Mr. Martocci revelas his mustache secret.

TEACHERS LOUNGE / FEATURES / PAGE 5

Jennifer Hudson's family deals with tragedy.

JENNIFER HUDSON/ NEWS / PAGE 4

Texting causes trouble on the road.

TEXTING / OPINIONS / PAGE 3



# The St. Clairion

Volume 10, Issue 2 - December 2008 - Upper St. Clair High School Pittsburgh, PA 15241

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

#### Phillies capture World Series in dramatic fashion

By: Nick Buzzelli Assistant Sports Editor

Philadelphia, the city of brotherly love, has given us Ben Franklin, the Liberty Bell, and Rocky Balboa. A World Series title can now be added to that list of great achievements. Phillies fans have reason to celebrate and will be doing so all the way to spring training. The last time a Philadelphia sports team accomplished a feat quite like this was over a quarter century ago when Dr. J led his 76er's to the NBA title. Philadelphia has been to the "Big Dance" five times but came out victorious only once. The Phillies now have a new flag to raise at Citizens Bank Park, "2008."

The Phillies have not had very many shining moments during their 124 years of existence, but their World Series titles top the list. The Phillies are the longest losing franchise in MLB history, but that doesn't matter anymore because they are sitting on top of the baseball world. The franchise's only other title came in 1980 on a team led by future hall-of-famers Steve Carlton and series MVP Mike Schmidt.

In 1993, Philadelphia was pitted against the defending world champion Toronto Blue Jays. Mitch Williams' name became

synonymous with "Philly Fanatics" during game six of the series for all of the wrong reasons. The Phillies were clinging to a 6-5 lead in the bottom of the ninth when Mitch "The Wild Thing" Williams was called upon to close the game. Joe Carter then hit a World Series winning homerun to give Toronto their second consecutive championship. The Phillies would have to wait another 15 years until they would make it to the October Classic again.

The Tampa Bay Rays came into the best of seven series with momentum on their side. The young Rays made their first ever trip to the post-season this year and were able to escape elimination by defeating the storied Boston Red Sox. Coming into the World Series, the Rays had home-field advantage Tropicana Field and looked to use it to their advantage. The Phillies won game one with the help of a Chase Utley two-run homer. Cole Hamels pitched a gem, allowing only five hits seven innings (www.espn.com). The Rays stole the show in the second game, scoring the first two runs of the game, while starter James Shields kept the Phillies off the board for the first five innings. Tampa Bay's four to two win tied the series with it shifting to Citizens Bank Park for games three, four and five.

Unfortunately, inclement weather delayed much of the series while in the city of brotherly love. Game three was postponed for one hour and 30 minutes, with the Phillies escaping with the victory. The weather held off for much of the fourth game. Philadelphia scored early and often, putting ten runs on the scoreboard. The Philadelphia pitching staff was able to keep the Rays to just only two runs. Philadelphia pitcher Joe Blanton became the first pitcher to hit a homerun in the World Series since Ken Holtzman did it in 1974 (www.mlb.com).

The rainy and dreary weather returned in a game five that the Phillies were hoping to clinch in front of the home crowd. The game was called after the top of the sixth inning with the score tied at two apiece. This was the first World Series game to not be finished in basehistory (www.phillies.mlb.com). When the game resumed almost two days later, the Phillies scored twice more and won the series in dramatic fashion. The Phillies won their first title in over 28 years and are now waiting until they get a chance for another.

## Congress attempts to bailout Wall Street after financial shock

By: JP Gooderham Editor-in-Chief

In the early fall, markets all over the world suffered severe meltdowns, which quickly caught the attention of lawmakers on Capitol Hill. Consequently, Congress turned its attention to crafting and passing a rescue plan to save American businesses from crumbling.

