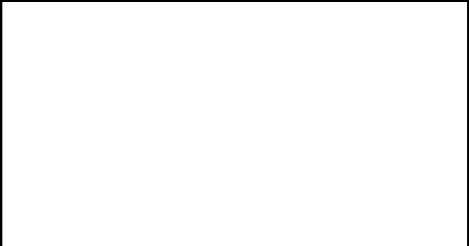
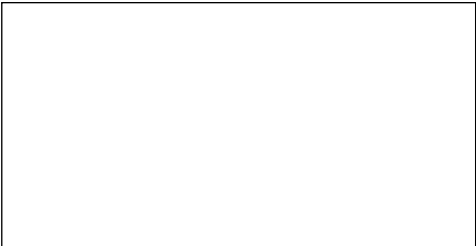


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# The St. Clairion

Volume 11, Issue 3 - February 2010 - Upper St. Clair High School Pittsburgh, PA 15241

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

## Brigadoon cast preparing for a fantastic spring musical

By: Alaina Zemanick  
News Editor

Since early January, the cast of the 2010 Spring Musical, Brigadoon, has been practicing extensively for their opening show on March 5th. With a packed schedule of drama, music, and dance rehearsals, the cast members, particularly the leads, have a large load to carry.

“Yes, so true!” agrees Sarah Nadler, who plays female lead Fiona MacClaren, “But, it’s fun.”

Brigadoon is the story of two New Yorkers, Tommy Albright (Mike Boyas) and Jeff Douglas (Santino Tomasetti), who take a vacation to Scotland. While there, they come across the village of Brigadoon that is under a spell and

wakes up every 100 years. Romance and drama ensues as Albright and Douglas become involved with the town’s events.

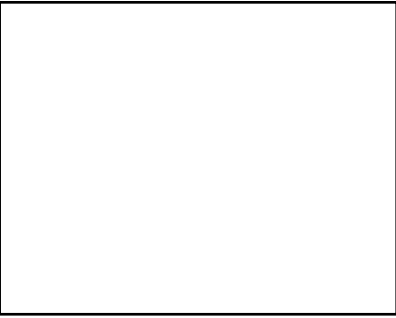
“The show is very different from any show I’ve ever done at USC,” says senior Anne Ciarlone, student director, “It’s romantic, funny, and has a classic score. Everyone in it

works hard and has fun being a part of it.”

With all the anticipation, many good comments have been spread about the upcoming spring musical.

“I’ve heard a lot of good things, and I am sure the show will be pretty rad,” states an excited junior Kate Groschner.

Performances of Brigadoon will be on March 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, and 13.



Some of the Brigadoon cast rehearsing.  
Photo courtesy of Alaina Zemanick.

## USC Juniors enjoy National College Fair

By: Greg Schlosser  
Sports Editor

Every year, Upper St. Clair juniors are given the chance to go the National College Fair at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center in downtown Pittsburgh. Juniors are basically dismissed from school for a day, and are able to show up at the college fair at any time. The National College Fair gave students a chance to explore many different colleges by asking college representatives any question s they had.

The convention center was filled with many booths, all representing a different college. Most of the schools were from the Northeastern U.S., such as Penn State, Pitt, and Villanova, but there were even schools, such as the University of Alabama, University of Miami, and the University of Colorado.

The National College Fair also allowed students to carry around a bar code, which colleges would scan to gain the student’s personal information. This made students’ lives easier by not having to write out their address and phone number multiple times.

Junior Caitlin Zovack took advantage of the scanner, but was upset when she found out some schools were not equipped with a scanner. She said, “Also, some big colleges didn’t take advantage of the scanner thing. I really wanted Pitt to, but they didn’t and they didn’t have a sign-up for anything.”

Despite not signing up for a few of the schools she was interested in, Zovack enjoyed the college fair because “all of the information that was readily available from the different colleges, because I could get it from all of the colleges I wanted to at the same time.”

After spending some time at the college fair, most USC students went out to lunch afterwards. Many went to Premanti’s, which has several locations throughout the city of Pittsburgh. Another popular location was the Hard Rock Café, which is located in Station Square. Some, however, kept it simple, and ate lunch at a popular fast food chain.

Junior Sam Humbert and her friends went to McDonalds for lunch and “wandered around [the city]. Then we went to the village on the way home.”

## Tragedy strikes Haiti after earthquake

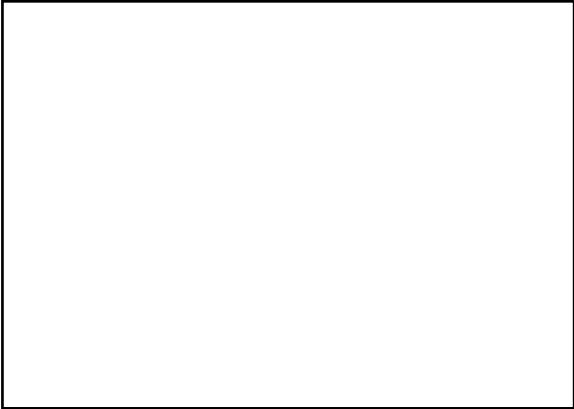
By: Alaina Zemanick  
News Editor

On January 12th, a 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck the impoverished country of Haiti, its epicenter only 16 miles from away from the capital of Port-Au-Prince (www.cnn.com). The natural disaster killed up to 200,000 people, who were caught under collapsed buildings that were poorly-constructed. Eight days later, a 6.1 magnitude aftershock earthquake hit the devastated region (www.bbc.co.uk).

The latest quake has further limited supplies being spread around to the needy Haitians. American troops have been sent down to Haiti to help with the relief effort, as well as former president Bill Clinton.

“The second thing we need to do is what the people on the ground are working to do,” Clinton explained, voicing his

concern for the Haitian people, “They need to increase the distribution - the pace and scope of the distribution - there are just more people who need the aid than have been able to get



Haiti after the earthquake on January 12.  
Photo Courtesy of Flickr.com.

it. But I think we are getting there, I see it” (www.voanews.com)

Supplies in the area are scarce. Medical specialists from Doctors Without Borders are without necessary supplies.

“We were forced to buy a saw in the market to continue amputations,” said Doctors

Without Borders participant Loris de Filippi (Reuters).

A plane with twelve tons of medical equipment for Doctors Without Borders was turned away from Port-Au-Prince (www.bbc.co.uk). Because of the plane not landing, five additional patients died without proper care.

“The tragedy in Haiti is just so terrible,” said Kate Groschner, a junior, “I wish I could personally go down there and do something to help.”

Philanthropic celebrities are now taking part in the relief in Haiti. Actor George Clooney organized a musical telethon that aired on January 22nd on ABC. Superstars such as Bono and Beyonce were among the performers on the telethon, which raised over \$56 million. Many of the singles from the airing, such as “Hallelujah” by Justin Timberlake are topping charts on iTunes (www.spin.com).

## Google considering leaving China because of censorship

By: Meghan Taylor  
Front-Page Editor

Recently, Google has challenged China’s censorship policies and is considering pulling out of China’s internet. Google’s new concern would likely leave millions of Chinese unhappy and unable to access much information. Google has announced that China needs to stop censoring its websites or many Chinese will be left without the widely used search engine. .

Chinese restrictions have been a problem for years. The Chinese government censors their internet with a very detailed system. Chinese law requires an internet site provider to gain a license from the Ministry of Information Industry. Once the user has his license, he must keep a record of all site users for the first sixty days. This process is monitored by at least twelve governmental agencies (www.cfr.org).

Specifically, Google is prohibited from allowing the Chinese to

search for Beijing’s Tiananmen Square disaster where the Chinese government killed hundreds during a protest on June 4, 1989 (www.news.cnet.com).

Google has evidence that China was hacking into the emails of the Chinese Human Rights Activists, yet the information they accessed was not sufficient to the government showing only the time , date and subjects of the emails.

China has been taking severe action in recent years to make sure their censorship is top notch. For example, the government shut down thousands of unregistered websites in 2005. In 2007, the government again took action and shut down several internet data centers (www.cfr.org).

In addition to Google specifically, the United States has been meeting with governmental officials regarding the censorship of China’s internet. Assistant U.S. Secretary of State Kurt Campbell told reporters that the United States views Internet as the “universal right that should be avail-

able to all people” (www.reuters.com).

As a result of Google’s outburst, they have delayed the launch of two new phones, both based on the Android. China believes that hacking into computers is necessary for their country, and they have made statements regarding the fact that Google needs to follow their laws.

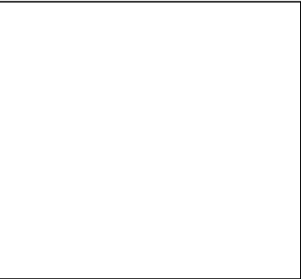
Ma Zhaoxu, foreign ministry spokesman said, “Foreign firms in China should respect China’s laws and regulations, and respect China’s public customs and traditions, and assume the corresponding social responsibilities, and of course Google is no exception” (www.cnn.com).

