



Former President George W. Bush...  
Inspirational Speaker?  
**BUSH/ News / PAGE 4**



Girls' Tennis Team Battles at States.  
**Girls Tennis / Sports / PAGE 7**



Cross Country strides along.  
**Cross Country / Sports / PAGE 7**



# The St. Clairion

Volume 11, Issue 1 - December 2009 - Upper St. Clair High School Pittsburgh, PA

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

Obama and McChrystal both see the need for more troops in Afghanistan

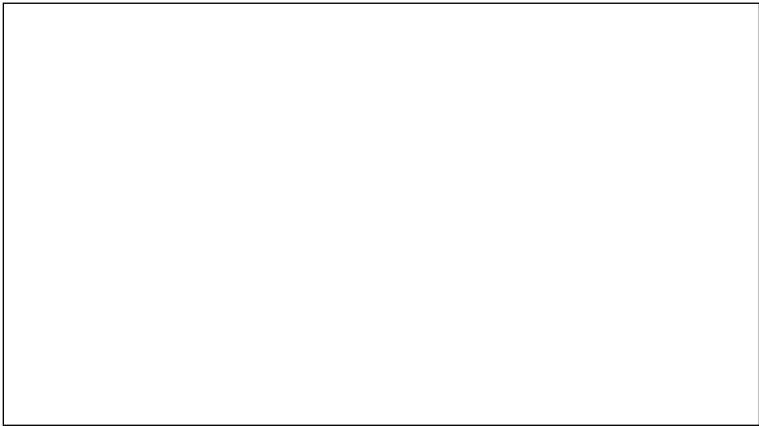
By: Nick Buzzelli  
Opinions Editor

President Obama has contemplated sending additional U.S. troops to Afghanistan within the past few months to continue fighting the eight year war against terrorism, and he now has approved a plan to send more American forces into the area.

The extra troops being deployed are expected to be support forces instead of artillery and combat troops. Obama has seen the need for more engineers, medical specialists, and intelligence forces. Over 68,000 troops are expected to be in the still unstable country before January 1st, 2010 (www.huffingtonpost.com).

Obama and General Stanley McChrystal, the chief U.S. commander in Afghanistan, are deciding on a war strategy that would benefit the United States

most in the future. The two have come close to a compromise regarding the need for extra troops. McChrystal requested more combat and training troops, while Obama sees the



President Barack Obama (left) joined by General Karl Horst visits section 60 at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia, on November 11, 2009. Section 60 contains the grave sties of servicemen and women who were killed in Iraq and Afghanistan. (Kevin Dietsch/Abaca Press/MCT)

need for more U.S. support forces in Afghanistan. The extra forces will help counter the explosive threats that come from insurgents.

Junior Michael Handy does not see the need for the extra troops to continue the war effort. “There is no point risking young lives to continue fighting in Afghanistan,” says Handy.

“The war has been going on for over eight years and with no end in sight. We need to withdraw our troops.” McChrystal believes that

without the extra troops ready for combat, “the war-effort will likely result in a failure” (www.cnn.com).

Along with the current 62,000 American troops in Afghanistan, NATO and other U.S. allies will send over 30,000 more soldiers overseas. Despite the fact that President Obama and McChrystal believe more U.S. troops are needed, the War in Afghanistan has hit “an all-time low” regarding support at home (www.compositor.com).

The need for additional armed forces comes after an increase of resurgents in the Taliban. The U.S. army commander in Iraq, General Ray Odierno, is also in the process of moving extra army units from Iraq into the Afghanistan mission that General McChrystal is planning. With further regiments occupying Afghanistan, an end to the ongoing war may be in the near future.

Upper Saint Clair Students Reach out to Help in the Dominican Mission Trip

By: Meghan Taylor  
Front-Page Editor

On November 13, 2009, twenty Upper St. Clair high school students traveled to the Dominican Republic for a mission trip with the Kids Helping Kids Program. The seventeen seniors and three juniors traveled down in hopes to help the people of the Dominican Republic.

The students provided medical assistance to those who needed it. The students had raised money in order to provide the proper necessary medicine. A doctor accompanied the students and teachers to the Dominican.

The students also taught lessons to some of the Dominican Children. USCHS students traveled to an orphanage where they helped repair the school. The students helped with painting a medical center and an orphanage.

The students of the Kids Helping Kids program stayed in the Dominican from November 13th to the 20th. They had been fundraising for this trip for many months and were very excited to help as many people in the Dominican Republic as possible.

In order to raise money for their trip, the studens hosted a varitey of fundraisers. The students hosted the popular pickleball tournament. All proceeds went to the the trip. In addition to the tournament, the students raised money at football games by selling shirts.

Emily Roarty, a junior at Upper St. Clair who attended the trip, explained before leaving for the Dominican:“I’m excited for this life changing event.”

The students had the opportunity to reach out to the less fortunate and explore the different ways in which people live around the world.

H1N1 vaccine causes people to waver about whether or not to receive the anecdote

By: Madeline Kushner  
Entertainment Editor

The H1N1 virus, otherwise known as the swine flu, has plagued the entire nation in addition to the halls of Upper St. Clair High School. A letter was sent home during the month of October to all parents and guardians informing them of the drastic drop in attendance throughout the past few weeks due to sickness.

The Health Department in the United States has predicted that over the course of the next two years, nearly forty percent of Americans will suffer from the infection. The U.S. Health officials also estimate that more than a few hundred thousand people will lose a life from H1N1 if the vaccine is not helpful (www.cnsnews.com).

But some are pondering the decision of whether or not he/she should get the vaccination.

nervous system is damaged until the possible point of paralysis or death. GBS is considered a possible threat when receiving the vaccine because, during the swine flu outbreak in 1976, there was a link between the distributed vaccines and the increased number of people diagnosed with GBS (www.thedailytelegraph.com).

Despite claims of GBS being a result of the H1N1 vaccine, scientists have no physical proof of a connection between the swine flu vaccine and GBS. According to sources from the Daily Telegraph, scientists are working on a flu vaccine that will also attempt to protect against GBS, as well.

Despite possible threats of GBS, those who have been given the H1N1vaccine this year have experienced only minor side effects, if any. Gregory Hartl, the World Health Organization

spokesperson, declared that so far the only detected additional results of the H1N1 vaccine have been muscle cramps and headache. “Adverse events are fully to be expected, especially these mild types,” explains Hartl (www.msnbc.msn.com).

Because there is not a proven connection between GBS and H1N1, fifty-two percent of the American population stated that they plan to get vaccinated. More specifically, sixty-two percent of adults ages sixty-five and older plan to visit their physician’s office for the swine flu vaccine, while only forty-five percent of Americans in the range of eighteen to twenty-nine years old are planning on receiving the vaccination (www.msns.msn.com).

In order to make the vaccine more accessible, President

Obama announced during the weekend of October 24 that the epidemic is officially a national emergency. “The rates of illness continue to rise rapidly within many communities across the nation, and the potential exists for the pandemic to overburden health care resources in some localities,” stated the President during his declaration.

In addition, by declaring the outbreak a national emergency, Obama has allowed healthcare companies to begin attentive distribution sites, such as school gyms or parking lots (www.surgistrategies.com).

Even so, the H1N1 virus can be easily avoided by taking a few precautions. Dr. Donald Kushner, a physician for Preferred Primary Care Physicians, states that there are a few easy steps that one can take towards the prevention of the swine flu: “Just continue to wash your hands with soap and water as often as possible. If a sink is inaccessible, use a limited amount of hand sanitizer that you should carry with you at all times. Also, avoid touching your face at all costs.”

Panther  
Predilections

What are you doing  
over Thanksgiving  
break?

“I am visitng my family in  
Detroit.”  
– Hanna Murray  
Freshman

“I’m going back to London  
to get myself some crum-  
pets.”  
– Jack Snowdon  
Sophomore

“I’m going to my grand-  
parents house in West  
Virginia.”  
– Alex Clleland  
Junior

“I’m hunting turkeys in  
the mountains.”  
– Ian Gallo  
Senior

By: Alaina Zamanick and  
Devin Ellis

Desk of the Editor  
The Congo is proving to have the worst human rights  
abuses in the world today

By: Marni Schreiber  
Editor-in-Chief

Every time a student buys a new cell phone, computer, or iPod, he or she is helping to support one of the worst human rights abuses seen in the world today. The Democratic Republic of the Congo, throughout history, has been eaten up for its natural resources.

Today, there is still unrest from the civil war in 1998, and this unrest is exponentially growing because companies that use the Congo for minerals have no value for human life.

Minerals, such as tin, tantalum, and tungsten, are all being extracted from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Every year, the people of the Congo, especially in the eastern region, are enslaved and forced to dig up the minerals for armed groups of men, who make immense profits by sell-

ing the minerals.

These armed groups “control mines that generate an estimated \$144 million to \$218 million in income each”(www.money.cnn.com).

The money raised, however, does not go to the enslaved people digging the minerals; instead, the money goes to buying more weapons and to killing and raping in the eastern Congo.

The human rights violations in this region are among the worst, if not the worst, in the world. Since 1998, more than 5.4 million people have died, and every month 45,000 more, mostly children, die from starvation and preventable diseases (www.enoughproject.org).