On September 29th, Congress failed to pass the first bailout plan which would have distributed \$700 billion to an ailing Wall Street. Economists were shocked by the bill's initial failure to pass: "The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the nation's

largest dusiness loodying group and a vocal bailout proponent, responded quickly after the vote with a letter to all members of Congress. 'Make no mistake: when the aftermath of congressional inaction becomes clear, Americans will not tolerate those who stood by and let the calamity happen,' said the letter, urging reconsideration and passage of 'financial rescue legislation'" (www.reuters.com). After continued debate in Congress; however, a similar package was approved on October 3rd.

The rescue plan sought to restore confidence in American banking while stabilizing a housing market ravaged by risky loans. Following the crisis, "The government [...] made the first investment of \$125 billion to purchase stakes in nine of the country's biggest banks" (www.washingtontimes.com). Of course, the funding for the bank investment came directly from the rescue plan.

While some are optimistic of the plan's potential effect on the market, many experts do not feel that the rescue plan will be significant enough to save the American market. The New York Times contends that the worst has, almost certainly, not passed: "The unfortunate reality is that as long as millions of Americans continue to default on their mort-

#### **Obama makes history**

By: Dallion L. Townsend Opinions Editor

The wait is over: the longest, hardest campaign of our generation comes to a close. Senator Barack Obama overcame Hillary Clinton, John McCain, and the color barrier by winning the 2008 Presidential Election.

Barack Obama has been characterized as "the best cam-

paigner have ever seen" by Fox News Bill host O'Reily Obama's campaign was up to par after winning all of the states former Democratic nominee

Democratic n o m i n e e John Kerry won in 2004, along with battleground states President-elect Barack Obama gives his acceptance speech after it is announced he has won the presidential election at his Election Night Rally in Grant Park, Chicago, Illinois, November 4, 2008. (Chuck Kennedy/MCT)

New Mexico.

With campaign messages like "Change we can believe in," Obama was able to pick up nearly 70% of all new voters, according to the exit polls compiled by CNN. Obama was also able to convince 93% of the African Americans voters to vote Democrat.

Obama was the first presi-

dential candidate since Bill

Clinton in 1996 to win both the

Virginia, Ohio, Florida, and

electoral college majority and the popular vote. He won 52.42% of the popular vote with 63,846,619, while Senator John McCain received 56,367,794 votes for 46.28%. Obama won gages and housing prices continue to slide, banks will continue to suffer big losses. Unless something is done quickly to help American homeowners avoid foreclosure and stay in their homes, those losses could swamp the bailout effort by exceeding the sums being spent to rescue the banks" (www.nytimes.com).

On the other hand, Jim Sinegal, CEO of Costco

handily by picking up 364 electoral votes, 94 more than he needed to win the presidency, and almost 200 electoral more votes than McCain.

McCain's inability to capture the key battleground states such as Ohio, Florida, and Pennsylvania took away any chance of his winning the electoral vote. Another major problem for McCain was that he

could not c h a n g e any of the "blue-states" to "red-states".

Obama,

For

after winning 65 key votes in Florida, N e w Mexico, Ohio, and Virginia, combined

with the traditionally democratic California, his electoral number was pushed over the top. Pennsylvania, a key state in the election, also sent 21 electoral votes to Senator Obama in a 55-44 tilt, even though McCain and running mate Sarah Palin spent much of their time campaigning in the battleground state

Almost immediately after the results were tallied, Obama received numerous congratulations from foreign leaders, such as China's President Ma Yingjeou, who not only praised the president-elect, but also feels that with cooperation on both sides, the U.S. and China can form a stronger working relationship together.

Wholesale believes that the "economy is moving in the wrong direction. I think (the bailout plan) will keep things from getting worse. I assume everyone will breathe a sigh of relief. You can only hope that the people who've thought this through know what they're doing. No one involved in this process to date has done much to instill much confidence" (www.usatoday.com).

#### Panther Predilections

What is your favorite thing about Thanksgiving?

"Getting to see all of my out-of-town family." – Evan McElhinny Freshman

> "The food." – Becca Lange Sophomore

"The Bond-a-thon."