As China and Google battle over the rights of the internet, China has the ability to hurt Google’s economy.

Pat Davis, a junior at Upper St. Clair High School said, “I do not think Google should pull out of China. It would hurt the company; as a US company, we want it to succeed.”

Panther  
Predilections

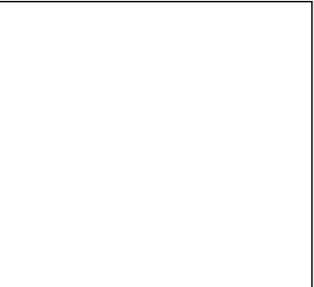
Who was your ideal  
Valentine?



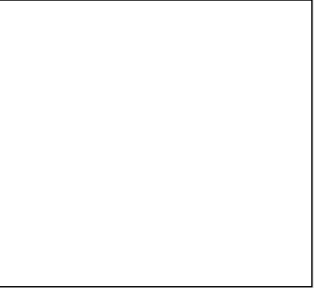
“Ed Westwick”  
– Dharti Ukani and Freya Brown  
Freshman



“Ms. Millovac”  
– Ben Reicher  
Sophomore



“Charlie Dalrymple”  
– Christina Hlutkowsky  
Junior



“Ophelia after she goes  
insane”  
– Rocky Patera  
Senior

By: Meghan Taylor and  
Alaina Zamanick

Desk of the Editor

Obama gives hope for the new year

By: Marni Schreiber  
Editor in Chief

On Wednesday, January 27, 2010, President Obama addressed a joint session of Congress and the American public in his much anticipated State of the Union Address. For President Obama, this speech was more than a report on what his administration has and has not done over the past year, but it was a way to regain the public’s confidence not only in his administration, but in government as a whole.

Obama’s hour and ten minute speech started by reminding the public that this is not the first time the United States has been through hard times; the country must again “answer history’s call” and persevere past the current recession.

Obama goes onto explain that “One year ago, I took office amid two wars, an economy rocked by severe recession, a financial system on the verge of collapse, and a government deeply in debt. Experts from across the political spectrum warned that if we did not act, we might face a second depression. So we acted – immediately and aggressively” (www.c-span.org).

One thing most Americans seem to forget is that President Obama did not start the two wars, cause a recession, or cause all the national debt. George W. Bush was President of the United States before Obama took office. These problems could not have been

caused and could never be fixed in one year. It will take many years to stabilize the economy and rebuild the country.

Later in his speech, while talking about government spending, Obama pronounced: At the beginning of the last decade, America had a budget surplus of over \$200 billion. By the time I

took office, we had a one year deficit of over \$1 trillion and projected deficits of \$8 trillion over the next decade. Most of this was the result of not paying for two wars, two tax cuts, and an expensive prescription drug program. On top of that, the effects of the recession put a \$3 trillion hole in our budget. That was before I walked in the door” (www.c-span.com).

Obama, however, does not deny that he has increased the national debt by another \$1 trillion. If President Obama had not taken measures to ensure the country did not fall into another Depression, as economists on both sides of the political spectrum proclaimed, the country, for the average citizen would be significantly worse.

Many in America think Obama has done nothing in his past year

as President. That is simply not true. Obama, his administration, and Congress “extended or increased unemployment benefits for more than 18 million Americans; made health insurance 65% cheaper for families who get their coverage through COBRA; and passed 25 different tax cuts [...] We cut taxes for 95% of working families. We cut taxes for small businesses. We cut taxes for first-time homebuyers. We cut taxes for parents trying to care for their children” (www.whitehouse.gov).

The administration has also given “about two million Americans working right now who would otherwise be unemployed. 200,000 work in construction and clean energy. 300,000 are teachers and other education workers. Tens of thousands are cops, firefighters, correctional officers, and first responders” (www.whitehouse.gov).

Regarding civil rights, Congress passed the long overdue Anti-Discrimination Act which takes major steps in protecting many Americans against hate crimes. He is also working to help with the equality of women, even though recently the Republicans shut down an equal rights amendment.

Obama did not claim he was the perfect president. He took much of the blame as to why

healthcare was not passed; he did not explain fully to the people what the bill would exactly entail. He also needs to start cracking down on the budget or else face more serious economic downturns in the future.

The main focus, according to Obama, for the next year is job development. Obama, will also focus on issues such as ending the wars, healthcare, making education more affordable, the economy as a whole, energy, and national security.

To accomplish these goals, Obama stresses bipartisanship between the Democrats and the Republicans. Not only will this bipartisanship help pass vital and significant legislation through the Senate, but will also help bring the country together.

The Democratic Senator from Iowa Tom Harkin responded that “He [Obama] outlined a road map that, if followed with bipartisan support in Congress, can reduce our deficit, rebuild our economy and create a new foundation of prosperity for American families and businesses” (www.cnn.com).

No matter one’s opinion on President Obama, it is under consensus that Congress needs to start working together to get necessary bills passed. Obama is not the perfect president and will face a hard next three to seven years, but he is taking the leadership to enact his policies which will, in the end, help the majority of American people.

The fair trade movement should be embraced

By: Vijay Viswanathan  
Features Editor

In recent years, most of the items Americans use on a daily basis have been coming from foreign nations. Even in this era of social responsibility, items ranging from toothpaste to t-shirts are still made by overworked and underpaid laborers. Although started in the 1940’s, the social movement known as “fair trade” is now emerging as an important approach to solving economic and social problems. On balance, this idea’s benefits far outweigh its risks. Therefore it

is pertinent that fair trade be more widely accepted.

According to the socially conscious organization White Apricot, fair trade enforces that all imports are produced under fair conditions (www.whiteapricot.com).

Essentially, employers allow workers to decide their pricing, rather than effectively forcing prices upon workers. This policy has been growing in popularity around the US. Still, many policy analysts such as those at the Adam Smith Institute have asserted that fair trade “impedes growth.”

The main arguments against

the movement are that it is more of a marketing scheme than a genuine approach, and that it doesn’t help developed economies. The former is not entirely correct because fair trade combines marketing benefits with social help. That is one of the best things about fair trade, it helps both developed economies and the developing exporters. This way, it’s a win-win situation.

Especially among young crowds, fair trade is being embraced. They recognized how the power is a socioeconomic problem-solving tool. Sophomore Soham Lawande

said, “I like it.” The main problem facing fair trade’s progress are more traditional, conservative crowds. It is vital that these conservative critics take a step back and stop to see how helpful fair trade could be.

Even locally, fair trade companies exist. One specific company, Mira Ethnicity, which markets “socially responsible shopping” is based in Upper St. Clair. Another Pittsburgh company, Equia, is becoming very popular. Seeing all of this positive outpour, it is clear that fair trade is a good local solution.

The St. Clairion  
Upper St. Clair, PA

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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. Clairion 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

In defense of the love letter

February has come and gone, and with it, the endless cascades of flowers, cards, and candy hearts that can only signal one thing; Valentine’s Day. While on the surface it may seem like another “candy holiday” along similar lines as Halloween, Valentine’s does, in fact, carry deeper meaning.

Valentine’s Day is primarily the day of the year for professions of love. For the chickens out there, it provides an easy excuse for asking out a crush. For the romantic types, Valentine’s adds another layer of meaning to an already complicated feeling. However, even Valentine’s Day cannot produce a significant other for everyone on earth, hence the love letter.

Love letters are complicated beasts. “How to begin?” and “What to say?” are just two of the quandaries facing would-be wooers. Also, love letters have, in recent times, garnered a reputation for being too old fashioned and clichéd to be attractive. However, the characteristics of letter-writing benefit all involved with a love note.

Unlike a face-to-face meeting, a letter allows the writer to think carefully about what he or she wants to say. Even if the thought was nice, poor face-to-face delivery can ruin an in-person offer of companionship. The letter also takes care of this, allowing practically unlimited

time for tinkering with wording and carefully writing out characters.

Careful tinkering is especially important, as love letters lacking consideration can have adverse effects on their recipients.

Sophomore Suraj Sundar can imagine a love letter as coming on too strong, saying, “I would be shocked. I would not expect to confront this emotion so early in my young life.”

French teacher Monsieur Clermont can remember when he got his first love letter; “I was confused because it was anonymous. What is the point of an anonymous love note?”

Finally, as embarrassing as it may feel to ask someone out in person, it may be even more off-putting to be on the receiving end of a live profession of affection. The private nature of a love letter ensures that neither person feels embarrassed by the situation.

Perhaps the best part of a love note isn’t what it says directly, but what it implies. As the sender has opened conversation through use of a letter, the receiver is now welcome to reply with one, thus giving the recipient all the same benefits.

Even though February has passed, pause and wonder if now is the time to find out if the feeling is mutual with that special someone. And remember: love letters are here to help.

Is the Rock n’ Roll Hall of Fame too liberal with its admissions?