The eastern part of the

Congo is also the “worst place in the world to be a woman. Used as a weapon of war, rape in Congo exists on a scale seen nowhere else in the world.

Often successful in its intent to destroy and exterminate, rape as a weapon of war is causing the near total destruction of women, their families, and their communities”(www.enoughproject.org).

Countries around the world, but most notably China, whose track record shows it does

not value human rights or even human life, have been profiting greatly from the trade of minerals because the armed groups from the Congo sell the minerals cheaper than anywhere else in the world.

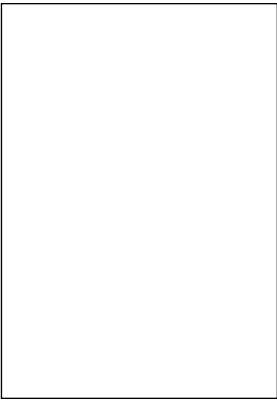
More recently, major elec-

tronic companies, such as Motorola, Apple, HP, and Nokia, have been taking some measures to stop this supply chain.

If more companies took a stand and refused to buy goods that are drenched in the blood of the dead Congolese citizens, the abuse, the murder, and the rape may come to an end sooner.

Electronic companies have the ability and leadership to “fundamentally change the way conflict minerals are bought and sold, ensuring that the minerals don't contribute to armed conflict and the continuation of the worst violence against women and girls in the world”(www.raisehopeforcongo.org).

Students can pledge their support to helping the people of the Congo and can write emails to the major electronic companies of the world at www.raisehopeforcongo.org.



Editor in Chief Marni  
Schreiber

Vegetarianism is a very effective alternative lifestyle

By: Vinay Viswanathan  
Senior Issue editor

Vegetarians are usually stereotyped into three categories: People with food allergies, Ethnic Asians who don't eat meat for religious reasons, and peace-loving hippies. These stereotypes however are being brought down by a new wave of vegetarianism.

America is slowly understanding that vegetarianism brings many biological, health-related, and political benefits.

Vegeterianism has long been known to help people to lose weight and get back in shape. However, according to animal rights group People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, “reducing meat consumption was one of the best ways to prevent the development and spread of deadly diseases”

(www.reuters.com). Many diseases begin in animals, like Swine Flu and Mad Cow Disease. However, with vegetarianism, such diseases could be avoided.

The reason behind meat-eating caused disease is shocking; scientists have found that humans are biologically meant to be vegetarian, but the human body adapted over time (since the period of the australopithecus) to accommodate meat eating.

A Cornell University professor of Nutritional Biochemistry Dr. T. Colin Campbell performed a massive experiment called “The China Study” about the physiological nature of meat-eating, and explained that “in fact, we only recently (historically speaking) began eating meat, and that the inclusion of meat in our diet came well

after we became who we are today”(www.huffingtonpost.com). Evidently, vegetarianism is part of human nature.

Being a vegetarian also is healthy. Of course, vegetarians have much less fat intake than others because they avoid fatty meats. While many critics retort that vegetarians lack protein, “it is not difficult to achieve a balance of good health in a vegetarian diet if you have a good intake of all the nutrients necessary for all stages of life”(www.vegso.c.org). Vegetarians can get protein from beans, such as soya and garbanzo, and dairy products, such as milk and yogurt, while avoiding the high fat content associated with meats.

The biological and health reasons are accompanied by the

political reasons to be vegetarian.

Vegetarianism is globally responsible, and helps overcome global problems. Vegetarianism helps reduce famine, because “about 70 percent of all grain produced in the United States is fed to animals raised for slaughter”(www.vegetariantimes.com). This grain fed to animals could instead be given to people, saving resources; surplus could be sent to the poor in Africa and Asia.

Additionally, vegetarianism is, as junior Grace Rubright said, “Cool!” Many celebrities, from rock singer of Rise Against Tim McIlrath and rapper Andre 3000, are strict vegetarians (www.andre3000.org). Vegetarianism is very politically popular as well. Obviously, vegetarianism is hip.

The St. Clairion  
Upper St. Clair, PA

Editor-In-Chief  
Marni Schreiber  
Opinions Editors  
Nick Buzzelli  
Asst Opinions Editor  
Garrett Cimena  
News Editor  
Alaina Zamanick  
Features Editor  
Vijay Viswanathan

Sports Editor  
Greg Schlosser  
Entertainment Editor  
Madeline Kushner  
Front Page Editor  
Meghan Taylor  
Senior Issue Editor  
Vinay Viswanathan  
Copy Editor  
Devin Ellis  
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

What worth does the Kindle have in regards to the average reader?

By: Madeline Kushner  
Entertainment Editor

Alleviating any pain from carrying around such “heavy” texts, the Kindle enables readers to electronically purchase books, magazines, newspapers, and blogs which are then wirelessly sent to the device for use, allowing the reader to obtain over 350,000 texts (www.amazon.com). But is paying a total of \$150 dollars for a refurbished first generation Kindle worth the cost?

Barnes & Noble agrees with the idea of an electronic reader. On October 20, 2009, Barnes & Noble introduced the Nook, the world’s largest bookseller’s own version of the Kindle, equipped with a color touch screen and an Android base. Offering over one million book options for the Nook, the new Barnes & Noble product permits the Nook owner to share the purchased eBooks with fellow Nook, iPhone, or Blackberry users. The Nook also allows readers to upload magazines, work documents, and photos, all the while storing up to 1,500 virtual novels (not including expandable memory cards) (www.earthtimes.org).

Yes, the Nook and the Kindle provide any reader with multiple novels at their finger tips, but when considering just phone chargers alone, only five percent of electricity produced from an outlet is used in the charging process of the phone (www.treehugger.com). The remaining ninety-five per-

cent of the energy contributes to the emission of pollutants and green house gases (www.epa.gov). Thus, if readers used novels instead of the Kindle or Nook, they could easily reduce the amount of wasted electricity in the world, much like if ten percent of phone users unplugged their chargers reducing electricity levels that would be the equivalent of the electricity used in 60,000 European houses per year (news.cnet.com).

In addition, if the batteries used in the Kindle or Nook are not disposed correctly, the chemicals from the batteries can leak into the world’s water supplies causing chemical harm to surrounding inhabitants (www.articleclick.com).

Despite the effects of electronic readers, the production of novels contributes to the destruction of nearly 20 million trees per year for just the production of books (www.prweb.com).

Even so, when purchasing a Kindle, one must take into account that if Amazon experiences bankruptcy, all downloaded books, magazines, newspapers, etc. will be lost from Kindle users’ data bases (jseliger.com).

Kate Groschner, a junior at Upper St. Clair High School, explains her opinion of the Kindle: “Even though the kindle is like an iPod where you can buy songs from iTunes and save yourself a trip to the store, the satisfaction of a page turn is more rewarding for me.”

Change is needed in the American vaccination system

By: Vijay Viswanathan  
Features Editor

The American vaccination system has stagnated for the last 50 years. The method of using chicken eggs to grow viruses is outdated and symbolizes a major issue in American health policy. Since the H1N1 hybrid Swine flu epidemic began, people have been waiting for an effective vaccine. Almost six months later, the vaccine is still in short supply; therefore it is clear that a comprehensive overhaul in the system is required.

Because the current vaccinations come from egg-borne viruses, people with allergies to eggs are at a high risk for complications. With this in mind, the government has mandated that the egg proteins be filtered out to allow people with allergies to be vaccinated. Still, violent reactions often can still occur in the 1% of people with the allergy (www.seattlechildrens.org).

The vaccine is also flawed because it carries many other side effects for the general public.

In 1976, Swine Flu vaccines gave hundreds of people Guillain-Barre Syndrome, a severe paralyzing autoimmune neurological disorder.

According to the Mayo Clinic, a study found that preschoolers who received the recent vaccinations had 2.5

times greater of a chance of being affected by Guillain-Barre. In addition, a recent international study published in Lancet found that one in every 2,500 pregnant women who receives a swine flu vaccine will experience a miscarriage in less than 24 hours.

The government is doing the public a great social injustice by failing to initiate progress in vaccines. Businesswire.com writes that a company called FluGen has found a way to produce vaccines in one month (Egg-based vaccines take six months) from Chinese hamster ovary cells. The CHO cell method is also cost effective, unlike the expensive H1N1 vaccine shots and nasal mists. However, the American government insists that the new systems are all unsafe and not suitable for mass usage.

The new vaccination system is also greatly improved because it is much more difficult to have an allergy to Chinese hamster ovaries than to have an allergy to egg.

So far, the government is many months behind its deadline for mass production of the H1N1 vaccine. The nasal spray, which is the only common form of vaccine right now, contains dangerous live virions that can infect people with Asthma and/or weak immune systems. With a switch to cell-based generation techniques, America could become healthier.

Panther Predilections

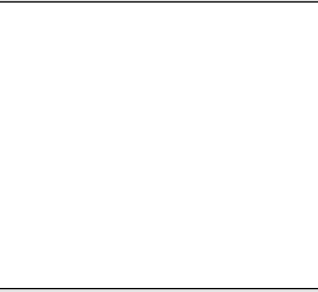
What are you doing over Thanksgiving break?



