investigations revealed a large number of athletes of who used performance enhancing drugs to win Olympic medals, world titles, and other awards. The drug scandal brought shame to professional sports and disappointment to children who had looked up to those players, who dishonestly excelled in their sports by using performance-enhancing drugs.

Michael Vick began his 23 month sentence for his participa-

tion in a dog fighting league. He was accused and indicted for financing the league, participating in dog fights and dog executions, and trafficking thousands of dollars in gambling activities (www.nfl.com).

Hollywood’s reputation was also on the rocks during 2007. Britney Spears bounced in and out of drug and alcohol rehabilitation, shaved her head bald, and lost the custody battle for her children to her former beau Kevin Federline (www.ew.com). Prominent movie star, Owen Wilson, attempted to commit suicide, Paris Hilton landed herself in prison for 45 days for violating the terms of her probation in an alcohol-related driving incident, and the writer’s strike threatened to end America’s favorite prime time TV shows.

On the bright side, the world became much more aware of the

global climate crisis.

Celebrities, car companies, and environmentalists promoted the green movement to reduce carbon emissions to delay the progression of global warming. Al Gore won the Nobel Prize for his environmental-awareness campaign and award-winning documentary, *An Inconvenient Truth*. People became more educated about global climate change and learned ways to join the conservation efforts.

Many predict that 2008 will be even more turbulent than 2007. The close race in the Primary Election will continue, and the battle for the White House will define the General Election in the fall. One third of the Senate seats will be up for grabs, as well as all of the House seats. Others see 2008 as the year of even more technologies. Consumers will probably be able to buy an i-anything, and YouTubeing will become, if possible, an even bigger sensation in amateur film production.

The United States needs a Democratic leader

By: Marni Schreiber  
Features Editor

The presidential primaries in Pennsylvania are slowly coming closer, and this is the first year that many of the current students at Upper St. Clair will be able to vote. There are many points of debate between the two front-running political parties, but one side should, with out a doubt, win the presidency this year: the Democrats.

The currant political party in office is the Republican party lead by George W. Bush. Bush has been elected twice for this position in the 2000 and 2004 elections. Not only has Bush neglected the U.S. economy, but he has thwarted the chance for a Republican to win the presidency in the near future.

Since Bush’s term in office, the United States’ economy has been significantly weakened. Bush mixed America up in the war in Iraq seven years ago, a venture which has cost the country billions of dollars. In addition, the value of the U.S. dollar has significantly dropped.

The English pound rose to \$1.9644 compared to the U.S. dollar; this is a record high.

Other record highs include the American dollar becoming \$1.0165 to the Canadian dollar and the Euro rising to \$1.4967 (www.chron.com).

To help the Untied States out of the huge economic hole the Republican-led government has made, Democrats.org states, “We [...] believe in balanced budgets and paying down our national debt, while Republicans continue to put huge burdens on future generations by borrowing hundreds of billions of dollars from foreign nations.”

The Democratic party wants to pull out of Iraq, while the Republican party stresses to continue the war. By continuing the war, the United States will not only jeopardize the lives of many more innocent American soldiers and citizens in Iraq, but it will also send the country into deeper debt.

By having a well educated Democrat in office, the country will not only prosper economically, but the morale of the

United States will increase. Conservatives of the Republican party believe in issues, such as no gay marriage, while liberals of the Democratic party support it.

Some Democratic candidates still do not agree completely with gay marriage but agree with civil unions. This is a step in the right direction to make America a better place for all people, not just the straight Christians.

Many of the Republican candidates on the other hand, will not even allow civil unions, arguing it goes against their faith. Republican candidate Mike Huckabee recently said on his website, “My faith is my life — it defines me”(www.cnn.com).

Huckabee, as well as many of the other Republican candidates forget that not everyone in the country is a Christian. The idea of no gay marriage has to do with the Christian religion. Unfortunately, the United States of America is not a Christian country, at least not officially. The U.S. currently

has a policy for freedom of religion and has a strong separation of church and state laws. By basing laws on the Christian religion, the line of separation is crossed. It is not right to have laws based on religion that affect a whole country.

Yes, laws, such as those against murder, apply in the Christian religion, but they also apply as laws of ethics in general. The difference between laws, like not committing murder and laws preventing gay marriage, is that laws against murder are made to protect all people, and laws against gay marriage only protect people in the eyes of the Christians. How does stopping two men in love from getting married protect anyone?

The United States has been heading downhill since Bush was elected into office eight years ago. Regardless of the issues, it is clear that it is time for a change in the United States. The best way to bring about this change is to do the right thing and elect a Democrat, such as Barack Obama or Hillary Clinton, into office; Republicans, with many of the same views as Bush, will send the country to its ruin.



The Democratic Donkey is the symbol for the Democratic party. Photo courtesy of www.ksdp.org.

**The St. Clairion**  
Upper St. Clair, PA

**Editor-In-Chief**  
Kelsey E. Short  
**Assistant Editor-In-Chief**  
Brigid McCabe  
**Opinions Editors**  
Kirstin Kennedy  
**News Editor**  
Rachel von Waldow  
**Features Editor**  
Marni Schreiber

**Sports Editor**  
JP Gooderham  
**Entertainment Editor**  
Amanda Dasdorf  
**Photography Editor**  
Alivia Kandabarow  
**Staff Writers**  
Dalion Townsend  
Greg Schlosser  
Hannah Mann  
**Photographers**  
Alivia Kandabarow  
**Sponsor**  
Ms. Caty DeWalt

**The St. Clairion** staff is made up of students who are committed to producing a newspaper for their fellow students that provides entertainment, self-expression, and relevant information in a fair, honest, thorough, and respectful manner.

The newspaper is financed by the sale of advertisement space to local businesses. Advertising rates will be sent to any business upon request.

**The St. Clarion** is a forum for student expression. Opinions expressed in by-lined articles are those of the authors, not necessarily the entire **St. Clairion** staff.

Letters to the editor are encouraged. All letters should be signed and submitted to **The St. Clairion** mailbox in the main office. Obscene, libelous, or otherwise inappropriate letters will not be printed.

St. Clairion Editorial

The Electoral College is out-dated and in need of reform

The media preaches the importance of voting to the younger demographic of voters through running ads, such as when MTV’s bunch of voting activists encourages America to “rock the vote” (www.mtv.com). Americans of all ages should let their voices be heard and vote, but there is an undemocratic barrier in their way: the Electoral College.

The Electoral College was designed by the framers of the U.S. Constitution to keep the “direct effect on the presidency out of the hands of the general population and into the hands of elite, elected representatives” (www.flyernews.com).

Today, the popular vote in each state determines the number of Electors a presidential candidate receives, and if a presidential candidate wins the popular vote in any given state, he or she wins all the state’s electoral

votes. To win the presidency, a candidate must win a simple majority of the votes in the Electoral College.

The Electoral College currently consists of 538 members or votes, one vote for each member of Congress (535) and 3 votes for the District of Columbia (www.powertolearn.com). A presidential candidate must win 270 or more electoral votes in order to win the presidency.

Some of the problems include the facts that only half of the states have a law to prosecute Electoral College voters who vote outside party lines and the system itself is extremely bipartisan and does not provide a fair forum for third-party candidates. The Republicans and Democrats are well-represented whereas other parties are not (www.powertolearn.com).