By: Devin Ellis  
Copy Editor

If you take a visit to the Rock and Roll hall of fame in Cleveland, Ohio, you will find the top rock performers of the past century and beyond being honored there. The Beatles, Led Zeppelin, The Grateful Dead, and many more great rock bands and artists. Take a closer look at the inductees into the museum and you will see some different artists, like James Taylor, The Mamas and the Papas, and Paul Simon. That’s ok, as long as they have roots in rock, right? Yet if you were to take a look at the more recent inductees into the hall of fame, you might question the museum’s genre as a rock and roll hall of fame.

Recently, the museum announced its 2010 inductees. They included the Stooges, certainly a rock group. The Hollies, it’s about time they got in! Jimmy Cliff, well he’s more reggae but he probably influence some rock acts. Genesis, wait, wait, wait! In what way was the electro-pop band that jump started the career of the droll Phil Collins a rock group?

This loose interpretation of the words Rock and Roll seems to be a very recent trend for the hall of fame. In 2009 the remaining members of Run DMC stood next to the great guitarist Jeff Beck, who played with the Yardbirds, to be inducted into the Rock and Roll hall of fame. In 2007 Grandmaster flash and the Furious Five were

inducted next to Van Halen and R.E.M. This article is not intended to bash the quality of Run DMC, Grandmaster Flash, or any other artist, but aside from one mix of an Aerosmith song, it must be said that Run DMC is not close to being a Rock band and no comparison can be made between Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five and Van Halen when considering Rock and Roll music.

The most shocking inductee, though, was made in 2008 when Madonna was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Once again, the intent of these statements is not to contest the quality of Madonna’s music. Madonna is a music star, but she is certainly not a rock star (as much as she might want people to think that she is).

Junior Nick Dorfner said, “When the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inducts people like Madonna into their museum, it is an insult to the whole rock scene.”

The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame must stop these unnecessary inductions into their museum and take a look around their own place to remember the meaning of the words Rock and Roll. Each lousy induction lessens the weight that being inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame has. The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame better start inducting Rock acts again, or else people will stop visiting and the museum will be no more. Then there will be no good reason for anyone ever to visit Cleveland.

Panther Predilections

Who was your ideal Valentine?

“Cute twins”  
– Ruri Blair  
Freshman

“Taylor Lautner”  
– Marissa Luxemburger  
Sophomore

“Beyoncee”  
– Lucas Worth  
Junior

“Kenneth Branaugh”  
- Molly Jones  
Senior

By: Meghan Taylor and  
Alaina Zamanick

Finals should become 20% of students’ grades

By: Vinay Viswanathan  
Senior Issue Editor

In the wake of January’s mid-term finals, many students have been pondering the effects of finals. Finals can decrease grades at any level by up to ten percent.

Finals currently comprise up to 10% of a student’s grade in any class, but if finals were increased to 20%, they would help both students and teachers in significant ways.

First of all, finals have an extremely small, positive impact on the grades of USCHS’s students. The only time finals can increase a

grade by more than 4% is if the student received a perfect score on the exam, and only if the student also had an ‘F’ grade in the class.

Sophomore T.J. Murray, an opponent of the current finals system, complained that “only kids who are failing their class can bring their grades up by ten percent. A ten percent weight on finals is a bit low.”

If finals became 20% of a student’s grade, kids with an 88% in a class could get an ‘A’ and kids with a 75 could end up getting a ‘B’. This improvement could really help the High School’s pupils.

Second, this low-weighted

final destroys one of the purposes of the final exam: to give students a second chance. Currently, students can have a cataclysmic destruction of their goal letter grade, but they cannot increase their grade by a sizeable margin.

With the current flawed system, students in this sticky quandary have nowhere to go, because, as sophomore Paul Van Ryzin voiced, “The impact [of finals] isn’t as big as itA should [be]”.

Also, 20%-weighted finals would healp teachers, and everyone as a whole, to be happier because students would have to study more for

finals. With the current 10% weight, students with, for example, an 88% grade in a class joke how they need a 20% on the final to lose an ‘A’, ergo the kids don’t study.

Contrary to popular belief, education isn’t just about grades. It’s about what students actually learn and remember. Sophomore Jack Snowdon said that “If finals’ importance were increased, everyone would be studying more.”

Upper St. Clair’s student will shine brightly if this change to 20%, rather than 10%, happens.

Off-field antics affecting all aspects of the NFL

By: Nick Buzzelli  
Opinions Editor

Within the past few football seasons, one thing has become clear: National Football League players have had their fair share of off-the-field antics. While the NFL is sometimes referred to as the “No Fun League,” because the players are not allowed to show off on the gridiron, does this give them the right to do all their celebrating off the field? Football players are the party animals of professional athletes and sometimes their off-the-field antics affect not only their playing careers, but also their lives as well.

Ever since Commissioner Roger Goodell took over the league in 2006

it seems that the athletes have taken advantage of him because they feel they can get away with their actions (www.chicagotribune.com). For example, after having a breakout season in 2006, Atlanta Falcons quarterback Michael Vick decided he would press his luck and take the \$20 million he made from his playing career and enter the world of underground dog fighting. Because of this, Vick was suspended from the NFL for two seasons, and released by the Falcons before finally being signed by the Eagles (www.sport.espn.go.com).

Although Vick has traveled the difficult path back to the NFL, no one will ever know how good he truly could have been if he had not been suspended for his illegal operations.

Former Cincinnati Bengals’ wide receiver Chris Henry has had, by far, the most off-field-problems in his short NFL career. After first breaking into the league with the Bengals in 2005, Henry was pulled over for a routine traffic stop, but when the authorities searched his car, they found illegal drugs hidden in his shoes. Henry also was suspended by the league for two games in 2006 for disobeying their substance abuse policy (www.usatoday.com).

Perhaps the most tragic part of Henry’s short-lived career is that it ended abruptly on December 16, 2009. On that day, he fell out of a moving truck that was being driven by his fiancée. Henry died two days later from trauma to his head, suf-

fered during the fall. The Bengals lost a valuable teammate because of his carelessness off the field antics.

“It’s a shame that NFL players have to pull crazy stunts just to get attention,” said junior Stephen Kleinhans. “NFL players have gone overboard and it seems to have negative aspects on their careers as well as their lives.”

Other than Tiger Woods, athletes from other professional sports leagues only make the headlines with impressive performances on the ice, the court, or the baseball diamond. The NFL needs to allow their players to unwind on the field and have a little fun if they want to cut down on dangerous league wide antics.

The cell phone industry is being “Googled” by Nexus One

By: Garrett Cimina  
Entertainment Editor

It’s thin. It’s sleek. It’s got a big touch screen. It is not, however, a new iPhone. Coming on the heels of the release of its mobile operating system, Android, Google has thrown its hat into the cellular communications ring with the release of its self-proclaimed “super phone,” the Nexus One.

From a short distance away, anyone could easily be forgiven for mistaking the Nexus One for an iPhone. The similar size and shape of the phones is clearly a result of the Apple product’s vast popularity and sophisticated design.

Much like the Motorola Droid, another smart phone from Verizon, the Nexus One runs on Google’s Android operating system. This operating system is similar to Apple’s and also

allows users to run multiple applications simultaneously and display moving backgrounds. However, as the system is still new, Android has yet to gain much support of the type that has made the iPhone a true industry leader: applications.

Apple.com currently claims over 3 billion apps have been downloaded from the company-run “App Store,” and while official figures for Google’s Android market have yet to be released, it is safe to say that Apple’s multi-year lead in the smartphone business will be tough to overcome.

The Nexus One however does advance in areas the iPhone has not. The Nexus One’s hardware is significantly faster than even the new iPhone 3GS, although this is most likely a result of needing additional system resources when running multiple applications. The Android oper-

ating system allows Nexus One users to fill in text fields by speaking into the phone and features a 3D photo gallery. Just don’t swear into the voice recognition software, as Nexus One will censor you faster than Don Imus (Reuters).

The battle for smartphone, or as Google says, “super phone,” supremacy will likely not end just because of this particular phone release. Apple’s groundbreaking device holds a huge lead in terms of variety of applications and looks quite similar to the Nexus One. Google’s phone is faster, can run more than one app at a time, and allows users to speak rather than use yet another bizarre touch screen keyboard. The fight rages on, but the ultimate winners will be the consumers. As engadget.com puts it, “The genuine-article Google Phone is finally here — for better or worse.”

Five Americans arrested in Pakistan for terrorism charges

By: Marni Schreiber  
Editor in Chief

Five Americans disappeared from Washington D.C, and were later found to be arrested in Pakistan for violating the country’s anti-terrorism act. The five men being held are all in their late teens and early twenties. The men have been identified as Ahmed Abdullah Minni, Umar Farooq, Aman Hassan Yemer, Waqar Hussain Khan and Ramy Zamzam; two Pakistani-American, two Yemeni-American, and one Egyptian-American (www.cnn.com).

The five men had been living with their families in the Virginia area until they disappeared about a month ago. The men left a jihad-style farewell video to their families and were not heard of again until their arrest in Pakistan.