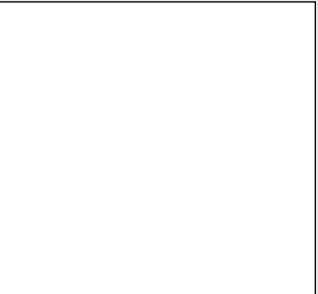
“I’m spending time with my family.”  
– Andre Ishmael  
Freshman



“I’m going to Las Vegas.”  
– Kyla Felice-Williams  
Sophomore



“I don’t celebrate Thanksgiving because i’m from Germany.”  
– Simon Terhaag  
Junior



“My cousins are coming in from New York.”  
– Dana Ritchie  
Senior

By: Alaina Zamanick and Devin Ellis

The bane of society

By: Garrett Cimina  
Assistant Opinions Editor

It has dominated worldwide politics for years. The UN has discussed little else. Colleges and newspapers have discussed its effects, and manufacturers of everything from cars to diapers have made a killing from the public hysteria that has followed in its wake. Too bad that global warming is a myth.

Global warming has been at the forefront of public consciousness for some time now, but what real evidence is there to support such a widespread issue? The Competitive Enterprise Institute, a nonprofit group dedicated to freedom of information, recently released an environmental

study showing that “the atmosphere has actually cooled by 0.13 degrees Celsius since 1979 according to highly accurate satellite-based atmospheric temperature measurements” (www.ourcivilization.com). Cooling, not warming.

The problem is global warming. Quick definition of warming: the process of becoming warmer; a rising temperature (Google). A rising temperature. Hmmm...

In the same vein as a lack of global warming is the thought of global cooling. Dailymail.co.uk reports that the city of Missoula, Montana is already coping with freezing temperatures that have “shattered a 36-year record.” Elsewhere in the world,

Austria is seeing its “earliest snowfall in history.” If the earth is warming, these extreme snowfall and temperature statistics should not be occurring. The only thing getting warm is the furnace in the homes of a lot of Austrians.

Global warming mythology hurts the pocketbook, too. Mycivilization.com claims that the “more than \$60 billion on research into global warming since 1990 has failed to demonstrate any human-caused climate trend, let alone a dangerous one.” \$60 billion might be enough to bail out GM. Oh well. Toyota is making a killing with their hybrid automobiles marketed to have “harmony between man, nature, and machine” (www.toyota.com). Never mind that these cars cost significantly more than their gas-sipping counterparts. Disposal of automobile batteries is a nasty, and expensive business. Whenever the state of Pennsylvania admits that car batteries present “the risk of groundwater contamination [and] toxic air emissions” (www.dep.state.pa.us) those batteries must be pretty bad.

Global warming is indeed a crisis, and it is man-made. It is not a problem howeverthat threatens the earth, just our minds. Science is showing with consistency that the earth is cooling, not warming. If people like the look of a Prius, then they can pay for it. For the rest, bring on the F-150s.

Former President Bush becomes inspirational speaker

By: Alaina Zemanick  
News Editor

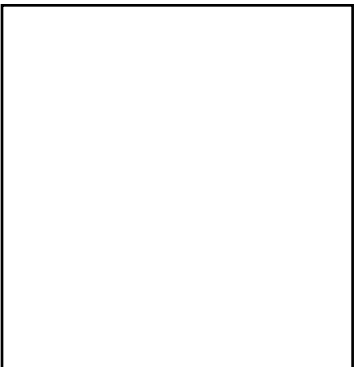
Former U.S. President George W. Bush has taken up motivational speaking during the dull days of retirement. The 43rd president premiered his inspirational skills to the 11,000 attendees of the “Get Motivated!” business seminar in Fort Worth, Texas (www.cnn.com).

Bush touched upon a variety of topics to enthuse the crowd of Texan business people. One ironic subject he discussed was the issue of popularity.

“It’s so simple in life to chase popularity, but popularity is fleeting, it’s not real,” explained Bush, who left the White House with a 22 percent approval rating (www.cnn.com).

Another surprising subject Bush talked about was on his stance on faith. He claimed his follower’s prayers helped him through his time in office.

“I don’t see how you can be president without relying on the



In this December 2004 photo provided by the White House, Derek McGinnis, left, Iraq veteran is helped up after losing his leg, by his wife, Andrea, as he meets former President George W. Bush at Bethesda (MD) National Naval Medical Center. (White House photo via Modesto Bee/MCT)

Almighty,” Bush confessed, “Now when I was 21, I wouldn’t have told you that, but at age 63, I can tell you that one of the most amazing surprises of the presidency was the fact that people’s prayers affected me. I can’t prove it to you. But I can tell you some days were great, some days not so great. But every day was joyous” (www.csmoni-

tor.com).

The former President’s speech lasted about twenty minutes and received mostly positive reviews from on-lookers. Many said that Bush did a good job, but those who followed, such as famed football quarterback Terry Bradshaw, were funnier and had better speeches (www.csmonitor.com).

Critics mostly poked fun at Bush’s alternate career path. The Daily Show host Jon Stewart called Bush “America’s Next Top \$20-and-under Motivational Speaker” (www.huffingtonpost.com). Stewart’s colleague Stephen Colbert of The Colbert Report said, “I defy you not to get jacked on [Bush’s] positive sauce” (www.huffingtonpost.com).

Many students were speechless when they heard of Bush’s new occupation, some saying that they would go “to get a laugh.”

Bush will be speaking at another “Get Motivated!” seminar in San Antonio, Texas on December 2nd.

HIV vaccine trial proves to be successful

By: Alaina Zemanick  
News Editor

After the announcement made September 24 of a new HIV vaccine, a recent trial conducted in Thailand in the months that followed proved that the vaccine was safe and effective (www.bbc.co.uk). According to the experiment conducted among 16,000 heterosexuals aged 18-30, the vaccine protected 31% against the disease and was far more defensive than a placebo drug.

Colonel Nelson Michael, director of the U.S. Military HIV Research Program, said that this trial “represents a significant step forward for vaccine research. While it will not likely have any immediate public health benefit, we are hopeful that the findings will guide additional studies and accelerate research efforts toward a more effective vaccine” (Reuters).

Despite the findings, scientists are beginning to speculate how large scale the results actually are.

During the test, those who did not take their vaccine were excluded from the data. Therefore, the statistics are as “robust” as possible (www.bbc.co.uk).

“The significance that has been established in this trial is that there is a 5% chance that this is a fluke,” said Dr. Nicola Frahm of the HIV Vaccines trials network in Seattle, “so we are 95% certain that what we are seeing is real and not down to pure chance” (www.bbc.co.uk).

Another negative of the vaccine is that it cannot be used in areas with high rates of HIV, such as Africa. Along the same lines, most believe that the vaccine cannot be used outside of Thailand (www.bbc.co.uk).

“Until we answer those other scientific questions the idea of using this vaccine in other parts of the world or testing it, is science rather than public health,” warned Colonel Jerome Kim, HIV Vaccines product manager for the US Army (Associated Press).

PS3 aims to increase market share

By: Garrett Cimina  
Assistant Opinions Editor

The latest video game consoles have been out for several years now, and the Playstation 3 has been hard-pressed to reverse its losing streak. The Xbox 360 is the choice of most adult gamers, with the Wii making a killing on the young kids and old folks. The odd man out has so far been the PS3, which has fallen hopelessly behind in the race for market share. Sony aims to change this fall with the lower-priced PS3.

The PS3 Slim is a departure from the last PS3 models. Gone is Playstation 2’s backwards compatibility, along with the shiny black finish and rounded front. The Slim is nearly as flat as the PS2 and displays the same matte finish. Current PS3 owners overall do not care for these changes, with

four different high school PS3 owners calling the slim “pretty dumb.”

Sony certainly has high hopes for the PS3 Slim, especially when their sales projections are examined. Sony thinks it will sell 13 million units by the end of March 2010, more than were sold during their highly successful holiday season last year. In the opinion of one sophomore, such sales “are unlikely if not impossible. Eventually people run out of money for these big purchases.” In spite of that some’s opinion, the Slim is selling out in stores across America. 150,000 units were sold in three days, in Japan.

The US is Xbox territory, as made obvious by the majority of consoles present at this school’s MX Gamers club. Sony may have a plan, but only time will tell if sales stay high.

No African leader worthy of the Ibrahim Prize

By: Marni Schreiber  
Editor in Chief

The Ibrahim Prize, a five million dollar reward given to a former African president, was, for the first time, not awarded to any past African leader. The prize, from the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, is given annually to a retired African president who has demonstrated good leadership within his or her country. This year, however, the committee was unable to elect a winner.

The Mo Ibrahim Foundation itself was founded to stimulate debates on respectable governmental systems or processes across the African region, teach citizens in the various African states what should be expected from their governments, and recognize those leaders in Africa who have exemplified strong and positive leadership in their country (www.moibrahimfoundation.org).

The committee that chooses the winner each year is made up of noteworthy members of society, including “Kofi Annan, the former United Nations secretary-general, Salim Ahmed Salim, former chairman of the Organisation of African Unity, Mary Robinson, Ireland’s former president, and Mohamed ElBaradei, the outgoing director-general of the International Atomic Energy Agency” (www.ft.com).