In addition, a major setback of the Electoral College is that it

is possible for the winner of the popular vote to lose the presidency if he or she does not win the majority of electoral votes. There have been four instances of this discrepancy between popular and electoral votes in U.S. history, the most recent of which happened in the 2000 election when Al Gore lost to current president, George W. Bush. Andrew Jackson lost to John Quincy Adams in the 1824 election, Samuel Tilden lost to Rutherford B. Hayes in 1876, and Grover Cleveland lost to Benjamin Harrison in 1888 (www.flyersnews.com).

According to the Federal Register, there have been over 700 congressional attempts to reform or abolish the Electoral College (www.archives.gov). The Federal Register also says that “public opinion polls have shown Americans favored abolishing [the Electoral College] by majorities of 58 percent in 1967;

81 percent in 1968; and 75 percent in 1981.” According to the most recent poll conducted by Rasmussen Reports in August 2007, 54% of people polled said that the United States should abolish the Electoral College so that the popular vote winner wins the presidency.

California Senator Dianne Feinstein (D) supports eradicating the Electoral College: “The current system enables a handful of states to become battleground states, and disenfranchises tens of millions of American voters in the most important election in the nation. By amending the Constitution to abolish the Electoral College, and replacing it with a system in which the winner is the candidate with the most votes nationwide, we will ensure that the method of electing the president and vice-president is fair and uniform” (www.angus-reid.com).

World reacts to Bhutto’s death with fear and sadness

By: JP Gooderham  
Sports Editor

In a county devastated by instability and insurgents, Benazir Bhutto, former Prime Minister of Pakistan, was killed in a suicide bombing near the capital, Islamabad. In a rally prior to Pakistan’s Parliamentary elections, Bhutto severely fractured her skull, which ultimately led to her death. According to CNN.com, “The opposition leader died after a suicide bombing at a political rally in the Pakistani city of Rawalpindi ahead of parliamentary elections set for January 8.”

Bhutto’s death shocked the leaders of Western and Eastern nations alike. President George

W. Bush told reporters, “The United States strongly condemns this cowardly act by murderous extremists who are trying to undermine Pakistan’s democracy. Those who committed this crime must be brought to justice.”

Even after the attack, it was unclear who and what organization were responsible for the attack: “The Interior Ministry told Pakistan’s GEO-TV that the suicide bomber belonged to Lashkar-e-Jhangvi — an al Qaeda-linked Sunni Muslim militant group that the government has blamed for hundreds of killings. U.S. officials believe that a Taliban leader, Baitullah Mahsud, may be the person behind the assassination”

(www.CNN.com).

One of the major concerns over the suicide attack was its effect of the pursuit of democracy in Pakistan. As Pakistan became increasingly important to peace in the Middle East, political tensions continued to rise in the nation. Mark Spannefield of *The Christian Science Monitor* explains, “It is the sort of instability that Western nations had sought to avoid by persuading President Pervez Musharraf to allow Bhutto back into the country — hoping her vows to tackle terrorism would help in the fight against Taliban militants and put Pakistan on a more moderate path. Now, they appear to have made her a target. Her death

marks a moment of decision for Pakistan’s leaders and lays bare the terrorists’ capabilities.”

At this point, it still seems that the prospect for long-term democracy in the Middle East is extremely nebulous. While Pakistan continued its progression toward peace and stability, domestic and foreign terrorist groups still undermined the pursuit. More frighteningly, Pakistan not only currently plays a major role in quelling insurgency and violence in Afghanistan, but continues to possess a nuclear arsenal. Of course, establishing a stable government for the future of Pakistan is necessary to decrease the risk of destruction from the former and latter.

Finals schedule too demanding

By: Amanda Dasdorf  
Entertainment Editor

Finals and midterms are something that happens every year. So it’s no surprise that students complain that they are too demanding and tough. But starting in the 2005-2006 school year, Upper St. Clair instilled a new finals schedule for students; there are two, two hour finals a day. The only break between the two finals everyday are mods 7-12, lunch mods. Students go to their regular 7/8, 9/10, and 11/12 classes.

Though teachers may see this still fairly new policy as a plus because finals are done faster, students see it as more of a hassle and much more stressful. Sophomore and newcomer to the finals schedule, Alex Herisko, states, “I’m really nervous [for finals] because I have so much studying to do. I think the finals should be spread out a little more.”

Many students would agree with this statement, especially students with friends or rela-

tives that attend school in surrounding townships, such as Bethel Park or Mt. Lebanon. The finals schedules in townships around Upper St. Clair are similar to the one currently in place but more relaxed. They have a two hour final each day, and once the final is completed, all students have an early dismissal.

The policy of other townships around Upper St. Clair would be more beneficial in that students would not have to study for two different finals the night before. Instead, they would be able to review for one final the day of, then, once they return home from that final, study for the final on the next day.

Numerous students at Upper St. Clair, such as Junior Rob Funk, believe that the final schedule at Upper St. Clair is, “asking too much of the students.” It is not likely that students will do their best on each final if the schedule includes two finals a day. They would be more well rested and ready for one final a day.

Edline gets mixed reviews

By: Dallion Townsend  
Staff Writer

A daily tradition for students during their free mods is to check edline.com to see their score on a quiz or a project. Some even use it to compare grades. Parents monitor their child’s progress in their classes by frequently visiting edline.com. Teachers normally update the website edline.net approximately every two weeks. Some however, update more frequently.

Senior Rob Lloyd speaks out against Edline stating, “Back at home [Colorado], we had a system like Edline.com. But they had everything on there; Assignments, grades, projects, agendas, everything. If the teachers updated everything edline has to offer, like the assignments and stuff, edline would probably be better.”

Joseph Jaquay, an other Senior feels that edline is a “double-edged sword based on personal performance. If we do well, then I don’t mind my par-

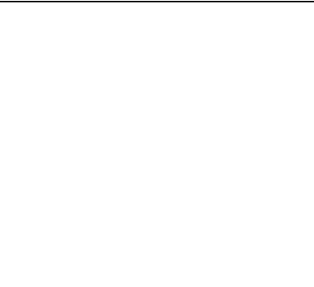
ents checking in on my grades. But on the flip side, I don’t like getting yelled at if my grades are low. But it helps me see where I’m at in a certain class and how I compare to other students in the same class.”

However, it is rather annoying to look at edline.net in the beginning of a marking period or at the very beginning of the year when a five point assignment is the difference between a 100% in a class and a 25%. There are other instances where Edline gets annoying when the teacher enters in a score incorrectly, forcing me to hunt down a teacher to fix a grade. But if not for edline, I would have never known that my grade was incorrect.

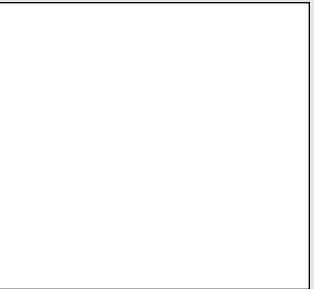
Edline.com is a great website and the school should continue to use the websites services despite the minor flaws with the system. Teachers could update more than just the grades, but the grading system is the main feature and one of the more popular among students.