In recent weeks, the Pakistani government has begun to crack down on the anti-terrorism act. The authorities have arrested many Americans accused of going to places such as Pakistan and Somalia to learn terrorist tactics.

A chief for the Pakistani government explained that “We watched them for one and a half days and then arrested them [...] We seized laptops and other

things from their possession. Later we came to know that they have come here with the intention of ‘jihad’”(www.timesonline.co.uk).

There are, however, different accounts of what happened. One account from *Java Islam* explained that the men were wishing to join militants in Pakistan’s tribal area.

The FBI has since become involved. Supervisory Special Agent Katherine Schweit of the FBI’s Washington field office explained that ““ We are working with Pakistan authorities to determine their identities and the nature of their business there, if indeed these are the students who had gone missing”” (www.latimes.com).

Nadeem Kiani, a spokesman for the Pakistani Embassy, states that the men were arrested due to raised suspicions, especially in the current atmosphere of Pakistan. Kiani explains that “[i]f a person is in a certain area where he does not have apparently any business there, he can be arrested and investigated” (www.latimes.com).

The future of the five men is still undetermined. It is possible that the men will spend the rest of their lives in jail. Details from their court date have not been released.

Apple’s iPad disappoints at press conference

By: Greg Schlosser  
Sports Editor

On January 27th, Apple showcased its latest gadget, the iPad, in San Francisco. Unfortunately, the iPad doesn’t introduce any new features and will most likely not sell well.

First of all, the iPad itself is “slightly smaller than a m a g a z i n e ” (www.apple.com). In all seriousness, who is going to want to carry around this awkwardly sized device that is basically an oversized iTouch? If the owner of the iPad is a woman, then it can probably be assumed to fit in a purse. If the owner is male, however, he will have to carry it around in a backpack to save the humiliation of having a “man purse.” Either way, no one will

likely want to have to carry around a large bag just to take the iPad with him or her.

Steve Jobs, CEO of Apple, said during the press conference, ““iPad is an awesome way to enjoy your music collection, and of course we have the iTunes store built right into the iPad so you can discover music, purchase it. Movies, podcast, iTunes university, everything built right i n ” (www.slideto-play.com).

Everything that Jobs listed above is available on the iTouch and iPhone, which basically makes the iPad massive version of the iPhone. Yes, the iPad will feature new types of business applications, but once again there is no multi-

tasking (running more than one app at a time), and the iPad does not feature a camera.

Also, the iPad will run on the iPhone operating system, which means programs like Word or PowerPoint will not be functional on an iPad, and the features normally found on something like a Macbook Pro will not be on the iPad, which makes the iPad’s size almost useless.

The iPad, however, excels in some areas, as it runs much faster than an average iPhone and will have special applications that will only run on the iPad and will be a viable way to watch a movie as the screen is around 8” by 10”.

Junior Megan Povenz thinks the iPad is “really cool, even though I don’t know what it does.”

Only the consumers of America will decide whether the iPad will be a hit or not, but if the iPad doesn’t upgrade its features within the next year or two, this latest Apple creation will most likely fail.



Apple’s iPad has a similar appearance to the popular iPhone and is just much larger.  
(Photo courtesy of Flickr)

John Frusciante no longer a Red Hot Chili Pepper

By: Devin Ellis  
Copy Editor

In December 2009, John Frusciante announced on his blog that he will be leaving the band Red Hot Chili Peppers to venture further into his solo career. His blog stated, “For me, art has never been something done out of a sense of duty. It is something I do because it is really fun, exciting, and interesting. Over the last 12 years, I have changed, as a person and artist, to such a degree that to do further work along the lines I did with the band would be to go against my own nature. There was no choice involved in this decision. I simply have to be what I am, and have to do what I must do” (Johnfrusciante.com).

This decision was a shock to almost everyone. John had finally gotten his life together, kicked his drug habit, and was recently making better music with RHCP. Their most recent albums, *By The Way* (2004) and *Stadium Arcadium* (2007) had sold incredibly well and included some amazing songs that Frusciante helped write such as “Can’t Stop” on *By The Way* and “Snow ((Hey Oh)) on *Stadium Arcadium*.

“[John’s exit from RHCP] doesn’t really matter to me anymore,” said Junior Sarah Paulino, who is a devoted Chili Peppers fan, “RHCP has gone through tons of members. When they lost Hillel [Slovak, RHCP’s original guitarist, who died from a drug overdose in 1988], that was really when the soul of the group died.”

This is a good point and not an uncommon opinion among RHCP fans. The guitarist position for Red Hot Chili Peppers has almost become like the Defense Against the Dark Arts in the series Harry Potter in that it seems to be cursed to never be a secured position.

The remaining members, singer Anthony Kiedis, bassist Flea, and drummer Chad Smith have decided to give the new guitarist job (for the moment) to Josh Klinghoffer. Klinghoffer, an accomplished session guitarist, has contributed his services to artists like Gnarlz Barkley and Beck (www.consequenceofsound.net). However, probably the most important factor in RHCP’s decision to make Klinghoffer their guitarist is the fact that he toured with them in 2007 during their Stadium Arcadium Tour (www.nydailynews.com). This means Klinghoffer is familiar with the band’s styles and can most likely play a lot of their songs. Interestingly enough, Klinghoffer is a good friend of Frusciante’s and appeared on his most recent album *The Empyrean* last year.

Still, John Frusciante is off to make his eleventh solo album. And although his solo work has improved greatly since his first two heroin soaked albums, *Niandra Ladies* and *Usually Just a T-Shirt* and *Smile from the Streets You Hold* (the second of which he has admitted was for drug money), one must wonder if he will ever reach the musical quality that he achieved with Red Hot Chili Peppers.

J.D. Salinger dies at 91

By: Marni Schreiber  
Editor in Chief

J.D. Salinger, the famous and respected author, died Wednesday, January 28, 2010 from natural causes. The renowned author has pleased high school students and adults alike with his cult classic novel *The Catcher in the Rye* since its publishing in 1951.

Salinger wrote his classic, quite possibly the most classic, coming of age story in 1951. Since then, Salinger and the book have been raised to a level not many find. To this day, *The Catcher in the Rye* continues to sell around 250,000 copies a year and has sold over 10 million copies since its publication (www.washingtonpost.com).

The average American knows of Holden Caulfield, the protagonist of *Catcher*, and his famous sayings, such as his always popular “phony.” Not only was

Salinger able to create a character most people can relate to, he created a character that outlasted the test of time. When it comes to Holden, you either love him or you hate him, but he will always be one of the most remembered literary figures of all time.

To many, Salinger himself is just as fascinating as the characters he has created. When Salinger was still publishing, he was “a demigod in a cult that seemed like a conspiracy between his books and his readers. He had mystique and a second-hand charisma” (www.washingtonpost.com).

Salinger, however, did not embrace this fame. He spent the majority of his life in seclusion at his home in New Hampshire. He, however, did not stop writing during this time though.

Salinger did not publish the majority of his writings. It is speculated that Salinger’s safe,

where he kept most of his writings, will now be opened to the public.

For the past many years, novelists have known of Salinger’s secret writings. Salinger’s neighbor explained that “the author had told him years earlier that he had written at least fifteen unpublished books kept locked in a safe at his home. A year earlier, author and former Salinger girlfriend Joyce Maynard had written that Salinger used to write daily and had at least two novels stored away” (www.cbsnews.com)

Whether or not Salinger’s unpublished works will be shared with the public, Salinger will surely be remembered and embraced. Not only is Salinger praised for *The Catcher in the Rye*, but also for classics such as *Nine Stories*, *Franny and Zooey*, and *Rise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters and Seymour: An Introduction*.

## Kous Kous Café is proving to be a hit

By: Marni Schreiber  
Editor in Chief

Mr. Khila, the former Arabic and French teacher at Upper St. Clair High School has left teaching, for the time being, and has opened up a Moroccan restaurant in Mt. Lebanon. The restaurant has delicious food and a very comforting atmosphere that almost all guests will enjoy.

Mr. Khila, who has spent much of his life in Morocco, is able to cook up authentic and comforting food. There are many classic Moroccan favorites on the menu, such as vegetable humus, eggplant dishes, duck, and, of course, couscous.

The vegetable humus is proving to be one of the most popular items on the menu, especially among Upper St. Clair students. Senior Carly McCann comments that “the humus is amazing. It was probably the best I have ever had.”

The humus is definitely something restaurant goers

should consider as an appetizer. The portion is large enough to share and there is plenty of warm Moroccan bread to go around. The other appetizers, both hot and cold, are also very appealing. The Moroccan platter with three different appetizers, including the humus is recommended.

Another thing to look forward to is the main course. There is something on the menu for everyone. Khila offers chicken, beef, duck, salmon, and of course, couscous. There are also options for vegetarians, including the vegetable couscous.

Dessert is something that should not be skipped. There is a delicious chocolate mousse and Moroccan cookies. Tea is also a good alternative to dessert. Moroccan tea is very sweet and delicious, perfect during and after a meal.