According to the foundation, the celebrated prize is given to a “democratically elected former African Executive Head of State or Government who has served their term in office within the limits set by the country’s constitution and has left office in the last three years” (www.moibrahimfoundation.org)

This year’s favorites were to be Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, Olusegun Obasanjo of

Nigeria, and John Kufuor of Ghana. All of these men, however, have not lived up to the standards of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation; Mbeki has been ousted from South Africa, Nigeria continues to be corrupted by crime and chaos, and Kufuor has made no real progress as president of Ghana (www.timesonline.co.uk).

There have been no exact reasons given by the committee as to why they could not select a winner, but the fact that no African leaders could be honored clearly implies the disappointment of the committee in the current democratic institutions of Africa.

Senior Olivia Lammel adds that “the fact the award was not given, clearly shows that the committee is making a statement. Hopefully this will put pressure on current African leaders to implement more honorable policies.”

Paradise living “under the influence”

By: Madeline Kushner  
Entertainment Editor

Hawaii is depicted as a form of paradise in various ways, such as in the Elvis Presley film *Blue Hawaii* or in the song “Hawaii” by the Beach Boys. As of late, the drug scene in the Aloha State has stereotyped the area negatively.

In 2000, nearly half of the juvenile population inhabiting the state of Hawaii claimed that they utilized alcohol. In addition, over one fourth of the students admitted to the use of marijuana while 9.5 percent eventually used cocaine before they entered senior year. 14.6 percent of the student body used some form of the inhaled drug. Overall, between the years 1991 to 1995, the juvenile drug

abuse cases brought before the Hawaiian court increased by 145 percent (www.publicpolicycenter.hawaii.edu).

A native Hawaiian, strolling on the beach Tunnels in Kauai, elaborated on the hazardous situation. “The educational system is not that good causing a lot of kids to drop out because they feel that drug dealing is a job opportunity. Both kids and adults suffer from the problem,” says the fretting surfer who feels close to the situation because of his adolescent son. “It’s hard to raise kids here [in Hawaii].”

The Kauai inhabitant explained that “the use of crystal meth [otherwise known as ice] has increased to the point where the drug is tearing apart family units.”

The substance known as crystal meth was introduced to the Hawaiian culture around the 1980’s as a result of the large Asian tourist population in the Hawaiian Islands (www.cbsnews.com).

The surfer’s statement concerning “ice” was proven true in the year 2002 by a Hawaii Health Department survey from the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division. The survey presented the information that the admittance in Hawaii of “ice” users increased to the point where about 2,750 people entered a rehab program because of crystal meth ingestion (archives.starbulletin.com).

The reason for such a high level of addiction to the drug “ice” is a result of the “high” caused by the substance. The effect of the

crystal meth is so serious and intense that addiction is almost instantaneous. “It’s just an insidious drug,” explains Lt. Gov. James Aiona, an ex-judge and prosecutor. “I’ve never seen the devastation from the other drugs like this” (www.cbsnews.com).

“It takes your soul away,” warns Joshua Lagmay, a twenty-six year old recovering addict (www.cbsnews.com).

The deaths caused by “ice” have also increased by a factor of four in the last decade according to the information provided by the Honolulu Medical Examiner’s Office. To make the matter even more drastic, the increase of deaths measured by the Honolulu Medical Examiner has only been calculated for the island of Oahu alone

(www.cbsnews.com).

Because the consumption of meth has increased by 87 percent among 10th graders from 2005 to 2007, Hawaii has formed an organization known as the Hawaii Meth Project. The project reaches out to the Hawaiian community in order to attempt to decrease the #3 ranking Hawaii holds for rehab admissions. In addition, the organization accepts donations to help its fight against “ice” (www.hawaiimethproject.org).

The project will also work in conjunction with the Hawaiian government. The government officials of Hawaii are also fighting the drug battle by forming a joint House-Senate committee to plan a resolution for the drug problem (www.cbsnews.com).

China leaves U.S. in the dust in the global green alternative energy movement

By: Vinay Viswanathan  
Senior Issue Editor

With the new “green movement” being pushed by people as diverse as talk show host Oprah Winfrew, former vice-president Al Gore, and United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, nations are scrambling to put together a “green economy” based off alternative energies and green technology.

Yet, in previous years, many nations like the United Kingdom and the U.S. largely ignored the push for alternative energy, even with the 1997 Kyoto Summit’s famous Kyoto Protocol. However, many nations, specifically China, have taken up green technology and engineering since the early 1990’s, a lead that is now making its mark on the West.

Solar and wind energy are the two least polluting alternative energies, however, they also produce the least amount of energy. The Brooking Institute stated in a February 2009 in a manifesto about energy sustainability that “the deployment and commercialization of solar (and) wind will be of long-term importance”. Many complain, however, that the low energy-production, and the relative costliness of the two offset the benefits of them. Senior Alex Churbock complains that “While wind energy is pretty good, I think that solar is definitely overrated, and it doesn’t make enough power. Nuclear energy is the way to go.”

Nuclear technology is controversial, but opponents bring up the card that this from of energy is a safety hazard. However, Secretary of Energy Steven Chu said in *The Boston Globe* that nuclear energy is vital for the U.S.’s energy issues, and is “really, very, very good” in terms of safety (www.boston.com/BostonGlobe). Hydroelectric energy is also an up-and-coming source. Hydroelectric energy employs dams to collect energy from water flow and causes the creation of water reservoirs. Both technologies are widely used by Asian nations.

China has wholly adopted alternative energies. A new energy sector is opening in China, which will also bring in investors to improve the Chinese green economy (www.alternative-energy-news.info). Even the poorer people in China are adopting alternative energy.

On a grassroots level, the Chinese government is spurring on the people of China to grow and invent their own alternative energies. In the village of

Meiquan in the Yunnan province, the Nature Consevancy of China gave the local government money to create a local green economy. CNN interviewed a man whose average income tripled after Meiquan adopted the green movement. Furthermore, people are able to afford more necessities and to improve their lifestyle with the new green technologies introduced by the government, such as bio-gas digesters and solar water heaters.

Solar and wind power is a huge part of the Chinese energy map. The New York Times said on February 4th of this year that China was one of the only nations to have a growing solar and wind power energy in the world (www.nytimes.com).

Wind power in China is growing very quickly because of the low emissions and relative inexpensiveness. Sun power has reached a complete new level, spawning many large Chinese companies in both China and the West. An example of this is Suntech from Shanghai which is one of the world’s largest producers of solar panels.

Nuclear and hydroelectric energy is at a new high in China, as well. Ikuo Sato, president of company Japan Steel, said “China, which had increased construction of coal-fired power plants, is now trying to focus on nuclear power because of the environmental issue” (www.bloomberg.com). About the world famous hydroelectric Three Gorges Dam, sophomore Ben Zhang said that “[it] will provide 50,000 megawatts of energy, and is the largest dam in the world, reducing the use of 61 million tons of coal an year. [China] is moving away from coal, going away from carbon pollution, and wanting to make energy cheaper.”

The Three Gorges Dam is one instance of China’s dominance over the US in the new emerging global green economy. The United States’ is trying to push over its “addiction to Middle Eastern oil,” but even if it does get over its middle eastern crisis, and adopts alternative energy, it could be chained to China. However, this doesn’t need to happen

The United States has arguably the most prolific, state-of-the-art research and laboratories on alternative energies in the world. The nation just needs the motivation to adopt the green economy. In the eyes of President Barack Obama, “To truly transform our economy, protect our security, and save our planet from the ravages of climate change, we need to ultimately make clean, renewable energy the profitable kind of energy” (www.nytimes.com).

Obama signs momentous hate crimes bill

By: Alaina Zemanick  
News Editor

On October 28, President Barack Obama signed the Matthew Shepard and John Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Bill, a law that has been debated upon for over eleven years (www.cnn.com). The passing of this law secures \$680 million for the defense of gay and transgender individuals, racial minorities, and disabled people. Obama called the law a “long awaited change” (www.miamiherald.com).

The new law was named after two victims of hate crimes in America. Shepard was an openly-gay teenager from Wyoming who was kidnapped and beaten to death in 1998 for his sexual orientation (www.cnn.com).

The same year, Byrd, a black Texan male, was dragged to death by a car driven by white supremacists (www.amath.colorado.edu).

Shepard’s mother Judy released a statement, saying that she and her husband “are incredibly grateful to Congress and the president for taking this step forward on behalf of hate crime victims and their families, especially given the continuing attacks on people simply for living their lives openly and honestly” (www.miamiherald.com).

Last year, a total of 29 gay, bisexual, or transgender persons were murdered because of their orientation. Ever since Shepard was killed, there have been approximately 16,000 similar hate crimes

(www.miamiherald.com). The Hate Crimes Prevention Act is known for being stricter than previous hate crime laws. The provisions in the act include education for law enforcement about how to prevent hate crimes against transgender persons and public education for everyone about similar subjects. This law is also the first act to positively discuss gender identity (Reuters). Obama’s passing of the bill is the first in many steps towards gay rights. He told the Human Rights Campaign earlier this month that “[d]espite the progress we’ve made, there are still laws to change and hearts to open. This fight continues now and I’m here with the simple message: I’m here with you in that fight” (www.cnn.com).