Panther Predilections

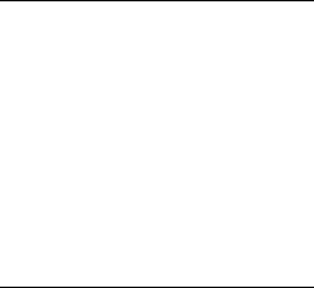
*If you could have one superpower, what would it be?*



*“Control the weather.”  
-Michael Marks  
Freshman*



*“Be one person with two heads.”  
-Marissa Murin and  
Troy Murphy  
Sophomores*



*“Change trash into trees.”  
-Drew Gallagher  
Junior*



*“Squirt spaghetti on people.”  
-Nick Kratsas  
Senior*

By: Alivia Kandabarow  
Photography Editor

# Bhutto assassination throws Pakistan into political unrest

By: Kelsey Short  
Editor-in-Chief

Only 12 days before Pakistan’s election, January 8, 2008, Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf’s most formidable opponent, Benazir Bhutto, was assassinated at a campaign rally, sending the country into turmoil (Associated Press).

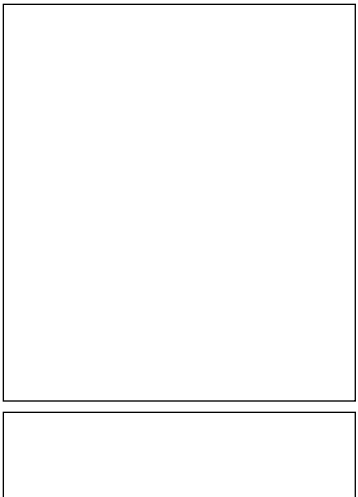
Bhutto, the twice prime minister of Pakistan, was departing a rally for her Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) on December 27, 2007, in the city of Rawalpindi, when a gunman opened fire on her vehicle. A suicide bomb then detonated, killing 20 people and injuring countless others (www.BBCnews.com).

Bhutto was rushed to a local hospital where she underwent emergency surgery. After doctors confirmed Bhutto’s death, her supporters went on a violent rampage, attacking police, burning tires and election campaign posters, and chanting party slogans against her rival, President Musharraf (Associated Press).

Opposition party leader, Nawaz Sharif, insisted that Musharraf resign his position immediately and publicized that his party would boycott the election (www.NPR.com). According to Reuters, a Pakistan commission decided in early January to delay the poll and consulted the political parties about a new date. The postponement triggered protests by Bhutto supporters because the delay will benefit

Musharraf’s campaign and avoid a sympathy vote in favor of Bhutto’s party.

The Pakistani government contends that Bhutto died from hitting



her head on part of her car’s sun roof during the nearby explosion, not from bullet wounds from a shooting. This and other government claims demonstrate the Pakistani government’s unwillingness to associate itself with the investigation into Bhutto’s death.

The government initially blamed tribal leader Baitullah Mehsud, an alleged al-Qaeda leader, but the allegations were quickly dismissed as “government propaganda” by PPP supporters. Bhutto’s political adversary, President Musharraf, later conceded in an interview with CBS News that Bhutto may have been gunned down. However, he laid the responsibility of the opposition

leader’s death solely on Bhutto herself, citing the dangers she exposed herself to throughout her campaign in such an unstable political atmosphere (www.CBSnews.com)

Pro-Taleban and al-Qaeda extremists who are seizing power along the Pakistani-Afghan border are the most likely to have carried out the assassination of Bhutto. Taleban and al-Qaeda leaders in this region made their intentions to kill Benazir Bhutto clear since her return to Pakistan last year after a long, self-imposed exile (www.cnn.com).

Bhutto survived the blasts of two suicide bombs at a rally celebrating her homecoming in October 2007 that killed over 130 civilians (www.MSNBCnews.com).

Benazir Bhutto was the leader of many Pakistani secular and religious political parties. She hoped that her party, “would emerge as the dominant force from next month’s elections, the first to be held since President Musharraf resigned as head of the army and became a civilian leader” (www.BBCnews.com).

Democratic nations, including the United States, lament the fact that Bhutto could have brought popular authority back to Pakistan’s unsuccessful war against Islamic militants (www.ABCnews.com). They now fear that Bhutto’s death may leave a political void which could compromise Pakistan’s future, a heralded key to global security.

# Bill Gates pledges money to reduce hunger

By: Greg Schlosser  
Staff Writer

On January 24th, Gates decided to pledge 306 million dollars to farmers in poor countries, reports CNN.com. Gates announced this at the World Economic Forum for popular business leaders held in Davos, Switzerland. The forum included many celebrities, such as Bono, the lead singer for the famous protest band U2. The goal of the World Economic Forum is to put more kids in school, help defend against AIDS, and reduce poverty.

“If we are serious about ending extreme hunger and poverty around the world, we must be serious about transforming agriculture for small farmers, most of whom are women,” Gates said about his generous donation (www.cnn.com).

Gates’ donation will rid of all the criticism targeted to the World Economic Forum, an organization which has mocked as the place where millionaires can talk and doodle around. Plus, Gates’ donations will show that Gates has a

side other than making money and being a great business leader. Gates is expected to step down from the computer giant Microsoft this year to focus on his philanthropic foundation (www.msnbc.com).

According to www.CNN.com, Gates said, “The challenge here is



to design a system including profit and recognition to do more for the poor,” Gates said, calling for a new form of “creative capitalism”.

A major critic of how the world is running, Bono, was also in attendance at the World Economic Forum. Bono was the one who suggested the

idea to Gates (www.cnn.com). Bono has sung many protest songs, including “Sunday Bloody Sunday, which is about two different religious groups fighting.

Of course, this has generated some interest among the students in Upper St. Clair High School.

Freshman Sam Humbert said, “I use to think Gates was boring, and shut himself off from the world. But now, he is a nice guy who isn’t selfish with all his money.”

# Actor Heath Ledger, 28, found dead in his apartment

By: Kirstin Kennedy  
Opinions Editor

Academy-Award nominated actor Heath Ledger, 28, was found dead in his SoHo loft on Tuesday, January 22, 2008. His body was discovered naked in his bed by his massage therapist after she entered his apartment for his 2:45 appointment. The masseuse, unable to awaken Ledger, made three calls to mutual friend, Mary Kate Olsen. When there was no answer, the massage therapist called paramedics (Associated Press).

Ledger was pronounced dead by paramedics at 3:30 pm (www.CNN.com). Authorities found six different prescription drugs in the New York loft where Ledger often resided. The drugs included Zoloft and Ambien (*TransWorld News*). Ambien is a sleeping drug which *TransWorld News* says, “has bizarre side effects.” When mixed with other prescription drugs, antihistamines are known to raise heart rates to unhealthy extents.

The Associated Press also states that other over-the-counter drugs were found in the apartment as well.

Ledger was once treated for drug addiction in his early twenties; however there is no evidence that his death was a purposeful suicide (Associated Press).

New York Police spokesperson, Paul Browne, states, “This [death] is being looked at as a possible overdose, but that is not confirmed yet” (www.CNN.com). Browne goes on to stress that there is no evidence to declare Ledger’s death a suicide.

Ledger’s family is baffled and confused by his death. An uncle to the actor, Hayden Ledger, states, “It [a suicide] just wouldn’t come into the equation at all,” in an interview on CBS’s *The Early Show* on January 23. His family and friends all confirm that in his last month Ledger was happy and full of life. Ledger will leave behind his two year old daughter, Matilda Rose (www.MTV.com).