In addition to the food, the atmosphere of Kous Kous Café is very aesthetically pleasing. There are Moroccan lamps and pictures around the tiny restau-

rant. Senior Marissa Murin explains that “even though the restaurant was small, it had authentic decorations throughout the place, making it feel that you were actually in a true Moroccan restaurant.”

The restaurant itself is very small, holding less than a dozen tables. This does mean that waits can be long to get inside. In fact, on a Thursday night, the line to get a table was well outside.

This wait, however, should not stop people from going to Kous Kous Café. Once, inside, customers are sure to have great food and dine in an excellent atmosphere.

Another incentive for USC students to visit Kous Kous Café is also to visit Mr. Khila, who, if not too busy, will always find time to talk to his old USC students. Senior Olivia Lammel comments that “I was very excited to see Mr. Khila again, he was one of my favorite teachers. Also, he is an amazing cook, and everything I ordered was perfect.”

## Leo Ciarlone: A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man

By: Alaina Zemanick  
News Editor

Mods 9-10. Senior Leo Ciarlone sits quietly in the band room, dear readers, playing some melody on the piano. His fellow peers are whispering and staring suspiciously– they know that he is a great man. Hated by some but loved by all, Ciarlone exudes the brilliant magic that human beings only experience once in a lifetime.

“Leo is my Aslan,” says Bruce Franz, a junior, “He is a lion.”

Behind the thick-rimmed lenses and toughly-knit argyle sweater vests lies a man so tender that even a Princeton summa cum laude graduate could not even comprehend his magnitude.

“I admire people who are greater than me,” Ciarlone admits, “like A.E. Housman, [Henri de] Toulouse Lautrec, Dean Acheson, and Waltz King Johann Strauss. I have all the bases covered.” He pauses for a few seconds from the piano piece he is playing and places his hand

under his chin, “I like baseball analogies.”

A briefing of his past can shed light onto the man Ciarlone has become today. Playing instruments since a young age, he has developed into a fantastic musician and lives in a near-virtuoso state. If you were to ask him though, he would deny all truth to this statement.

“C’mon, I’m not that

“I like–writing bad poetry–” he explains, comparing himself such sickening poets like Sylvia Plath and Emily Dickinson. “Occasionally, I mess up and write something remotely good. It happens.”

Ciarlone is very well known among his peers. “I’ve talked to him once or twice,” says fellow senior Jeff Wucher, “He seems like a nice guy.”

“Leo is my uncle’s name,” pipes junior Joe Merchant.

Cialone also has a twin. No, it is not senior Laura Rollick as some believe. It’s Anne Ciarlone!

“He’s a good twin,” adds sister Anne Ciarlone, senior, “He is kind of overrated.”

As the song on the piano fades, Ciarlone glances at the music he has just finished and thinks contemplatively about his life. Dear readers, this scene is very emotional. This thought process is historic, beautiful, and very much a life-changing moment. Ciarlone has come to the conclusion– he is happy with his life.

great,” he modestly says, while playing a flawless rendition of “Rhapsody in Blue” on the piano.

Yet, dear readers, Ciarlone does possess the powers in the field of music alone. He appreciates art with the ability to recognize beautiful paintings (as well as the horrible ones), and in his spare time, he enjoys writing.

ter, The Hollywood Theatre.

This theater has a much more broad selection of films, showing anything from the Christmas classic It’s a Wonderful Life to the cult-classic Rocky Horror Picture Show to the new hit Inglorious Basterds.

Though containing but a single screen, the theater’s smaller size provides the viewer with a certain intima-

cy with the film. The art deco design and furnishings introduce a comfortable at-home feeling; the theater is complete with a balcony containing orange 50’s era armchairs and a cozy lounge full of couches and armchairs beneath the lobby.

Unlike its multiplex kin, The Hollywood Theatre does not require its visitors to break the bank. The conces-

## Teacher’s Lounge



Mr. Shefler

### “[I] took calculus as an elective”

By: Vijay Viswanathan  
Features Editor

Q: If you had to resurrect one mathematician, who would it be?

[Leonhard] Euler. That guy knew a little bit of everything.

Q: What is the hardest math course you’ve ever taken?

By far, abstract algebra. Ordinary differential equations were close, but abstract algebra was RIDICULOUS.

Q: When was the last time you had to use a box-and-whisker plot?

I’ve never had to use a box-and-whisker plot my whole life long.

Q: When did you realize you wanted to go into math?

I realized I wanted to go into math in my senior year of college. I completed my English degree and took calculus as an elective.

## The linguistic extinction

By: Vijay Viswanathan  
Features Editor

According to the University of Basel, English is spoken by roughly 1.8 million people (www.ehistling-pub.meotod.de). Compare this to the roughly five to seven hundred thousand speakers of the language 400 years ago, and a disparity is clear. The fact is, English is now a linguistic carnivore that is universalizing language while terminating others.

In the late 80’s and early 90’s, the world was concentrating on an old man named Tevfik Esenç. The reason: he was the last speaker of Ubykh, which was considered to be the rarest language at the time. Even when he died, effectively killing the language, the epitaph on his grave read: This is the grave of Tevfik Esenç. He was the last person able to speak the language they called Ubykh (www.circassianworld.com).

The primary significance of these dying languages is the fact that there exists languages and sounds that would be inconceivable in the Western world. Most people couldn’t imagine sounds other than the alphabet. Linguists are, however, intrigued by the different grammatical and phonetic aspects of languages. Often, these offer views of cultures. For example, one of the rarest languages, Taushiro, doesn’t

have any words for numbers over ten! (www.toptenz.net) This demonstrates the isolation and growth of different cultures.

Even though keeping languages alive gives great glimpses into different cultures, people have views against them. One view is that keeping languages alive simply is not worth the struggle. For example, famed linguist Michael Krauss estimated in 2007 that over 6000 languages exist. With this in mind, keeping all alive would be impossible. Further, as sophomore Karl Egeland pointed out, “These languages should not be revived because their speakers could learn a more universal language. This way language could become more general.”

Overall, though, the concept of keeping a language alive is being widely embraced. For example, in the early 21st century, the Cornish language, from the English county of Cornwall had less than 300 speakers. A recent project caused that number to jump up to 2,000 and counting. For the case of the Cornish language, it was said that Cornish was important in the culture of the United Kingdom.

As Mr. Martocci opined, “In order to understand our own language, we must understand other languages, even if they are dying.”

## Resurrected old-time theatre shines through shadows of modern giants

By: Danielle Schultz  
Guest Writer

Nowadays, movie theaters are huge concrete edifices with enough screens for Jon and Kate and their kids to each watch a different movie. They have lost the beauty and coziness of their predecessors that have run out of business. There is, however, one grand old theater in Dormont which has restored its previous lus-

ter, The Hollywood Theatre.

This theater has a much more broad selection of films, showing anything from the Christmas classic It’s a Wonderful Life to the cult-classic Rocky Horror Picture Show to the new hit Inglorious Basterds.

Though containing but a single screen, the theater’s smaller size provides the viewer with a certain intima-

cy with the film. The art deco design and furnishings introduce a comfortable at-home feeling; the theater is complete with a balcony containing orange 50’s era armchairs and a cozy lounge full of couches and armchairs beneath the lobby.

Unlike its multiplex kin, The Hollywood Theatre does not require its visitors to break the bank. The conces-

sions are reasonably priced despite the fact that the theater relies on its small profits to keep it up and running. Also, the show itself costs only \$6 for adults and \$4 for its Sunday matinee.

The Hollywood Theatre opened its doors in 1924 and was renovated in the late 40’s by Warner Bros. Theaters. Its ownership switched around a few times between Stanley-

Warner, Cinemette Theaters, Neighborhood Theaters, zand CineMagic, finally, in 2007, landing in the hands of Motion Picture Heritage, a group determined to restore old theaters to their former glory.

Thus, two years, \$300,000, and a ton of hard work later, the Hollywood Theatre has re-opened its doors to the public.



USC Hockey heats up the ice

By: Nick Buzzelli  
Opinions Editor

The Upper St. Clair hockey program has always had a winning tradition unmatched by any other team in the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Hockey League. With former players, such as Ryan Malone of the Tampa Bay Lightning and AHL defenseman Dylan Reese, the Panthers' hockey club has produced some of the most notable hockey talent from Western Pennsylvania. After a disappointing overtime loss in the Penguin Cup quarter finals last season, the Panthers are trying to make a statement this year as one of Class AAA's toughest teams. Last year, the Panthers capped off one of their most productive seasons in recent memory with a trip to the PIHL semi-finals at Mellon Arena. USC was unable to come away with the victory against Seneca Valley, but this year, they are a more experienced team and have learned from last season's bitter loss.