People speculate of an economic comeback

By: Vinay Viswanathan  
Senior Issue Editor

Early last year, the global economy collapsed because of mishaps by financial corporations, such as AIG and Lehman Brothers, on Wall Street. In February, the media was making it seem as if things were never going to be the same. But now, with governments, such as those of the G20, intruding upon the matter, the world might escape its recession.

Recession is defined as “a period of negative economic growth at the trough of the trade cycle” (www.bized.co.uk). After the financial crisis, consumers decreased their spending from the fear of foreclosure and bankruptcy. The decrease in spending posed as a major problem for Main Street (the everyday companies), because demand for their products decreased, the laws of supply and demand forced the companies to trade less, bringing a full-scale recession.

Nowadays, trade is improving. Consumer feelings are at the highest point since before the recession, last January (www.forbes.com). This suggests that the consumers are willing to spend again, thus thawing the frozen economy. However, consumers are not the only positive point.

Wall Street itself has also picked it up. According to University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School of Business, “Wall Street has [seen] a two-month rally that included a whopping 39% rise [in the summer]” (www.knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu).

This financial news is an indicator that the banks have learned from their poor economic decisions. But many say that the financial news still doesn’t show that the economy, as a whole, is improving.

Early sharp growth does not necessarily indicate great economic results. Earlier in the year, the Wall Street Journal explained that “trouble with spending and lending

could potentially make the recovery a slog” (www.online.wsj.com). If banks are stereotyped by the current trend of being too nervous to lend to consumers, the economy could take a dive for the worst. But no matter what someone’s opinion on the future of the economy is, everyone agrees that things need to be done. Junior Vijay Venkateshan says that “People just need to focus on saving money for the future, even if it’s more popular to just spend in the present.” He suggests that banks need to create safety nets for future economic crises, a concept patronized by President Barack Obama. Other people think the U.S. should focus on short-term gains to carry the country on in the future. Positive economic data suggests that the global economy is improving greatly, but this data is mere numbers if policy-makers and economists don’t adopt proper, sustainable, long-term plans to accommodate for future crises.

After 42 Years, Sealand is still going strong

By: Devin Ellis  
Copy Editor

On September 2nd, 1967, former British army officer Roy Bates sailed his fishing boat out to an abandoned WWII sea fort seven miles of the coast of England. He and his family quickly settled in. Bates claimed the territory as his own, and, possibly without knowing, rightly so. The territory was out of the rule of Great Britain and belonged to no country. Sealand was born. Within a year Sealand had a flag, currency, and stamps (www.fruitsofthesea.demon.co.uk).

Sealand is a bizarre prospect as a country, but the nation has a very interesting story. A few months after Sealand was established, the British navy transported some of their ships through the waters claimed by the now Prince Roy of Sealand, and shots were fired. Since Roy Bates was still techni-

cally an English citizen, he had to go back to England and stand trial for the skirmish. Yet the charges against Roy were decided unjustified as he, and his principality, was located outside of the three miles of sea the country had claimed. This decision unofficially but decidedly declared that Sealand was not part of Great Britain, but rather its own independent state (www.sealandgov.org).

Nearly 20 years later, in 1997, the same German business man came back to haunt the nation of Sealand. As forged Sealand passports started showing up around the world, the fake passports were traced back to the same German man who employed and accompanied the Dutch men who invaded Sealand in 1978. Prince Roy was quoted as saying, “Each and every country in the world has problems like this. The world is awash with forged passports”

(www.sealandnews.com). Yet, it just so happened that there were around 150,000 forged passports made, which is 500 times the amount of actual Sealand passports (www.sealandgov.org). This plethora of fake passports is a problem Sealanders still deal with today. Junior Vijay Venkatesan said, “[Sealand is] awesome because it’s fighting the power!” He also added “[Sealand is] like Sea World minus Shamu plus internet.” Many other feel this is way because Sealand has become a symbol over the years for rebellion and not taking the beaten path. With the appointment of Roy’s son Michael Bates as Prince of Sealand in 1999 and the introduction of technology such as the internet to the island, it seems as though things are looking up for the noble nautical nation of Sealand.



Son of the State is ready to rock the world

By: Greg Schlosser  
Sports Editor

Despite being just normal high school boys attending Upper St. Clair High School, the members of Son of the State have accomplished a lot. The members, Brandon Gallagher (singer/guitarist) Dustin Tropp (Guitarist), Josh Tropp (Drums), and Brent (Bass), are set to release their first self titled album on January 1, 2010. The album will even be available to buy on iTunes, Napster, Rhapsody, Amazon, and to most major phone carriers allowing the songs to be used as ring tones.

SOTS already has one single available on iTunes, titled “30 Minutes.” The feedback for the song has been “both negative and positive,” commented guitarist Dustin Tropp. “It’s good to hear the criticism

because it makes us better, but it is always nice to hear compliments from our fans.” In the final copy of the album, “30 Minutes” will be slightly different than the single available right now, as the band has changed the song for a better sound.

Furthermore, SOTS has played multiple shows, in places such as the Saddle Club and Pittsburgh Pulse in downtown Pittsburgh. However, the band is taking time off from performing in order to teach Brent, who is new to the band, how to play their songs and to record for their upcoming album. Their next show will be held downtown on New Years Day.

One thing that makes SOTS different from most other bands is the fact that their lyrics aren’t always “about some girl.” The lyrics actually have “very cool concepts,” according to

Tropp. For example, the song “Spring Break” is about looking forward to the future and “Taking Back This Year” is about being sick of the games people play and “how your opinion of people will never be right,” added Tropp.

However, SOTS is focusing on promoting their album and making sure that it has an overall good release. In addition to that, the band is even working on a new EP.

“Since the album, we have written two new songs, and are working on three others. Other than that, we are just trying to take a break before winter to teach our bassist the new songs, and start promoting the album release in late November,” said Tropp. “However, we have learned a lot from this album, and this experience will only make us better as a band.”

“Southside Works” area flourishes and expands

By: Vinay Viswanathan  
Senior Issue Editor

In the Southside Works area of Pittsburgh, the economic recession seems transparent. The “Works” are one of the highlights of the “reborn” Pittsburgh, showcased at the G20 conference in September. As if the modern area of the South Side doesn’t have enough to cater to consumers already, the Southside Works complex is expanding. And yet is still a very interesting place

When fabricated in 2005, the design of the plaza was, according to Development Magazine in its Summer 2005 issue, to “build a neighborhood” (www.southside-works.com). And the venture succeeded greatly, with a huge increase in the sales sector of Pittsburgh’s economy because of the complex.

Furthermore, the complex was constructed on a “[steel] foundry that was abandoned and razed” (www.signon-sandiego.com).

The area has succeeded very well in its goals so far. But it is still expanding to cater to a larger crowd.

Sophomore Mike Boyas, however, says that “They probably should expand. I guess because of the recession, so many stores are closing now.” He has a point; while Pittsburgh hasn’t been hit too hard by the recession, this extravagant, elaborate spending could instead be channeled towards jobs and banks.

The neighborhood is, interestingly, benefiting the economy greatly. According to Carnegie Mellon University’s Brownfields Center, it is a “good source of employment for the area”, helping Pittsburgh combat the national unemployment malaise. (www.cmu.edu) Also, it has increased investments, and outside interest in Pittsburgh. It is surely boosting our city’s economy.

However, many worry that the high-class, upscale stores of the Works won’t agree with most Pittsburghers. Claire Kylander, a sophomore at USCHS, voices that “more shops that are less expensive would be nice, [because] it seems like a lot of what they have is pretty high [in costs] and and a little bit more

[expensive] than I would like to spend.”.

Locations at Southside Works include the pricey restaurant The Cheescake Factory, the expensive clothing company Benetton, and the popular teen store American Eagle. Evidently, the prices at the Works are not low enough for the average consumer to buy.

But the Southside Works aren’t just for stores. There are also offices and apartments. American Eagle Outfitters is even headquartered there!

Additionally, the area offers units of flat and loft-style apartments. The new expansions of the Works could help more people live in prime areas, rejuvenating the South Side.

The Southside Works are obviously at a peak. The leaders of twenty most industrial nations even looked at them for inspiration on September 24th and 25th. Even though it holds a budgetary burden on Pittsburgh, the Works is setting an example for complexes in the future.

Diwali Illuminates Pittsburgh

By: Vinay Viswanathan  
Senior Issue Editor

Many people in America don’t know much about the massive Indian holiday of Diwali, lest for an Office episode two years ago. However, Diwali is celebrated by over a billion people, and, in India, is celebrated by people of all races, despite its Hindu beginnings. Diwali has surfaced as the main holiday of the Indians; the Christmas of Hindus.

Many people in the West don’t know much about Diwali. Sophomore Jack Snowdon asked “Is [Diwali] a language?” Diwali originates as the time when, according to Hindu texts, King Rama, an incarnation of God sent to Earth to help civilization, returned from his fourteen year exile (ordered by his brainwashed father) in a remote forest to reclaim his kingdom. The Ramayana, the book written about King Rama and his exile, says that after he returned, he became King again and all of his grateful citizens lit up his kingdom, Ayodhya.