The actor was said to be slightly overwhelmed at the time of his death. Recently filming both the Batman sequel, *The Dark Knight*, where he was playing the Joker, and *The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus*, a film directed by Terry Gilliam (www.CNN.com). Taking Zoloft for issues with anxiety and sleeping medication to assist in reassuring that he was well rested, the actor was accustomed to taking medicine while filming as extravagantly as he was. Both films plan to change the marketing of their movies as a result of this tragedy.

# USC residents are torn on issue of costly rec center project

By: Brigid McCabe  
Asst. Editor-in-Chief

The proposed plan for the new Upper St. Clair recreation center that has been under review since the fall of 1999 is almost finalized. The complex will occupy approximately three acres of Boyce Mayview Park. Resident taxes will be raised in order to fund the project, a prospect which angers many Upper St. Clair residents.

The Upper St. Clair commissioners cites a “lifestyles survey” administered in 2004 as the reason why the new recreation center is necessary. In the survey, residents “identified specific recreation needs as the first step in the 10-year update to the Comprehensive Plan” (www.twpusc.org).

Senior Lauren May says, “I really like that they directly asked the community what we wanted. The commissioners didn’t just randomly formulate a plan to rob the residents’ pockets; people actually requested an area to promote community togetherness, in addition to sidewalks and bike paths. The Comprehensive Plan is just a response to the demands of the people.”

The park entails a pool, water slide, “interactive spray area,” concession area, picnic and play area, birthday party room, fitness

area, two sand volleyball courts, and sandbox (www.twpusc.org).

The new reaction center was designed by Philadelphia corporation Wallace, Roberts & Todd and will cost in between 15 and 30 million dollars, not including the estimated 350,000 dollar maintenance and operational charges.

Due to these exponential costs, Upper St. Clair residents expect heavy taxation and a large membership fee, which is said to be approximately nine hundred dollars a year. “Why we need this new center is beyond my reasoning, and even more mind-boggling is the cost. I know that many are not going to join for nine hundred dollars, but yet, they still have to pay the township taxes,” says senior Olivia Herisko.

According to www.twpusc, non-residents may also join the rec center, but at a 25% higher rate; however, this statistic does little to comfort Upper St. Clair High School students. “The point of a USC rec center is that it’s for residents only. The fact that we have to share the park with other townships that didn’t pay taxes doesn’t seem right,” comments freshman Nick Bazzelli.

One fact that seems to please community members is that the center is environmentally friendly. The Ballard King report, in cooperation with the Upper St.

Clair Board of Commissioners, found that the recreation center will have “15% lower utility costs savings associated with the green design features of the building” (www.twpusc.org).

“If this rec center really is going happen, I think residents have to at least appreciate that the commissioners decided to go green,” says senior Kelly Milligan.

The people on board are intent that the park will be built no matter what dissent is voiced and are doing their research to prove it. The Community Recreation Center Advisory Ad Hoc Group visited Peters and Cranberry Townships’ community facilities for a general idea of the set up. They also “traveled to northeastern Ohio to tour the campuses of seven operational community recreation centers” (www.twpusc.org).

“Who knows – once the park is finished and actually in front of our eyes, we could love it. I think we just have to wait it out,” comments senior Pat Kernan.

To find out more information, the Community Recreation Center Advisory Ad Hoc Group meets in the township building on the last Monday of every month at 7:00 PM with an update on the proposed community center. The conferences are public and open to anyone who wishes to attend.

# Features

## Field trip to Pittsburgh opens students’ eyes about globalization

By: Brigid McCabe  
Asst. Editor-in-Chief

The International Studies class ventured to Seagate Technology in the Strip District, the University of Pittsburgh’s International department, and Lulu’s Noodles to see how the world today has gone global.

Because Seagate Technology researches and produces electronic microchips, most of the workers have PhDs; however, the high learning standard may be the only factor that employees have in common. The Seagate Pittsburgh division employs people from over one hundred companies and makes a conscious effort to educate all of its employees about various regions of the world.

In fact, the company’s break rooms are themed according to each continent of the world. Furthermore, poster displays, quite similar to those a high school stu-

dent might design, teach about the customs and cultures of an assortment of countries.

“The employees will prepare presentations on their countries and might work on them over a six month period. It’s important to us,” said the tour guide.

The cultural divide between the employees does not get in the way of their work, however. The tour guide continued, “A European man might find an Indian woman difficult to get along with, but they still have to work together. They learn to get along.”

Once the bus dropped the class off at the University of Pittsburgh campus, the students filed into the University of Pittsburgh International department, which deals with everything from foreign exchange students to traveling abroad. The speakers discussed the importance of international components to a college student’s education. One graduate student attested,

“Studying the Spanish language opened up so many doors for me; I want to aid people from foreign countries.”

Furthermore, the speakers emphasized the benefits of studying abroad and living in an international learning community, both of which open up great networking options for the future. Additionally, the students received pamphlets that listed the nationality organizations in Pittsburgh that anyone is welcomed to get involved with.

Lastly the students enjoyed Asian food from Lulu’s noodles, a popular and delicious eat in Oakland. Once they were finished, they walked around Oakland, noting Indian restaurants and Caribbean bead stores.

“It was interesting, but more than that it was a wake up call. The world is becoming global and not just when you enter the workplace – it’s happening now,” reflects senior Mike Falvo.

## Valentines Day is more than a “Hallmark Holiday”

By: Kirstin Kennedy  
Opinion Editor

With the lovers’ holiday, commonly known as St. Valentine’s Day, quickly approaching, everyone, regardless of whether or not they wish to admit it, wants to spend the special event with a very special person. Aware of its commercialization, we commonly refer to this passionate date as the “Hallmark Holiday,” yet we still enjoy celebrating it. But why? Why do we have this strong need to pass out chocolates and kisses on February the 14th? Why do we hope for cards in the mail, roses at our doorstops, and large boxes of heart shaped candies? The truth is, we don’t really know why. The legends, history, and culture of Valentine’s Day are just as sweet as its title.

The actual origins of Valentine’s Day are relatively

unknown. The date began with both Christian and Roman traditions of celebrating love in the month of February. As far as St. Valentine is concerned, the History Channel reports, “the Catholic Church recognizes at least three different saints named Valentine or Valentines, all of whom were martyred.” Considering all three saints died for their cause, their efforts in themselves are romantic.

One myth in particular asserts that Valentine was a priest in third century Rome who continued to perform marriage ceremonies even after Emperor Claudius II outlawed the action in order to keep soldiers in his army. For his actions, St. Valentine was executed. His efforts to end laws instated against love were indeed reason to celebrate heart flutters and stomach butterflies.

A second tale explaining the

genesis of the holiday is that a particular St. Valentine, who was banished to a prison sentence, continued his sainthood. While in position, he allegedly fell in love with a female. Writing her a letter prior to his emendable death, he signed it, “From your Valentine,” thus being the creator of the popular term (www.history.com).

Valentine’s Day has been celebrated since the times of the Romans. Whether considered a day to celebrate true, passionate love or a day to mass market some abstract concept, no one can deny the joy of candy hearts. So what if it is often considered a “fake holiday”? Jump on the bandwagon and appreciate the love that actually exists in the world. From secret weddings, to lengthy love letters, to tacky daytime television Valentine’s Day specials, on February the 14th, no one can avoid love, as no one should.