Leading the Upper St. Clair

offense is senior forward James Kline, who was the Panthers' top scorer last season with 54 points in 22 games (www.postgazette.com). Aside from being one of USC's most productive players, Kline, the captain, has brought veteran leadership to a Panther team full of underclass talent. Rounding out the Panther offense is junior CJ Murray and senior Zach Feldman, who both bring veteran experience to the team. Justin Selep, Rob Schneid, and Mitchell Lewis anchor the Upper St. Clair defense. Matt Wregget and Mike Stein have been solid net-minders for USC this season, posting twelve wins and four shutouts through the Panthers' first 17 games (www.eteamz.com). The 2009-10 Upper St. Clair hockey team is looking to restore the program to its former glory by winning their first state championship in over 20 years. With the Panthers' nucleus of talent, they aim to bring a championship back to Upper St. Clair and cement their legacy as one of the top programs in the PIHL.

The Pitt-Washington Rivarly becoming the best in the NHL

By: Greg Schlosser  
Sports Editor

The NHL has always had its rivalries throughout the years; the Toronto Maple Leafs and Montreal Canadians have always been a classic. The Colorado Avalanche and the Detroit Red Wings rivalry was at its height during the 90s. A new must see match-up, however, is the Pittsburgh Penguins and the Washington Capitals. Both the Pens and the Capitals represent the post-lockout NHL to a tee. Both teams have high-flying offenses that score almost at will. Washington leads the league with 3.92 goals per game, while the Pens are ninth in the league with 3.03 goals per game (www.nhl.com). This is what average fans dream of because more goals always equal a more exciting game. It also helps that the top two superstars in the NHL, Sidney Crosby and Alexander Ovechkin, are always at their best when the two teams meet. Crosby is the more reserved, pass-first type of player while Ovechkin is the flamboyant goal scorer.

Both players have publicly voiced their discontent of each other, as Crosby said "Like it or lump it, that's what he does [...] Personally, I don't like it" (www.nhl.fanhouse.com). Ovechkin responded with, "He's a good player, but he talks too much." Ovechkin and Crosby aren't the only two to get after each other in this rivalry, as there is a lot of bad blood between the two teams. The rivalry goes all the way back to 2007 where supposedly Ovechkin punched Evgeni Malkin's agent at a Russian nightclub (www.sports.yahoo.com). On the ice, big hits such as the one Malkin laid on Ovechkin in the 2007/2008 season and the dirty knee-to-knee hit Ovechkin put on Sergei Gonchar in the 2009 Stanley Cup Playoffs have intensified the rivalry even more. The NHL is certainly happy with the rivalry that has been created between Pittsburgh and Washington. When the two teams are dominant offensively and the two top superstars go head to head and absolutely despise each other, it is always must see TV.

The Steelers look to build with this upcoming draft class

By: Garrett Cimina  
Entertainment/Assistant  
Opinions Editor

As the Steelers closed out their disappointing season against the Miami Dolphins, many fans back in Pittsburgh were already planning how to go through the difficult times of a Steeler-less January. For some, there are the Penguins, for others Pitt basketball, but real diehard football fans take this time to study up on the 2010 NFL Draft.

This year's draft features some of the most high-profile graduates of any class in history, including quarterbacks Tim Tebow, Jimmy Clausen, and Tony Pike, dominant defensive players Ndamukong Suh and Eric Berry, and a myriad of other highly-rated players.

Unfortunately (or fortunately) for Pittsburgh fans, the draft hasn't been much of a landmark in recent years, with the Steelers last picking in the top 12 back in 2004 when Ben Roethlisberger was drafted. Despite the lackluster nature of the 2009 season, the Steelers are in a fairly mediocre situation at pick number 18. Still, some quality talent of the non-Limas Sweed variety should be present, including these top 5 Steelers prospects:

5. Taylor Mays, the senior safety from USC. While Troy Polamalu is undoubtedly one of the best safeties in football, his insane style of play has left him susceptible to injuries. With multiple concussions in the not-so-distant past and nearly his entire 2009 season ruined by a bum knee, it is only a matter of time before his superhuman play begins to decline.

In the meantime the Steelers secondary is a wreck of underperforming players who were low draft picks to begin with. Setting Mays next to Polamalu in the secondary would give the Steelers more playmaking ability and allow Ryan Clark to try his hand at cornerback in the place of woeful William Gay. Should Polamalu once again find himself on the sideline, Mays would be a much more talented partner for Clark than Tyrone Carter.

4. Carlos Dunlap, the junior defensive end from Florida. The

Steelers' front three is an aging bunch, featuring only two players under 30 in its entire rotation. Ziggy Hood, last year's first round pick, caught on towards the end of this season and promises to be a force come fall, but besides him, the line is filled with aging ends Aaron Smith, Travis Kirschke, Brett Keisel and Nick Eason (steelers.com).

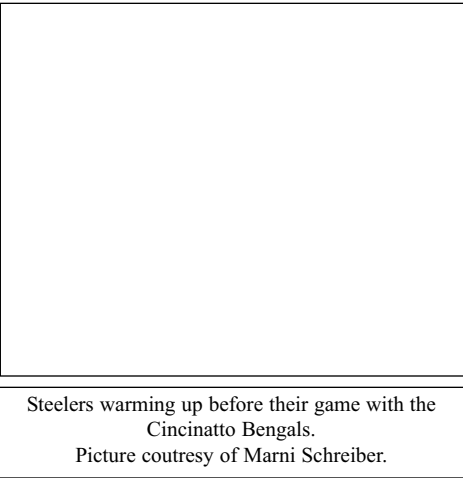
Dunlap, one of the biggest and most athletic ends in the draft, could step into the rotation immediately. He has the size to

prolific tackler, nearly as big as Farrior but with more speed and moderate pass-coverage skills. Lee was improved in his pass coverage every year in college, with his senior season netting him his first interception with a return (espn.com). Lee hasn't had the troubling off-field difficulties of highly touted Florida linebacker Brandon Spikes, either. And with the departure of Charlie Batch seemingly inevitable, Lee could also provide the Steelers the hometown connection they appear to value highly.

2. Tim Tebow, the senior quarterback from Florida. Despite being widely credited as college football's greatest player and having come off his best game statistically against an undefeated Cincinnati team in the Sugar Bowl, Tebow is not projected to be a good fit for a conventional pro-style offense and therefore is free-falling down draft boards in the major sports magazines (rivals.com). Pittsburgh, having just enjoyed a terrific season of quarterback play by Ben Roethlisberger, seems an unlikely spot for Tebow to land, but the curious thing about Tebow is how unorthodox as a whole he is.

Everything he does, from throwing lefty to running over linebackers, is so beyond the current scope of professional quarterbacking that no NFL coach currently has in place a system to take advantage of Tebow's unique skill set. The Steelers can adjust just as easily as any other team, and having Tebow and Roethlisberger side-by-side in the shotgun would open up a world of possibilities never before explored by a pro offense. Plus, he would do wonders for ticket sales.

1. Golden Tate, the junior wide receiver from Notre Dame. The speedster with good hands and sound mechanics could add to the three-headed monster of Hines Ward, Santonio Holmes and Mike Wallace to create the most dominant receiving corps in the NFL. With over 1,400 receiving yards and 15 touchdowns in his junior year, Tate was nigh-unstoppable in college (espn.com). In the pros, especially in the slot of a four-receiver set, he could be the straw that breaks the back of any NFL pass defense.



hold his ground against run-blocking tackles, but also enough speed to rush the passer, perhaps allowing another defender to help out in the weak Steeler secondary.

Three-man rushes became more common this season, with the lack of speed of the Steelers' defensive ends dooming many a defensive stand. Despite playing in a 4-3 defensive scheme in college, Dunlap is as big (290 pounds) as the prototypical Steelers defensive end. If he somehow is not large enough to be a lineman, he can always play linebacker.

3. Sean Lee, the senior linebacker from Penn State. James Farrior is getting old. While he may try to skirt the issue, the fact is, when opponents needed a big third down conversion this season, they frequently threw to the halfback being covered by Farrior, who was too slow to keep up. While he may have been, and continues to be, a great run-stopping middle linebacker, the tread on his tires is wearing thin. Enter Sean Lee, a product of Upper St. Clair's high school football program, who spent his college career playing on a talented Penn State team.