Nowadays, besides the religious significance, Diwali is now loved because of the celebrations, the present-giving associated with it (like Christmas), and, perhaps most famous, the use of lights. When questioned about the best part of Diwali, sophomore Arjun Sharma exclaimed “Fireworks!” Fireworks are an integral part of Diwali because of religious meaning.

Diwali is also known for the

food. Poorwa Godbole, a sophomore, said that “I went to a party for Diwali and my mom cooked a special dinner.” For North Indians, typical meals at Diwali-time consist of a rich vegetable or meat based curry, special fried flatbread, known as Paratha, and, of course, the special cake-like nut based desserts. For South Indians, a special Diwali meal is often a crepe-like dish known as Dosa, a fried bread ball called Vada in spicy gravy, special yogurt on rice, and timely desserts.

Another very important religious tradition during Diwali is the pooja. Poojas are religious ceremonies saluting God for good-fortune. For the Diwali poojas, five lamps are lit around the prayer area, food is offered to the God, and prayers, known as mantras, are chanted. In villages, cows are decorated and worshipped (www.truthstar.com).

Diwali is also celebrated for the “abundance of the autumn harvest” (www.boloji.com). Therefore, Indians give clothes and gifts to each other. In India, on the day of Diwali, people wear their new clothes, to show a beginning of the new autumn.

Diwali is a fun holiday, perhaps the most important for Hindus. But it is not just celebrated by Hindus; the holiday is cherished by all Indians alike. This year, Diwali took place on October 17, a day full of lights, food, and good moods. Diwali is a great time to take a break and simply enjoy oneself.

Don’t be a chicken!

Garrett Cimina  
Assistant Opinions Editor

Here’s a sad commentary on the state of things in America: If, as the saying says, you are what you eat, then the vast majority of people in this country are chickens. Home of the brave? Please. Of course, chicken is not often excluded from diets, and even less so from religions, so this phenomenon is not without its reasonable causes.

However, chicken is not without its faults. If prepared incorrectly, chicken often carries no flavor of its own, requiring prodigious amounts of either sugar- or salt-laden sauces to make it palatable. This negates any health benefits. As a non-red meat, chicken may seem to be safer, but salmonella poisoning is a common occurrence, especially with chicken’s white color making it hard to tell when it is done. One of chicken’s only real redeeming qualities is its ease on the wallet. Pound-for-pound, few foods are cheaper than chicken.

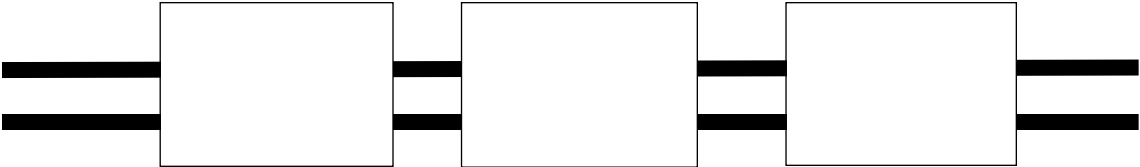
Of course, conventional wisdom suggests that if chicken is such a flawed food item then there must be no alternative. Or at the very least, most of the population probably has the “I don’t care” attitude of sophomore Arley Schenker. Attitudes are unknown, but there is competition. Chicken may have good qualities in the areas of price and religious acceptance, but it often fails in the area of taste. Pork is usually held in good stead when it comes to taste, but there are a great many people who are unable to consume pork. This

leaves beef. Again, it tastes good, but it is often excluded from some religions. And then there is the small matter of the price of steak...

Is there an alternative to chicken? While debates will inevitably rage, fish seems to be the most appropriate substitute for chicken. Fish can be cooked in a great many ways, though not as many as chicken. Fish is often white, the color of chicken, and is acceptable to most religions. According to thefishsite.com, fresh fish has a “fresh odor,” not a fishy one. As for the biggest consideration, rest assured that fish does not taste like chicken. Junior Ryan Larson says that he “likes fishies.” True, fish can run high at the supermarket, but buying in bulk helps with the price, as does buying a cheaper type of fish, like catfish, and then dressing it up when it is cooked. Fish has most of what chicken has, but is different enough to relieve the monotony.

Will fish surpass chicken as America’s edible identity? It is doubtful. Chicken’s convenience makes it well suited to the modern “on-the-go” lifestyle. Keep in mind, however, that while proper chicken grilling preparation requires some sort of gasping, slicing or “butterflying”, fish’s flat shape allows it to cook evenly with very little tampering. Ezinearticles.com even supports cavemen as first broiling fish, soon after first making fire. If fish is so easy a caveman can do it, why should chicken be allowed to rule the marketplace any longer? Please, don’t be a chicken.

Teacher’s Lounge



Mrs. Moeller - “I would burn any Hemingway book.”

By: Vinay Viswanathan  
Senior Issue Editor

Q: If you were going to a deserted island and you could bring two books, one to burn and one to read, which ones would you bring?

A: I would burn any Hemingway book, and I would keep *Charlotte’s Web*.

Q: If you could marry any character, which would it be?

A: Probably Johnny Procter from *The Crucible*.

Q: What’s your favorite

book-inspired movie?

A: It would have to be *The Wizard of Oz*.

Q: Who’s your favorite writer?

A: Joan Didion- she’s bold, candid, and seeks the truth

Q: What’s your least favorite pet peeve with students?

A: The use of the “evil, empty this,” and thesis sentences that try to explain the whole world, e.g. “All humans have emotions. Some are positive, while some are negative. Love is a

positive emotion”

Q: Did you ever want to be a writer?

A: Well, I worked as an editor of a publishing company, so I have experience with writers. In a perfect fantasy world, I would be a writer, but I feel that I am meant to teach writers rather than to be a writer.

Q: Do you have any advice for seniors?

A: Be sure to spell your professor’s name right on the first assignment! Also, write with personality.

USC cross-country team finishes an exciting season

By: Vinay Viswanathan  
Senior Issue Editor

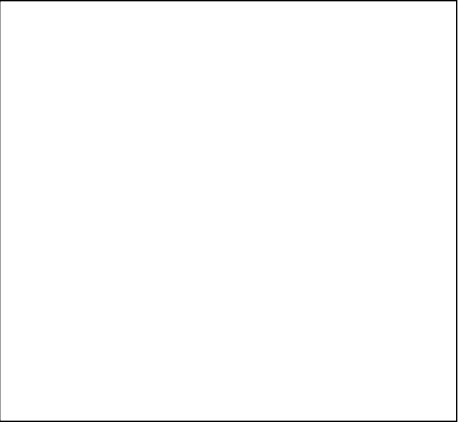
In August, the Upper St. Clair High School Cross Country team kicked off a great beginning to a hopefully fantastic season. The coaches, Mr. Doug Petrick and Mrs. Maureen Chermak, and the captains, Carolyn Vespa, Sarah Walters-Slezak, Andrew Kearns, and Everett Altherr, enforced demanding workouts and draining long runs in the late-summer heat. Clearly, the cross country team is trying to make a name for itself.

The USCHS cross country has come a long way. Sophomore standout Austin Wilding says about the team: “I am looking forward to seeing how the season goes. We have a lot of potential, and a lot of people putting in the work. And we have a great set of captains.” On both sides of the team (the girls’ side and the guys’ side) people are getting ready to run times not seen in previous years.

“It’s safe to say that for the first time in eight years, we have five runners very close to each other in times.”, forecasted Coach Petrick. Coach Petrick has reasons to be optimistic; the girl’s team is having one of the best years’ in its lengthy history.

The girls’ side of the team, with many great freshmen, like Betsy Erlanger, Elena Zatawski, and Leah Griffith, and upper-classmen, like Amy Anderson, Sarah Walters-Slezak, and Carolyn Vespa, is at one of its

best season in history. Senior, captain, and top-seeded girl’s runner, Carolyn Vespa, boldly predicted that “Latrobe, Bethel, and Lebo better watch out, because USC girls’ Cross Country is making it to State’s!” Carolyn’s prediction, while ultimately wrong, was very close, with the girls’ team as a whole



From left to right, girls’ captain Caroline Vespa, and freshmen Helena Zatawski and Betsy Erlanger warm up for a race. (Photo courtesy of Mr. Petrick)

placing in the top five at WPIAL qualifiers, and the team superceded all expectations.

Arguably the most suprising and succesful member of the team is freshman Betsy Erlanger. Erlanger made the PIAA State Championships and placed 29th out of 285 runners as a freshman, making her the sixth fastest freshman in Pennsylvania . Erlanger won every race on the Upper St. Clair home course at Mayview Park.

The girls team as a whole represented Upper St. Clair as one of Allegheny County’s best team. David Claypool, commenting on the team’s success, said that “it’s pretty good...it’s

pretty awesome!”. The guy’s side of the team also has a lot of potential, and has evened out since last year. The team is anchored by seniors Andrew Kearns and Everett Altherr, along with sophomore Austin Wilding, known by his nickname “BuckWild”.

The Junior Varsity team is also great.. Senior Matt Karashin said about the JV team “[We’ve done] pretty well. [I think] that we’ll do well in about two-thirds of our races. And [we’ll] definitely [do] better than last year. The JV team, with younger members has seen unbelievably fast growth of its team. The JV squad is the future of the Varsity squad.