## Dip me, sway me... Ballroom Dance Club

By: Alivia Kandabarow  
Photography Editor

Adding to the new group of dance clubs at the high school this year, the Ballroom Dance Club is getting off to a good start. Mrs. Alloway, the club’s sponsor, and senior girls have been working hard to meet every week and learn new ballroom type dances. There are about ten to twelve people that participate each week to learn new dances, fundraise for a professional teacher, and have fun!

“We have already learned the salsa, tango, swing, and jive but the favorite among the club members is the waltz. Its hard to learn and challenging to do,” says senior co-founder Ally Murray.

The club has been fundraising through bake sales and plans to do a fashion show to raise money. Usually Aly Murray and Mrs. Alloway teach the dances in room

148-149 to the club’s members, but the club pays Mr. Dryden, a professional ballroom dancer who owns a studio in Bridgeville, PA, whenever they raise enough money to sponsor him.

More attendees are encouraged. Since it takes a boy and a girl to correctly do the dances, the members are looking for ways to get boys curious about their club. Though there is currently a shortage of boys, the girls learn the steps separately and then switch gender roles.

“There are usually announcements in the morning. I and many others signed up during freshman rush. I know Ally invites people to come through e-mail and facebook,” says freshman club member Caroline Cherup.

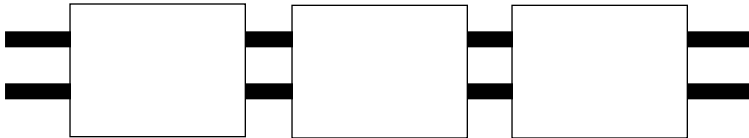
Though the club does not plan to perform in any competitions, they do enjoy performing at school functions whenever the opportunity arises. The club prac-

ticed very hard to perform in the auditorium during International week. The performance was successful and was showcased during lunch mods.

Club members want the school to become more involved in this new club. The Ballroom Dance club is planning on doing a family oriented program where students will be able to bring parents and family members to learn how to ball room dance. In addition, The Ballroom dance club will hold a ballroom dance clinic for Upper St. Clair high school teachers and their dance partner of choice to improve their ballroom skills and fundraise for the club’s benefit.

“There are about twenty or twenty-five teachers planning on attending the clinic. I think it will be fun to watch the female teachers bring their husbands to the classes,” says Ally Murray about the teacher’s clinic.

## Teacher’s Lounge



### Learn Shakespeare with Ms. Cecelia

By: Brigid McCabe  
Asst. Editor-in-Chief

1. *Why did you decide to teach English?*  
Because I love the classics and literature and wanted to share this with students.
2. *What advice can you give to graduating seniors?*  
“This above all, to thine own self be true./ And it must follow as the night the day/ Thou canst not then be false to any man./ Farewell. My blessing season this in thee!” (Shakespeare, *Hamlet*).
3. *What career would you have if you weren’t an English teacher?*  
It would be one of two: I’d like to be a freelance writer for *Rolling Stone Magazine* or a screenwriter, specifically writing drama.
4. *What do you do in your spare time?*  
I read, cook, listen to music, and go to live shows. I go to live music shows as often as I can.
5. *Word association:*  
Poetry – “Fun”  
Ophelia – “Victim”

50 Cent – “Music”  
Gangster – “Movie”

6. *What’s one thing that you would change about Upper St. Clair High School?*  
I’d like to see, although idealistic, for the academic clubs to receive the same amount of attention that athletic sports do. For example, I’d like for *The Montage* to get more notice.

7. *What is your favorite unit to teach?*  
I like the poetry unit because my students have not yet studied it in depth. For the first time, we have a textbook, and we study a new poem every day, instead of focusing on one piece for a long time, so it’s fresh. Also, poetry is the most challenging for students, so it is the most rewarding for me.

8. *What is your favorite band and why?*  
My favorite band is the Dave Mathews Band because I go to all of their live shows; I have seen them fifteen different times. I like that they’re a grass roots band and really focus on their fan base. They’re not caught up in the fame. I also love the sound; they’re a nice hybrid of jazz, rock, and country.

## College-bound juniors, fear not

By: Kirstin Kennedy  
Opinions Editor

On Tuesday January 8th, you, members of the junior class, were exposed to your first college-bound meeting, one of many to come. You were introduced to the college selection process by high school counselors, and you will most likely have a private meeting (or meetings in most cases) with your counselor and your parents. Most of you are experiencing a rush of emotions: excitement, fear, and curiosity, but mostly stress. Murmurs in the halls consisted of, “I’m so stressed about college,” and “There’s no way I can do this.” For the next year you are going to be invested in the college selection process. There are groups, foundations, books and websites devoted to providing advice and assistance in this process. But coming from someone who has just experienced this process first hand, the best advice that you can be given is: fear not.

There is a list of things that it takes to apply to college. You must take the SAT and ACT at least once each. In many cases you will take one or the other (or both) more than once. Taking one of these tests more than once is a great idea. Yes, it’s a bummer that you will have to spend more than one Saturday morning up early at a foreign high school, but the time is worth your while. The SAT and ACT can be stressful. A key to success, if you are not taking a

class, is to simply review. The Official SAT provided by College Board costs about fifteen dollars on-line or in any book store. The book provides eight practice tests and plenty of review. There is also always the handy Upper St. Clair High School Resource Center where teachers can answer any questions that you have. SAT and ACT’s are offered at schools across the Pittsburgh Area. Make sure to sign up for the test with enough time to resister. All information about registration and preparation can be found at collegeboard.com. Take the tests as soon as you can.

Now the process becomes more personalized. You choose the colleges that you want to visit. When you get to a college you will most likely take a tour, meet with teachers and admissions advisors, and probably have lunch in the college’s dining hall. I advise narrowing your schools down to less than six. Learn as much as you can about the school and try to talk to current students. Just because you visit a school does not mean that you have to go there or even apply.

Throughout the college application process you always have your counselor to turn to as well as your teachers. Keep in mind that you are doing this for you, as stressful as it may be it is still exciting and promising. Above all, don’t forget that all of your classmates are experiencing the exact same situation and are always there for your support.



2007-2008: A season of athletes gone wild

By: Greg Schlosser  
Staff Writer

This year was an unusual one for sports. Yes, there were some exciting and unique plays that happened on the field, but this year, there was more commotion off the field.

The year got off to a bad start when Denver Broncos defensive back Darrent Williams was shot and killed in a limo on early New Years morning. You could say that this opened the floodgates.

Probably the most popular player this year to become a criminal was Michael Vick. As financial operator of a dog fighting organization Bad Newz Kennels, Vick was indicted by the federal government and sentenced to two years in jail. Vick has been suspended indefinitely by

Commissioner Roger Goodell, so Vick likely won't play quarterback in the NFL again, let alone any position for any other team.

In the MLB, players made headlines this year with the steroids and HGH (Human Growth Hormone) problem. In December, Senator George Mitchell published the "Mitchell Report," which lists 70-80 players, current and past, as perpetrators of anti-doping policy. Players named include stars like Roger Clemens, Andy Pettitte, Brian Roberts, and former Pirate first baseman Kevin Young. All of these players face a suspension from MLB Commissioner Bud Selig, who plans to handle these suspensions on a case-by-case basis. The event undermined the fans' confidence in America's pas-time.

The NBA also has had it's share of bad boys this year too. NBA referee Tom Donaghy has been accused of betting tens of thousands of dollars on NBA games. Donaghy apparently was in major debt, so he tried to make it all up during the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 season through gambling on basketball. Some tend to believe that some of the games were fixed in favor with Donaghy. If he did, this would prove some of the theories that the referees would fix basketball games. While no one may ever know, Donaghy still faces up to 25 years in prison.