Despite having missed all of his 2008 season because of injury, Lee has proven to be a

The US Winter Olympic team faces glory

By: Vijay Viswanathan  
Features Editor

Millions of Americans have tuned in to watch the Winter Olympics. This year's batch of American competitors is proving to be great. The Winter Olympic sports can be narrowed into a variety of classes. To start, there is the timeless sport of curling. The US team of Jason Smith, Jeff Isaacson, and John Benton seems

poised to make the US proud. They finished off their season with six straight wins culminating in a victory at the World Curling Tour (www.curling.teamusa.org). Even USC students are proud of this team, and the sport in general. Sophomore Chris Beaulieu agreed: "My favorite Olympic sport is Curling, because it's quirky." Then, there are the high-speed sports, such as bobsled, luge, and skeleton. The skeleton is

arguably the most intense of Winter Olympics sports. In skeleton, riders slide with a sled roughly half the size of their body down slippery and slick mountains. To make things more difficult, they have to hold themselves up for most of the time on their hands alone. The skeleton sled also has no brakes, so to turn or break, the rider must use his or her legs. And the rider can experience a mind-bending five Gs of pressure! Sadly for the US team,

the British Amy Williams and John Montgomery from Canada came away with the only gold medals in skeleton. This year the US Hockey team is looking decent, led by Zach Parise. The goalies are Tim Thomas, Ryan Miller, and Jon Quick, while among the defensemen will be Pittsburgh's own Brooks Orpik. The only other Pittsburgh player on the squad is Alex Goligoski, who is an alternate defenseman. Ryan Malone

and Ryan Whitney, both former Pens, are on the team, and both have made key contributions on the team's quest for a medal. An Upper St. Clair sophomore, Andy Tomiczek, had only one complaint. When asked what he wants to watch on the Olympics, he deadpanned, "Swimming. I have seen the Winter Olympics commercial of Michael Phelps swimming on a road towards Canada, so they should have swimming."

Conan O'Brien leaves NBC's "Tonight Show"

By: Alaina Zemanick  
News Editor

On January 21, NBC officially announced the departure of Conan O'Brien from "The Tonight Show with Conan O'Brien" (www.cnn.com). This statement came after a week of controversy involving former "Tonight Show" host Jay Leno. When his prime-time hour turned out to be a flop, NBC cancelled the show but promised to place Leno in the late-night lineup. This action meant removing O'Brien as the current "Tonight Show" host. There was addition motivation behind O'Brien's removal as well. For the 5 months since O'Brien took over for Leno, ratings for "The Tonight Show" have not fared well against CBS rival David Letterman.

O'Brien has only managed to score 2.4 million viewers in comparison to Letterman's 4.2 million, nearly double of O'Brien's audience (www.yahoo.com). "We believe Leno will be very competitive right away," said Jay Gaspin, chairman of NBC Universal Television Entertainment, "and that over time Leno will be the late-night leader again" (www.yahoo.com). Originally, NBC was going to push O'Brien back to his old 12:05 time slot for "Late Night," currently hosted by Jimmy Fallon. However, O'Brien refused to accept NBC's idea. O'Brien released in a statement, "I sincerely believe that delaying the Tonight Show into the next day to accommodate another comedy program will seriously damage what I

consider to be the greatest franchise in the history of broadcasting. The *Tonight Show* at 12:05 simply isn't the *Tonight Show*" (www.huffingtonpost.com). O'Brien also added that NBC's intentions "would hurt the other NBC franchise that I love ["Late Night"], and it would be unfair to Jimmy [F a l l o n]" (www.huffingtonpost.com). Though O'Brien will be gone from the seat at "The Tonight Show," he will not be uncompensated as NBC has reportedly given him a \$45 million severance package. Rumors are also swirling about O'Brien getting a new show on Comedy Central (www.chicagotribune.com). "I really like Conan," said Brent Heard, a junior, "Being a fellow red head, he's a cool cat."

The best albums you probably missed in 2009

By: Alaina Zemanick  
News Editor

In 2009, famous albums took center stage, widely raved by critics. But some of the best albums of the year fell under the radar and managed to gain a small American cult following. One such album was the Arctic Monkeys' newest album, Humbug. Compared to their sophomore success, Favourite Worst Nightmare, Humbug is much darker with heavier and more complex lyrics; the new sound is thanks to their guest producer, Josh Homme of Queens of the Stone Age (www.nme.com). "[W]ith this [album], we were prepared to put a bit more consideration into," said Alex Turner, lead singer of the Arctic Monkeys, "For the first time, this thing really feels like we're not catching up with ourselves" (www.rollingstone.com). "I really like the new sound from Alex Turner," says senior Krissy King, a long-time Monkeys fan, "It's really mature, and Josh Homme has added a nice touch to their new

album." Another fantastic album that dropped this past year was Julian Casablancas' solo project Phrazes of the Young. Casablancas, lead singer of the Strokes, followed in the footsteps of his bandmates on the Strokes' three year hiatus and created a very interesting album. Though Phrazes is infused with many Strokes-esque elements, Casablancas incorporates many electronic elements that he found by listening to many underground techno bands. In addition, he managed to place a coordinating piece of advice with each song. For example, for his opening song "Out of the Blue," Casablancas' matched the angry tone of the song with "Anger is weakness, patience is strength" (www.juliancasablancas.com). He told The Guardian, "In general, the goal was to inspire." Besides the inspiring aspects of Phrases, each song individually is fantastic, and when combined, the songs make a great, eclectic combination that helps promote Casablancas' talents.

NBC's Community has become the best new show on the air

By: Devin Ellis  
Copy Editor

At the start of this TV season, NBC debuted a new show called *Community*. This show, which features an all-star lineup including the timeless Chevy Chase, is an exciting new comedy about life in a small community college called Greendale Community College. The show, with its superb acting and witty writing, has impressed audiences all over America and has become a big part of NBC's Thursday night lineup (which includes *30 Rock* and *The Office*). However, instead of ridiculing how pathetic community

college life is, *Community* shows how people down on their luck can kickstart their life with the help of some great friends. The show's commercials (and characters in the actual show) have compared the situation in the show to the situation in *The Breakfast Club*, and the comparison is a fair one. The cast of the show consists of a motley group of community college attendees with different backgrounds who come to become very good friends. This causes the plot to be very believable and the characters to be more endearing to the audience. Sophomore Mike Stein agrees that the show is appealing, saying that "I think

*Community* is a pretty good show. It's funny and it reminds me of the office, which is good." *Community* seems to have taken on the role of one of those nighttime NBC comedy shows like *The Office* and *30 Rock*. So far the show is holding its own against these TV show giants, and seems to be building its own loyal fan base. Hollywoodreporter.com reports that, "it's clear that "Community" has the ingredients needed to attract and build an audience, something that could not be said for many of the shows NBC has run at 9:30 p.m. Thursdays over the years" (www.hollywoodreporter.com)

New batch of 'Idol' contestants surprise audiences

By: Vijay Viswanathan  
Features Editor

Originally a spin-off of the British hit series, "Pop Idol," American Idol has managed to become one of the superstars of the reality show genre. Despite switching Paula Abdul with a variety of guest stars and ultimately Ellen DeGeneres, the show still manages to keep great ratings and help Fox "rule Wednesday" (www.hitfix.com). Although sophomore Sean Gaudio claims that he "[doesn't] like watching people sing," the majority of people are beginning to appreciate the show. With a healthy balance of some great singers and some entertaining failures, the ninth season of "Idol" is shaping up to be a good one. Some of the most popular parts of "American Idol" are the auditions. Some people featured in the auditions are simply great singers, while others are just hilariously bad. Indeed, auditions may be one of the driving reasons that "American Idol" became popular. As freshman Chen Hao Yang added, "I like the auditions." The auditions for the show

were in Atlanta, Chicago, Orlando, Pasadena, Arlington, Texas, Denver, and Foxborough, Mass. Of these, Chicago had the lowest number of tickets given out, only 13 over two days (www.nj.com) In Orlando, a man named Matt Lawrence sang a flawless rendition of Ray LaMontagne's "Trouble." His history was troubled (at the age of 15 he was sentenced to four years behind bars because he robbed a bank), but Simon and the other judges raved over him. In Chicago, arguably the most notable singer at the auditions was Katelyn Epperly, who gave a soulful yet minimalist take on "Syrup and Honey," by Duffy. One other great singer on the show was Jermaine Purifoy, who was a straight-edge singer who performed a Tony Bennett song. Among the "different" people were the uniquely good and the purely bad. Of the smaller number of good, there was a man named Jay Stone, who beat-boxed while singing "Come Together" by The Beatles. Also, among the people with different styles was a singer named

Charity Vance, who was only sixteen but had a very unique voice. However, as Sophomore David Claypool posited, "In American Idol, there are a lot of bad singers with great voices." Ultimately, a large attractor is bad singers. Sophomore John Kulp opined, "I don't like the show's intent, but I like the idiots who make themselves popular on it." One ridiculous singer was a young looking man who claimed to have fought in the Korean War and sang a Tiny Tim song called "Tiptoe through the tulips." Another bad singer was the infamous Jarrod Norrell, who was an awful singer but had to be forced out of the audition room. And lastly, there was the final singer in Atlanta named Larry Platt, who wrote a song called "Pants on the ground." However, Platt's reception was different because he had only auditioned in order to make a point against wearing pants "real low." Furthermore, it was revealed that Platt is a famous, recognized, 62-year old civil rights activist. Because the age limit for the show is 28, he was kicked out.



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The Lovely Bones may disappoint many

The Grammy Awards light up Staples Center

By: Marni Schreiber  
Editor in Chief

*The Lovely Bones*, a new film by Peter Jackson, starring Mark Wahlberg, Rachel Weisz, Susan Sarandon, Stanley Tucci, and Saoirse Ronan, proved to be a fairly inaccurate adaption from the popular novel by Alice Sebold. The movie does, however, have stunning visuals and portrays Susie’s heaven in an original and beautiful way.