The team’s leadership is great this year, arguably even better than last year’s. The girls’ captains (Carolyn and Sarah) were last year’s girls’ captains as well, but the guys’ captains (Andrew and Everett) are new.

Guys’ captain, and top-ranked guys’ runner Andrew Kearns orated, “Me and Everett have good leadership, which is needed with a lot of younger runner. And we like to keep them in line...” The great captainship of the Guys XC (Cross-country) team has really helped the team in years past, and it seems like this year will not be any different.

As a whole, the cross country team this year is a better team, both in athleticism and in integrity, than last year. Whether they are motoring up a hill, or charging across a flat, the cross country team is united.

Pitt freshman Dion Lewis fills hole left by McCoy

By: Nick Buzzelli  
Opinions Editor

After LeSean McCoy left Pitt at the end of his sophomore year to pursue his dream of playing professional football, the Panthers had a hole at the running back position that seemed impossible to overcome in time for the 2009 campaign.

The running back position was atop Pitt’s to do list until freshman Dion Lewis stepped onto campus. The Albany, New York, native brought hope to the Panther squad when he first arrived on campus. With Lewis at running-back, the Panthers look to conquer the Big East Conference.

Although he is only a freshman this season, Lewis has already made a big impression on the Panther faithful. In his first season playing collegiate football, Lewis rushed for almost 1300 yards and 13 touchdowns on just over 200 carries (www.espn.com).

Lewis has proven he can fill in the gap left by star running back LeSean McCoy, by providing the Panthers with an 85 yard score in only his second game playing for Pitt. “You should always expect to do well, always expect to make plays,” said the freshman tailback after rushing for 190 yards against the University of Buffalo (www.post gazette.com).

Despite his small size, the product of Blair Academy has been compared to the Jacksonville Jaguars’

Maurice Jones-Drew because of his small stature and running style. “Dion Lewis has the potential to be one of the best young rushers in the Big East,” says junior H.B. Mertz. “As long as Lewis stays healthy, he can have a very productive college career at Pitt.”

Aside from Lewis, Pitt also has another freshman running back that has the ability to make it as an impact player. Ray Graham of Elizabeth, New Jersey, battled Lewis for the starting job while the Panthers were holding training camp.

Graham ultimately lost the top spot on the depth chart to Lewis, but will receive a bit of playing time as a short-yardage back (www.rivals.com). In Graham’s senior season of high school he rushed for over 1,500 yards and 24 TD’s.

LeSean McCoy was Pitt’s standout runner the past two seasons, but Dion Lewis will likely pull the load and live up to the legacy that McCoy left behind. Dion Lewis has proved that he will be one of Pitt’s top running backs in the near future, perhaps even passing the great Tony Dorsett if he stays in college for the next three years. The Panthers have a two tailback threat that will propel them atop the Big East standings.

With Pitt ranked #8 in the BCS, the panthers will continue to look to Lewis in order to win big games against their toughest opponnets.

USC rifle takes aim at upcoming season

By: Nick Buzzelli  
Opinions Editor

After coming off of a disappointing season last year, the USC rifle team is making strides to have a better campaign during the 2009-2010 school year. This season however, the rifle team will not only be aiming at targets, but also for their ultimate goal, the WPIAL championship.

The rifle team began practicing early in the season to be able to shoot for their first title since 1970. “We have been practicing five times per week to get ready for the start of the new season” said junior Matt Prosser. “The practices have been long and intense, but hopefully all the hard work will pay off and we can have a successful season.”

Also a junior, sharpshooter Harris Hartung believes the team will be able to compete at a much higher level this year. “Our strengths this season are definitely the marksmanship of our returning varsity shooters

exclaimed Hartung.

“We have a solid core of players who are very consistent,” said the third year shooter Hartung. “As long as we continue our normal practice routines we will do very well this season and make a dramatic improvement over the previous years.” “It’s easy to go to practice every day when you get to hang out with your friends and shoot rifles.”

Michael Polens, a sophomore is anxious to start training and competing for the USC rifle team this season. “I am obvious looking forward to the new rifle season because we will get another chance to redeem ourselves after the mediocre season the team had last year.” “Our key matches against Bethel Park and Mt. Lebanon will challenge us because the Blue Devils and Black Hawks always field good teams,” said Polens. “With enough practice and determination we may be able to pull the upset against two of our biggest rivals.”

Girls’ Tennis Team takes second at PIAA state Championships

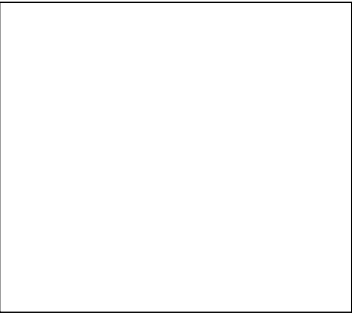
By: Meghan Taylor  
Front-Page Editor

On October 29, 2009, the Upper St. Clair girls’ tennis team traveled to Hershey, Pennsylvania to compete in the state wide championship. The girls made it to the finals, where they lost to Peters Township 3-2 on Saturday, October 31.

The girls who played singles in the state competition included sophomore Claudia Escribens, senior Brittany Russell, and freshman Megan Adamo. The doubles teams included sophomore Andrea Hammer and senior Meredith Borst, and seniors Molly O’Grady and Chrissy Sandman. These girls won a variety of matches that led to their eventual attempt for the State title.

The final round versus Peters was intended to be revenge for Upper St. Clair. To qualify for

states, the girls competed in WPIALs where the final round came down to USC versus Peters. The girls fought hard to



The girls team celebrates their PIAA runner-up trophy. (Photo Courtesy of Meghan Taylor.)

the end, but were disappointed by their first loss of the season.

The girls battled through three rounds to get to the championship in Hershey to get to their rematch against the Indians. Their road consisted of winning a match in Monroeville and two at the Hershey Racquet Club.

The final match took place on

Saturday October 31, 2009. The Pittsburgh Post Gazette reported that, “the team match tied at two matches apiece, the fates of both teams rested on second doubles, where Komer and Madalena [for Peters] split the first two sets against Chrissy Sandman and Molly O’Grady.” (www.post-gazette.com).

The match ended in a defeat, but the girls have nothing to be ashamed of.

The team had gone undefeated in their season and ended as section champs, which was an impressive feat. Emily Roarty, Maggie Overstreet, Rachel Amoroso, Lizzie Kunkle, Amanda Gans, Madyson Scheller, and Catherine Engel all helped win the section for their team.

Emily Roarty, a junior on the team, said, “We had a really impressive season even though we didn’t win states.”

Do You Want to Know a Secret? *The Beatles: Rock Band* is a solid game

By: Greg Schlosser  
Sports Editor

After much anticipation by fellow Beatles and Rock Band fans alike, *The Beatles: Rock Band* was released on September 9th and sold over 700,000 units in the first week (www.rockband.com).

The game features around 40 of The Beatles’ best songs, including classics such as “I Saw Her Standing There,” “Paperback Writer,” “I Am the Walrus,” and “Get Back.” Unlike other Rock Bands, *The Beatles: Rock Band* does the Band Tour mode (or in *The Beatles: RB* case Story Mode) in a way that instead of creating your own band and working your way to the top, you start as The Beatles playing at The Tavern. The gamer then follows The Beatles’ story all the way to the rooftop concert at the Apple building.

Progressing through the story mode, special pictures and videos of The Beatles can be obtained by playing the songs. For example, if four stars or less are gained on a song, one photo is unlocked. If five stars are

earned, then two photos are unlocked. These photos accumulate to unlock rare videos of The Beatles, such as a performance by the Beatles on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, to a Christmas video made by The Fab Four.

Another advancement that makes this version of *Rock Band* different from others is the ability to sing in harmony. The Beatles often utilized the voices of John Lennon, Paul McCartney, and George Harrison in one song, creating their infamous sound, and now players have the opportunity to sing the famous harmonies in songs such as “Twist and Shout” and “Hello Goodbye.”

Yet another great thing about *The Beatles: RB* is that it is the gift that keeps on giving, meaning some Beatles albums will be released for purchase further down the road to be playable in the game. *Abbey Road* is set to release in October, with *Sgt. Peppers Lonely Heart Club Band* in November, and *Rubber Soul* in December (www.eurogamer.net).

However, the game does have a few faults. For example, forty songs pale in comparison to

some other *Rock Band* games. The fact that users will have to pay money to get more songs and increase the longevity of the game might be seen as annoying to most people.

Also, the game overall is not too difficult. It almost seems that a song on “Hard” difficulty in *The Beatles: RB* is pretty much the same difficulty as a “Medium” song in *Rock Band 2*, since The Beatles’ songs are extremely well known and not very complicated. Once the user can beat every song fairly easily, the only way to keep interest will be to buy the albums once they become available.

Overall *The Beatles: RB* is an extremely solid title that will be loved by most Fab Four fanatics. And, even though they cost money, the purchasable albums available at later dates will keep people interested in this game for months to come.

Sarah Nadler, a junior, said, “I absolutely love it, since I’m a big Beatles fan and it really shows the different stages of their career and it’s very interesting to see how they progressed as a band.”