This year has definitely been an interesting one in sports due to all of the criminal activity. It has, in its own way, made sports a bit more interesting this past year, whether it is a good or a bad thing.

Penguins flourish in NHL's "Ice Bowl"

By: JP Gooderham  
Sports Editor

On January 1, 2008, the Pittsburgh Penguins kicked off the new year by playing the storied Buffalo Sabres in Buffalo, New York. However, unlike the usual match-up, which takes place at Pittsburgh's Mellon arena or Buffalo's HSBC Center, the teams faced off at Ralph Wilson Stadium, on a temporary rink constructed on the field.

The "Ice Bowl," a highly publicized gimmick promoted by the National Hockey League, was a hot topic since the idea was first conceived, evoking the excitement of hockey purists and less than diehard fans. "It took less than 30 minutes for the National Hockey League's outdoor "Ice Bowl" game to sell out [on September 28th], leaving the league thrilled that interest is so high for the Jan. 1 matchup between the Penguins and host Buffalo Sabres" (*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*).

The game itself, aside from the prospect of a real, outdoor game of professional hockey, could not have ended any better for the NHL or fans. While the patchy ice was a constant danger for the players, as inches of snow accumulated on the surface during the game, the difficulties the players encountered made the game more interesting for some. According to John Bonfatti

of the *Buffalo News*, "The beginning of the game was slow, as a snow buildup from the opening ceremonies affected both teams' skating and left the puck looking as if it were moving in slow motion. The speed picked up later, as the snow subsided and the players seemed to adjust to the outdoor conditions."

Despite the horrible playing conditions, the players themselves seemed enjoy the experience. Pittsburgh Penguins star Sidney Crosby told ESPN, "I think it brings you back a bit when you're out there. You know, someone said it before, it is a big stage. You know, it's a big game. It's a regular-season game. But, at the same time, you don't get this chance very often, so you want to enjoy it."

The conclusion of the match was picture perfect for the Pittsburgh Penguins. The Penguins were able to defeat the Sabres in overtime after none other than the star, Sidney Crosby, fired in the game winning shot during the second shootout, following three intense, close periods of regulation play. In the end, the fans enjoyed the performance on hockey's national stage. As one Sabres writer notes, "I can't say I favor another outdoor game involving the Sabres, but for once I can't call the NHL a garage league. It took a major league to pull off an event like this. And a major hockey town" ([www.LetsGoSabres.com](http://www.LetsGoSabres.com)).

Pirates waste another off-season

By: Dallion Townsend  
Staff Writer

Despite losing veteran reliever Solomon Torres, utility infielder Jose Castillo, and serviceable middle reliever Shawn Chacon, new general manager Neal Huntington is optimistic about this upcoming season stating, "I know we haven't done much of anything, but we're not going to make the same mistakes of the past by running a declining, overpriced free agent in here. This is a bad free agent market and bringing in an overpriced free agent is not a good business decision."

The Pirates have only acquired one major leaguer in infielder Chris Gomez and a

number of minor league players. They also tried to trade left-fielder Jason Bay after a down season, thankfully, to no avail. The Pirates continue to maintain the lowest budget in the NL Central which was just under \$40 million and might increase to about \$50 million by the beginning of the season. Compare those figures to those of the Yankees who have a payroll of almost \$200 million and the Red Sox who aren't far behind.

The Buccos had an opportunity to snag free agent Miguel Tajeda, but instead have to face off with him and divisional rival Houston. The Pirates also failed to land pitchers Jon Lieber and made no attempt to sign superstar starter Johan

Santana. They also messed up a deal with starting pitcher Matt Clement who went to St. Louis, another divisional opponent. Yet, to make up for these blunders, the team states that "they are set" with their starting rotation of Ian Snell, Zach Duke, Paul Maholm, Tom Gorzelanny, and Matt Morris.

The baffling thing about the Pirates is that when fans expect results, they want to see the product on the field improve, not the front office. Our team down-graded, and our general manager makes claims that the product he is putting out on the field will be better than last year's squad. 68-94 is the record to beat with pretty much the same squad as last year.

NCAA coach in hot water

By: JP Gooderham  
Sports Editor

Traditionally, college basketball coaches have not been actively involved in social movements or political races, at least publicly. However, Rick Majerus, the head coach for the St. Louis University men's basketball team, often chooses to voice his opinions despite challenging consequences.

This January, Majerus's career at St. Louis quickly entered hot water due to his presence at a Hillary Clinton presidential rally. St. Louis, a Catholic school, has been challenged within the Catholic community for condoning the pro-choice stance of their basketball coach.

Of course, basketball coaches are generally expected to divorce themselves from the issues of the public sphere, and only release well-coached comments to the press. Pat Ford of ESPN.com contends, "If Rick Majerus were like 95 percent of the men in his profession, he wouldn't have been anywhere near that Hillary Clinton rally last weekend. He would have been watching tape and pretending the real world didn't exist."

On the other hand, some sports fans support the decision of Majerus to publicize his viewpoints. Gary Parrish argues, "Honestly, [athletes are] a boring crop. Which is what makes a guy like Majerus a true gem, because he's a basketball coach who is passionate about more than basketball, a man truly engaged in public life and politics who has thoughts on foreign policy, healthcare, stem-cell research and abortion." ([www.CBSNews.com](http://www.CBSNews.com)).

750,000 satisfied students can't be wrong!



**DriversEd.com**

**Drivers Ed - anytime, anywhere you want.**

**Take 25% Off!**  
Use the discount code PA2007A when you sign up.



### Before They Were Seniors

By:Amanda Dasdorf  
Entertainment Editor

1. Initials: PWG
2. Birth date: 11/4/1989
3. Best friend(s): Chris Fisher
4. First word(s): Potato
5. Favorite color: Green
6. Favorite high school memory: Techno Tuesday
7. Sport(s): Rifle
8. Favorite teacher: I am equally prejudice
9. Years in USC: A lot
10. Future plans: Retire by age 25

1. Initials: KAM
2. Birth date: 7/24/90
3. Best friend(s): Too many to name
4. First word(s): I don't know
5. Favorite color: Purple
6. Favorite high school memory: Froelich's freshman English class 1/2
7. Sport(s): Dance and "field"
8. Favorite teacher: Mrs. Smith and the Sabram
9. Years in USC: 12
10. Future plans: Special ed. teacher

### Late night TV returns

By: Alivia Kandabarow  
Photography Editor

The return of late night T.V. on January 7th was successful yet controversial. Most late night talk show hosts' programs made the bold move to penetrate picket lines and air their show sans their writers due to the writer's guild strike that has been picketing since early November (Associated Press).

Though both David Letterman's *Late-Show* and *The Tonight Show* with Jay Leno sported unmerciful beards and presidential candidates, one thing set the two hosts in hot water. Leno returned to the late night talk show scene without the help of his writers while Letterman was able to air his show using his writer's jokes due to his special agreement he came to with the Writers Guild of America through his Worldwide Pants Production Company (www.adweek.com).

With Leno writing his own monologue and cracking his own jokes on NBC without the help of his writers, he was under close watch by demanding WGA members. Unfortunately, shortly after his solo premier, Leno was loosely accused of violating WGA rules and regulations about writing his own jokes. Many forget that Leno's witty persona does not entirely belong to the clever minds of his writers; he used to perform as a stand up comic 300 out of the 365 days a year before entering the talk show business (www.MTV.com).