From the start, the movie is rather emotional. The viewer hears that fourteen year old girl Susie Salmon is murdered. It does, however, take a long time for the murder to take place on the screen. The movie first reveals the background of Susie’s life and family before her murder.

Despite its controversial nature, Peter Jackson handled the topic of child rape and murder well. Susie’s actual attack is not shown on screen, but rather in a roundabout sort of way. Also, Susie’s progression into her “partial” heaven is handled well.

Susie is stuck in the “in-

between” between heaven and earth because she is unable to let go of her life on earth and move forward. This “in-between” is a beautiful place that can be whatever Susie can imagine in her head. The imagery of Susie’s heaven is breathtaking.

The transitions between her heaven and the scenes that surround Susie’s family and her murderer George Harvey, played by Tucci, are sharply contrasted and poorly edited. Susie’s heaven can be seen as artwork, but to some, the film “shows less audacity and too much art” (movies.nytimes.com).

The movie is very visual, but not as heartwarming and sentimental as the book proved to be. Mark Wahlberg delivers a believable performance as Susie’s father longingly looking for justice, but other characters are less developed, such as Susie’s mother and policeman Len Fenerman.

One exceptional performance is Stanley Tucci’s. Tucci, the very flamboyant Nigel from *The Devil Wears Prada*, truly embodies the

sick and twisted murderer George Harvey.

Senior Sarah Walters-Slezack remarks that “the movie was able to show just how disgusting of a man George Harvey is. The actor was very believable in the role.”

Overall, the movie has received many mixed reviews. Some praise the movie for its visuals, but many comment on the lack of depth and warmth present in the novel.

On Rotten Tomatoes, the movie received only a 37% approval rating, citing that the movie was "stuffed full of Peter Jackson’s typically dazzling imagery, but *The Lovely Bones* suffers from abrupt shifts between horrific violence and cloying sentimentality” (www.rottentomatoes.com).

While a 37% rating may truly be ‘rotten’, the movie is not nearly as good as the book. If Jackson had developed all of the storylines from the book, many of which were missing completely, the movie could have been more accepted by fans of the book.

By: Vijay Viswanathan  
Features Editor

The 52nd annual Grammy Awards came to the Staples Center to celebrate what the Philly Inquirer called, “Music’s Biggest Night” (www.philly.com). Dominating the stage were what the Inquirer christened the “Big Three,” Lady GaGa, Beyoncé, and Taylor Swift. Even so, some Upper St. Clair students such as sophomore Sean Dougherty called the awards, “a pointless set of awards.” Still, shown live then and broadcast on television the next day, the Grammy’s stood out once again.

Taylor Swift, who collected “Best Country Music Album” among other awards, also performed her energetic single “You Belong With Me.” Her album Fearless was 2009’s top selling album, but some USC students had issues with her (www.billboard.com). One of these critics, musician and junior Anas Hoque posited, “I can’t believe they allowed Taylor [Swift] to come.”

As is tradition, the awards acted as a magnetic force for celebrities. If one looked to the stands he or she would see stars ranging from Andy Samberg to

Jay-Z to Stephen Colbert’s daughter. Even Stephen Colbert himself (who won the awards for top comedy album) gave the opening address in which he poked fun at the iPad and Susan Boyle, to name a few.

The start of the show was interesting, as it suddenly panned to show a “Fame Factory.” Then, a tuxedo-clad announcer creepily introduced Lady GaGa. GaGa and a team of camouflage-clad men went through a steampunk dance routine culminating with a version of Elton John’s “Your Song,” sung with Sir John himself. Still, Lady GaGa’s performance (with her shortage of adequate clothing and dramatic pyrotechnics) was not for the weak-hearted. One sophomore fan, Rishab Nathan, agreed, “Lady gaga is my goddess.”

Arguably the night’s most memorable moment was when Smokey Robinson, Jennifer Hudson, Usher, Carrie Underwood, and Celine Dion sang a tribute to Michael Jackson. Shortly afterwards, Michael’s children Prince and Paris Jackson collected a Lifetime Achievement award. This truly memorialized the sad loss of one of the music industry’s biggest superstars.

Demon’s Souls will grind your bones to make its bread

By: Garrett Cimina  
Entertainment/Assistant  
Opinions Editor

As 2009 wound down, one thing was painfully apparent in the world of gaming: Playstation 3 was the new boss. Not only were console sales way up since the beginning of the year, but a slew of terrific first-party games dominated the Game of the Year awards across the major game magazines. Most notable was certainly *Uncharted 2*, as it swept past *Call of Duty* to take the top prize at Spike TV’s VGA video game awards show. But on the lesser-traveled site of gamespot.com, a very different champion was crowned, albeit still a Playstation 3 game: *Demon’s Souls*.

*Demon’s Souls* is a role-playing game in the strictest sense. That is, the player can create a personalized avatar from a number of customization options, assign that avatar a particular set of attributes, such as knight or thief, and then progress through a world in which he or she defeats enemies, scavenges equipment, and kills bosses. After a brief, easy tutorial, however, the game suddenly smothers the player with its labyrinthine complexity and Draconian difficulty.

Make no mistake: *Demon’s Souls* is not an overly complex game. Sure, there is

the multitude of items, magical spells and character varieties of any Role Playing Game (RPG), but beyond that, the scope of the game is manageable. What isn’t manageable, at least not right away, is the difficulty. *Demon’s Souls* is most certainly the hardest game yet released on the Xbox 360, Wii or Playstation 3. The tutorial is easy, but only until its end boss, which sends the player straight to spirit-land with a maximum of two axe-swings. That’s right, the tutorial has a boss.

So how tough is *Demon’s Souls*? For one, the game cannot be paused. Period. For another, it is quite possible in *Demon’s Souls* to enter a world with a mighty sword-wielding knight as the player’s character, only to discover that the creatures in this world fly, and so will never get close enough to be felled with an axe. The creatures all carry a seemingly infinite number of spears, waiting to be thrust into the knight’s helpless body.

There are a lot more examples of how *Demon’s Souls* is an exceedingly difficult game, but to list them all would only take away from the game’s redeeming quality: it makes the gamer want to keep playing. How is this possible for such an unforgiving game? Three reasons:

One, the setting. *Demon’s Souls* is a Japanese game, but its setting is based on dark Western fantasy. That means castles, dragons, dungeons and possessed soldiers are the headliners. The player’s character may choose to begin on a stone bridge leading to an ominous-looking fort, full of inhabitants displaying the classic symptoms of prolonged insanity. Needless to say, playthroughs by young children are not encouraged.

Two, the gameplay. Yes, it is difficult, but yes, it is also fair. Most of the time players spend in *Demon’s Souls* will be in fighting the endless hordes of insane, undead, or just plain evil enemies that infest every corner of the game world, and so would benefit from rock-steady combat controls. Thankfully, the game delivers a deep set of options for engagements with the bad guys. The fact that the game is so hard, then, is more a product of the enemies’ skill than the poor quality of the game controls, as might be true of other games.

Three, the online multiplayer. As far as RPGs go, the fact that *Demon’s Souls* even has an online component is a break from the crowd. The online component is a fortunate break for gamers, though, as multiplayer in the game is apparent in all aspects of gameplay. Helpful messages

from other players can appear on the ground that may warn of impending danger or hidden loot. The bloodstains of other players may appear on the ground, which, when activated, will display the last ten seconds of that player’s life. This is especially useful in diagnosing an area for potential pitfalls. The ghosts of other players may wander past, showing how those players are doing in their own parallel universe of the game.

The two best parts of online multiplayer, however, are a bit more direct. In one instance, a player may be summoned into another player’s parallel universe of the game, to help conquer a boss or sprint through a particularly treacherous area. The home player gets to advance in the story, and the summoned player gets to acquire as many souls (the game’s currency) as possible, so the arrangement works out for both sides.


On the other hand, players can also invade other players’ worlds as Black Phantoms, and try to hunt them down and kill them for their souls. After the game notifies the home player they have been invaded, one can expect some very careful looks around corners, waiting for the inevitable confrontation. As GameInformer.com editor Phil Kollar puts it, “The atmosphere of *Demon’s*

*Souls* is already intense and moody, but when you receive a flashing message notifying you that ‘Black Phantom Noobkiller3000 has invaded,’ it’s hard not to start sweating.”


In the end, *Demon’s Souls* may prove to be too brutally difficult to be attractive to more than a handful of diehard gamers, but those few will experience a game unlike any other. With its bizarre yet effective combination of chillingly tough combat, deep character progression, and imaginative multiplayer play, *Demon’s Souls* should be at least attempted by anyone interested in games, and certainly deserved more than one nod for Game of the Year.

“Life cannot defeat a writer who is in love with writing- for life itself is a writer’s love until death.”

Edna Ferber




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