*of the Opera* and takes place in Coney Island, is scheduled to release in London during March of 2010 and then on Broadway the following November (www.huffingtonpost.com). As previously stated by his publicists, Webber plans to finish his work on the sequel by the close of the year.

After tackling his prostate cancer, Webber also plans to begin a reality show that will cast a new Dorothy and Toto character for the show *The Wizard of Oz*, much like past shows known as *Grease: You’re the One that I Want* and *Legally Blonde: The Musical: The Search for Elle Woods*.

Christina Hlutkowsky, a junior at Upper St. Clair High School, commented on the creation of yet another musical theatre reality show: “[The success of the show] depends because the competitors have to know what they are doing with the role and with their ‘talent’ in general. The competitors have to be serious about the competition and they have to fit with the theme of the show.”

Webber has also agreed to join three BBC series that will cast the leads for *How Do you Solve a Problem like Maria?*, *Oliver!*, and *Any Dream will Do*, all three of which will take place in London’s West End (www.dailymail.co.uk).

When Lady Gaga herself excitedly informed her Twitter followers that her song was to be included on the runway’s soundtrack, a swarm of fans crashed the website where McQueen was broadcasting his show live (www.style.com).

Likely to McQueen’s delight, his latest runway collection left fashion critics amazed by its beauty. *The New York Times* calculated that his collection received the most praising reviews from all the online fashion sources, including

Muse’s *The Resistance* Starts Excitement among Fans

By: Devin Ellis  
Copy Editor

Muse: for many, the name brings to mind a trio of innovative Brits, rather than mythical women who inspired the masses to be creative. Since their first album *Showbiz*, which was released in 1999 (www.muse.mu), Muse has developed a cult following around the world due to its numerous smash hits, including “Hysteria” and “Supermassive Black Hole”.

Needless to say, the release of their fifth and most recent album, *The Resistance*, was one of the most highly anticipated musical events of the summer. As a result of their exceptional and critically acclaimed past albums, *The Resistance* was met with mixed feelings by both fans and critics alike.

At first glance, *The Resistance* seems to sound like all other Muse albums. Mathew Bellamy’s falsetto notes and catchy guitar riffs are prevalent, accompanied well by bassist Christopher Wolstenholme and drummer Dominic Howard, to make a spacey progressive punk rock sound that influenced Muse’s fame so much. Yet, a closer look reveals a huge departure from Muse’s earlier works.

*The Resistance* has an electro-punk sound that is personified in the opening track, “Uprising”, which is also their lead single off the album. Bellamy’s voice is

noticeably lower and the lyrics, as suggested by the song title, deal with revolution and fighting the powers that be, so to speak. This new sound seems to work, because “Uprising” has been hailed by fans as well as by critics. *The Beat Review BlogSpot* said “Uprising” is a “5-minute new summer anthem” (www.thebeatreview.blogspot.com).

The other songs on *The Resistance* are also quite different from old Muse songs. The last three tracks on the album are “rock symphonies” named “Exogenesis: Symphony” 1, 2, and 3 respectively.

As one review of *The Resistance* puts it, the new album has a “Queen-esque progressive rock” sound to it (www.antiquiet.com). And this is true; the new album has been compared numerous times to Radiohead, Queen and U2. *The Rolling Stone* says that in *The Resistance*, Muse “borrow[s] shamelessly from Radiohead and Queen [...] leave[ing] a listener wondering just what the point of Muse is” (www.rollingstone.com).

Despite this criticism, fans of *The Resistance* and of Muse have shown their support by making *The Resistance* the number 1 album in all of Europe upon release (www.billboard.biz). As for Muse, their music may sound a bit different right now, but their fans won’t mind; Muse’s musical future looks very bright.

The Saw franchise needs to come to an end

By: Marni Schreiber  
Editor in Chief

*The Saw* franchise has recently released its newest movie, *Saw VI*. This franchise continues to release new movies, regardless of dismal support and repeating storylines. Ever since the original *Saw*, the movies have gone downhill; it is about time this franchise retire.

The original *Saw* was released in October of 2004 and received relatively positive reviews from audiences. The original gave viewers a somewhat new twist on horror films, having the main action violence scenes between the victims themselves, not between the victims and the villain.

The first movie, in fact, almost quadrupled the newest release in the box office, \$55,153,403 to the dismal \$14,800,000 (www.moviesonline.ca).

The original film also fared better with critics, receiving many positive reviews: “[The movie is] terrifying at some moments and insinuatingly creepy at many others [...] ‘Saw’ also contains what might be the most frightening horror-movie mask ever. Think back to when that ‘Scream’ mask was still scary and multiply that by 100 to get the ‘Saw’ mask” (www.sfgate.com).

Ever since its start, however, the *Saw* franchise has gone significantly south. The original plot was easy to understand and the drama was not based entirely on gore; although when Cary Elwes cuts

famed fashion reporter Suzy Menkes’ report that called his collection “the most dramatic revolution in 21st-century fashion” (www.nytimes.com). Women’s Wear Daily wrote that

off his foot in the final scenes, the viewer is given a rather gruesome view.

Senior Dylan Lease said that he “doesn’t like *Saw* at all. I’m not a huge fan of horror movies, but the *Saw* movies are just gross and bloody.”

In the more recent movies, the plot becomes increasingly more confusing as the viewer tries to understand the mind of serial killer Jigsaw. The situations the victims are forced to overcome become increasingly more unrealistic and gory as well.

Fellow Senior Danny Codeluppi explained that the plots are “getting ridiculous. At first it was cool, but now it just kind of blows.”

If one hasn’t studied the second through fifth films, it would be almost impossible to have any understanding of what was occurring in the sixth movie: “If you haven’t followed the series up until now, there’s not much point in trying to catch up with the agonized convolutions of the *Saw* saga’s plot line” (www.laweekly.com).

Unfortunately, there are already talks about a seventh and eighth film contract. It is likely the plots will continue to confuse, but not scare the viewer. The past five films have relied entirely on blood to shock the audiences, which is proving to not work as the box office reports continue to full.

Sophomore Danielle VonWaldo states that she “hates the *Saw* movies. They should never make another one, ever.”

“[the] dresses approached art,” and Dolly Jones of *UK Vogue* stated, “It was a show in the true sense of the word and the clothes were spectacular to match.”

Renowned composer Andrew Lloyd Webber diagnosed with cancer

By: Madeline Kushner  
Entertainment Editor

A publicist of the famous composer Andrew Lloyd Webber was prompted to announce on October 25, 2009, Webber has been diagnosed with prostate cancer (www.cnn.com).

Despite the claims of a disastrous disease, the sixty-one-year old’s prognosis is very positive because the disease has not spread to any of Webber’s organs, allowing the cancer to be treatable. Thus, the composer has been placed into an unnamed specialist cancer hospital (www.dailymail.co.uk).

The composer’s publicists put the public’s mind at ease, stating, “The condition is in its very early stages” (www.cnn.com).

“It is so heart-wrenching that one of the most talented musical minds in history is suffering from such a terrible disease,” explains Anna Mittelman, a junior at Upper St. Clair High School. Yet Mittelman also manages to look on the sunny side of the situation: “Even though being diagnosed with cancer is so depressing, Andrew Lloyd Webber can hopefully reach out to the musical community and draw attention to the cause.”

Even so, Webber, who was also

honored with a Kennedy Center Honor, became knighted in 1992, and made an honorary life peer in 1997, does not intend to permit the cancer to dictate his life and slow him down (www.andrewlloydwebber.com). Webber’s publicists continued to state that “Andrew is now undergoing treatment and expects to be fully back at work before the end of the year” (www.huffingtonpost.com).

The famous composer has earned seven Tonys, three Grammys, seven Oliviers, a Golden Globe, an Oscar, two International Emmys, the Praemium Imperiale, and a Richard Rodgers award (www.andrewlloydwebber.com).

On October 8, 2009, to add to his collection of extremely successful works, the composer of famous musicals, such as *Cats*, *Joseph and the Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *Evita*, and many more, announced that he would be creating a sequel to the world famous show, *The Phantom of the Opera* (www.andrewlloydwebber). The musical depicts the life of a talented opera singer torn between love and the seduction of the Phantom of the Opera (www.network.nationalpost.com). The sequel, entitled *Love Never Dies* which describes the Phantom’s life after *The Phantom*

clothing (www.style.com).

Instead of using basic motifs on the fabric such as plaids or stripes, McQueen digitally printed reptile patterns onto his dresses. With the help of the beautiful couture-like seaming of each frock, they all had their own individual psychedelic designs created by the reptile prints.

To make the runway collection even more show-stopping, McQueen premiered Lady Gaga’s newest single “Bad Romance” as the encore runway song

Alexander McQueen magnifies fashion status with innovative collection

By: Alaina Zemanick  
News Editor

This past season in Paris, many of the world’s fashion greats took the runways with fantastic designs that were both beautiful and original, but none shocked the fashion world like the spring 2010 collection of the renowned Alexander McQueen. McQueen, who is known for his offbeat avant-garde apparel, entitled his latest collection “Plato’s Atlantis,” and brought an unusual animalistic theme to his