"You know what I'm doing?" asks Leno. "I'm doing what I did the day I started. I write jokes and wake my wife up in the middle of the night and say, 'Honey, is this funny?' So if this monologue doesn't work, it's my wife's fault. She said the joke was funny" (www.MTV.com)

Stars also had to make a tough decision to cross picket lines. When Lupe Fiasco guest starred on Letterman's show to perform his single "Superstar" he voiced that he was on the side of the writers because Lupe Fiasco indeed considers himself a writer (www.MTV.com).

As long as late night hosts are able to bring in the Paris Hiltons of Hollywood and Hillary Clintons of the political scene, late night T.V. is not suspected to come crashing down without the help of WGA writers. When Los Angeles Business Journals polled Late night T.V. watchers for their opinion whether not to support late night T.V., 75% of viewers responded yes while a weak 15% said no. Ten percent of viewers were indifferent (www.bizjournals.com).

### Seinfeld DVD sales assist "the show about nothing" lovers

By: Kirstin Kennedy  
Opinions Editor

Dodging homework and activities from 7:30 to 8:00 and staying up until 11 o'clock pm every night to catch *Seinfeld* on FOX, then not being able to fall asleep until at least midnight due to unnatural nocturnal television watching can be very detrimental to ones health. Not to mention less than frequent reruns that are played occasionally on TBS can frustrate those who need their *Seinfeld* fix.

Fortunately, Sony Pictures has done every lover of "the show about nothing" a great favor in marketing the complete nine seasons of *Seinfeld* on DVD. No longer must the viewers of the greatest show ever be made to crank their necks to grab laughs of Cramer not being able to get a pair of jeans off, George failing at another job inquisition, or Elaine and Jerry making another "we used to date" comment.

The DVD's include every episode of the comedy, from beginning to end, as well as bonuses of "yada, yada, yada commentary," done by either Jerry Seinfeld and Larry David (co-creators and producers of the show), or Jason Alexander (who played the unconventional George), Julia Louis-Dreyfus (other wise known as the eccentric Elaine), and Michael Richards (or THE Cosmo Cramer). This commentary is not only humorous but also a beautiful representation of the growth of the show. The DVD also includes a Fun-Facts feature that is used as a pop-up during the viewing of an episode. Although the pop-ups can be annoying, they are extremely enlightening to the starry-eyed *Seinfeld* fans.

Each season is available independent of the others, except the first two seasons, which are included in one DVD set (*Seinfeld* fact: the first season was only four episodes long). The beginning four season take the old school *Seinfeld* stance, while the last five take on an even funnier form. There is also a complete *Seinfeld* series DVD set available for the true nothing lover. Regular season DVD's are priced at about forty dollars each while the complete series is at a hefty two-hundred dollars. That is a small price for the greatest form of television.

Thus it is no longer necessary for the fans of *Seinfeld* to aimlessly flip channels to find a program of subsidence, though it is occasionally rerun-ed on TBS, often two at a time, and daily on FOX at 7:30pm and 11:00PM.

### The Golden Compass sparks controversy amongst religious groups

By: Brigid McCabe  
Asst. Editor-in-Chief

Author Philip Pullman created the "His Dark Materials" series with a fantastical world in mind, but received a similar controversial reaction as that of J.K. Rowling's "Harry Potter" series. Religious groups worldwide took notice when Pullman's first novel *The Golden Compass* was adapted to film version in 2007. Despite the fact that Pullman pleads creative license, some concepts in the book and film outraged Christians, specifically of the Catholic denomination, everywhere.

Both the movie and book follow a young girl Lyra, portrayed by Dakota Blue Richards, as she journeys to save her friends, as well as the citizens of their world from the Magisterium, a government that controls the people. In this world, all people have daemons, or their souls, portrayed as animals. The term "daemons" set Christian groups to protest immediately, claiming that the name implies that so-called evil spirits walk beside their human counterparts. Also, the Magisterium have been "removing their [the childrens'] souls and preventing them from being touched by 'dust,' a substance that is alluded to be representative of the free will the Magisterium is trying to avoid and eliminate" (www.abc-news.com).

Some Facebook groups have surfaced entitled "Boycott *The Golden Compass* – Pullman kills God!" Furthermore, Bill Donohue, the President of the Catholic League, told Fox reporters that he is not pleased with what the film presents young minds (www.associatedcontent.com). Though Pullman uses his alternate fantasy world to bring the topics of free will and obedience to light, he never intentionally writes to brainwash children.

"My mom is Catholic, so she didn't want me to see the movie simply because of what our church told her. But once I actually went, I was able to tell her that it's not anti-God. It's just an exciting movie. If anything, it questions the concept of an abusive government," comments senior Emily Kauffelt.

The book simply presents an extraordinary world of imagination that captivates all ages but is aimed specifically at teens. Though the film cuts short many of Lyra's adventures in *The Golden Compass*, it fully establishes the story's points, including a corrupt government and free will. The skilled Daniel Craig and Nicole Kidman also respectively play the parts of good and evil very convincingly.

The film and movie both fulfill expectations and should be taken as a fictitious and creative story, not as heresy. I would recommend this movie to anyone who wishes to leave reality and travel to an alternate world.

### Golden Globes cancelled

By: Marni Schreiber  
Features Editor

Every year, the Golden Globes give students and families the opportunity to see all the up and coming stars as well as some old favorites. Awards are given out in such categories as Best Movie, Actor, Actress, Best Television Show, and much more. This year, however, the great award show may be cancelled.

Starting in November, the Writers Guild of America went on strike. The Writers Guild of America is a "labor union composed of the thousands of writers who write the television shows, movies, news programs, documentaries, animation, CD-ROMs, and content for new-media technologies that keep audiences constantly entertained and informed" (www.wga.org).

Because the writers have gone on strike, television shows have not been able to create new episodes, and new movie scripts have not been able to be produced. The writers are starting to make agreements as late night television shows are coming back with new episodes.

The reason the Golden Globes are not going to make it this year is because the actors are not willing to "cross the picket line." According to Michael White of Bloomberg.com, "Striking Hollywood writers forced the cancellation of the annual Golden Globe Awards telecast after gaining support from movie and television actors who refused to appear on the show" (www.bloomberg.com).

The stars are not willing to go against the writers and appear on the televised version of the Golden Globes. Stars have supported the writers since the beginning of the strike and have often appeared holding up picket signs among them.

Even though there will not be a formal televised ceremony with a red carpet and exclusive coverage, the stars will still be receiving their well deserved awards.

According to Don Kaplan of the *New York Post*, "NBC yesterday scrapped its annual awards gala and elected instead to announce this year's Golden Globe winners at a one-hour press conference Sunday" (www.nypost.com).

This press conference will provide viewers with only the winners of the awards, not with interviews of the stars or with coverage of the actual event. Also according to the *New York Post*, "NBC declined to provide further details, but the network is supposedly negotiating with Globe gala producer Dick Clark Enterprises for a one-hour show to air before the press conference" (www.nypost.com).

If this one hour pre-show does happen, viewers will be able to experience a little of experience they would have received if the award ceremony had gone as planned.



Juno surprises audiences with Oscar nomination

By: Alaina Zemanick  
Guest Writer

It's the teen movie that even adults are talking about! Oscar nominated Juno follows quirky adolescent Juno MacGruff, played by Ellen Page, through her accidental pregnancy. With the aid of the baby's father, Paulie Bleeker, portrayed by Michael Cera of *Superbad*, best friend Leah, performed by Olivia Thirlby, and her family, Juno finds the perfect couple to take care of the expected child. Even though everything seems to be in place, Juno and her posse find there are many twists and turns in the road before the infant's birth.

*Juno* is one of the unlikeliest of movies to catch the hearts of all viewers. It is a rarity to watch a movie that is this heartwarming, witty, and hilarious all at the same time. Ellen Page

brings the character of Juno to another level with her clever acting and original humor. The cherry on top is Michael Cera, whose seemingly effortless portrayal of Bleeker is the epitome of the sweet boy who lives next door.

Freshman Maria Alessi expresses similar opinions of most viewers and critics of the movie: "Juno had me laughing at every scene," she raves, "It was as funny as *Napoleon Dynamite*."

The surprise indie hit could possibly be the greatest comedy and movie of 2007. This Oscar hopeful is sure to be an eternal classic as well. Behind the comical quotes and unforgettable characters, *Juno* shines the much-needed humorous light onto the serious issue of teen pregnancy and conveys to us not to make awful situations worse than they actually are.

The *Bucket List* lives up to critics' low ratings

By: Kelsey Short  
Editor-in-Chief

Morgan Freeman and Jack Nicholson star in director Rob Reiner's film *The Bucket List*, a story of two elderly men from very different walks of life who both have terminal cancer. Multi-billionaire Edward Cole, Nicholson, and family-man mechanic Carter Chambers, Freeman, are placed in the same hospital room during their treatments, and before long, the two steadily forge an unlikely friendship. When the doctors tell them that they only have about six more months to live, Cole and Chambers draft "the bucket list," a catalog of things they'd like to do before dying.

Almost too fortuitously, Cole and Chambers are asymptomatic and check out of the hospital to immediately begin fulfilling their lifelong dreams. The two skydive, race classic cars, eat caviar in the Mediterranean, go on an African safari, climb the Egyptian pyramids, and tour the Taj Mahal, accomplishing all sorts of clichéd mid-life-crisis

dreams (*Chicago Tribune*).

The story line is so contrived that any cancer patient would agree that the film does not accurately depict the great physical and emotional hardships

Freeman and Jack Nicholson. The two actors come off exactly the way they do in all their other movies, making the message lose its meaning."

Freeman's character in *The Bucket List* is yet another hackneyed role to add to his repertoire of appearances as a sagacious black man. Audiences have seen the same side of Freeman in his other mediocre film, *Evan Almighty*. Jack Nicholson's character is also just another one of his typical roles as the grouchy, old womanizer. The characters of these actors are all too familiar to audiences.

In places, jokes are made in *The Bucket List* that could offend people who have actually grappled with cancer themselves or else watched someone else battle with the disease. Other scenes are dripping with unappealing sentimentality. Freeman and Nicholson's performance even runs the danger of coming off as condescending to some viewers as two successful Oscar winners try their hand at portraying ordinary people ([www.star-telegram.com](http://www.star-telegram.com)).

PA's Largest Family Owned  
Homecoming/Prom & Bridal Store



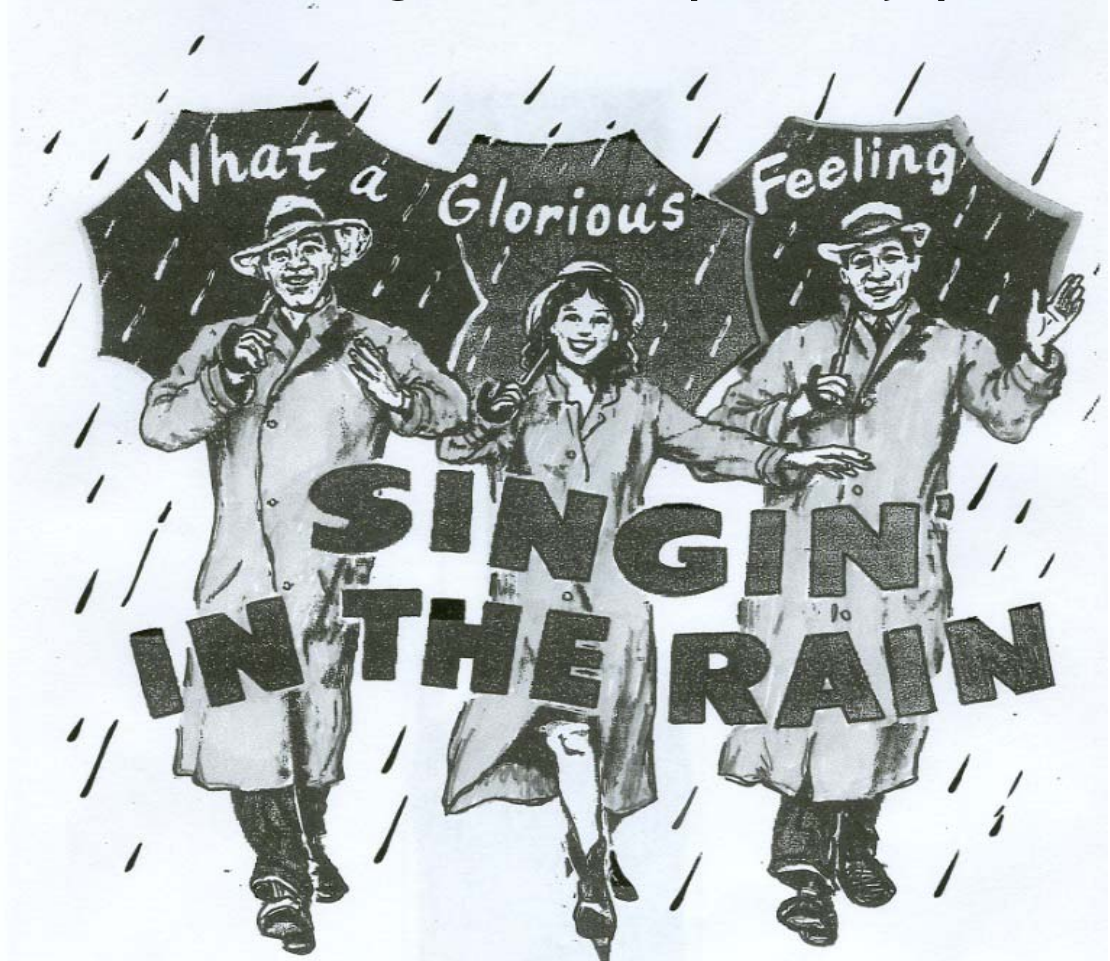
17 Years of Award Winning Service  
**MB BRIDE**  
A SPECIAL OCCASION

See our new EXPANDED  
Homecoming & Prom Dress Area.

123 S. Urenia Ave. Greensburg, PA 15601  
724.836.6676

View our dress collections online and download free dress catalogs at  
[mbbride.com](http://mbbride.com)

Upper St. Clair High School proudly presents...



February 29, March 1, March 7 and 8, 2008 at 7:30 p.m.  
March 2 Matinee at 2 p.m.    March 6 Family Night at 6:30 p.m.  
USCHS Theatre    For ticket information, call 412-851-2060