– Chris Peck

Junior

"Getting off from school." – Chrissy Rojcewicz Senior

By: Kelsey Short Editor-in-Chief

#### **Desk of the Editor**

# Congress's bailout is necessary to stop the bleeding in the global economic crisis

By: JP Gooderham Editor-in-Chief

By mid-September, 2008, it was clear that America was in a state of economic turmoil. Despite Congress's response, the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008, which allowed the Secretary of the Treasury to buy \$700 billion worth of distressed companies, the economy continued to plummet

In early November, representatives from twenty nations convened to discuss the economic crisis, which had penetrated every sector of the international community. The result: the representatives "endorsed several stimulative measures, including interest rate cuts by central banks around the globe or potential economic stimulus packages" (www.money.cnn.com).

While these measures may help to stabilize global markets, the most crucial component of any plan is certainly consumer confidence.

Thomas Friedman explains, "When President Bush told us to go shopping after 9/11, he was

right. We needed to stimulate the economy then. The problem was that the Bush economic team never turned off the green light



and told people to 'go saving.' So with easy credit seemingly endlessly available, American consumers saved virtually nothing and bid up housing prices to record levels. It was quite a party" (www.nytimes.com).

Because of reckless spending, the mortgage market ultimately blew up, which sparked a credit crisis that annihilated the banking industry. Friedman continues, "Banks stopped lending. That soon morphed into an equity crisis, as worried investors liquidated stock portfolios. The equity crisis made people feel poor and metastasized into a consumption crisis, which is why purchases of cars, appliances, electronics, homes and clothing have just fallen off a cliff. This, in turn, has sparked more company defaults, exacerbated the credit crisis and metastasized into an unemployment crisis, as companies rush to shed workers" (www.nytimes.com).

At this point, it looks like the damage has been done. Interest rates continue to skyrocket while credit becomes less readily available, which further restricts consumer spending.

Thus, the most crucial change in the international economy must be a restoration of consumer confidence.

On the surface, the economic bailout plan passed by Congress seems, to some extent, unfair. The very notion of saving businesses that destroyed themselves through greed is absurd to any observer.

Furthermore, requiring those who have acted responsibly financially to foot the bill for such corporate greed is even more ridiculous.

The sad truth is that the banking system must be re-stabilized in order to begin lending once again.

As Friedman concludes, this policy "may mean rescuing some bankers who don't deserve rescuing, while also helping prudent bankers who were doing the right things.

And, yes, that may mean rescuing reckless home buyers who never should have taken out mortgages and now can't pay them back, while not aiding people who saved prudently and are still meeting their mortgage payments. No, it's not fair. But fairness is not on the menu anymore" (www.nytimes.com).

Unless the downturn of consumer spending begins to slow, the international economy will inevitably continue to plunge. Hopefully, the events that preceded the current economic crisis will be a lesson to Americans for years to come. However, in the present, the federal government must continue to allocate aid to failing companies, or we will risk any chance we have at a speedy recovery.

## Texting is one of the biggest distractions on the road today

By: Julianne Tarullo Front Page Editor

Staying focused while driving is crucial to the safety of the driver and passengers. Even experienced drivers can take their eyes off the road for a second and be faced with a deadly crash just seconds ahead. Driving mistakes include applying makeup, adjusting the radio, or talking on the phone, and texting can now be added to this list. Recently, texting has been the cause of many horrible accidents that could have easily been avoided.

Texting while driving is a new safety hazard that 37 percent of teens say they find extremely distracting, according to a survey conducted by Liberty Mutual Insurance Company. In addition, a Virginia Tech Transportation Institute survey found that 80 percent of crashes involved driver inattention within the last three seconds of the crash. This distraction was most commonly found to be a cell phone.

A survey by National Mutual Insurance Company discovered that 73 percent of drivers talk on cell phones while driving. According to the Insurance Information Institute, drivers using cell phones are four times more likely to be involved in an accident (www.iii.org). Clearly, any use of a cell phone is a major distraction on the road and should be avoided as much as possible.

One crash resulting from texting was the recent train wreck in California on September 12th. The train driver was texting when his commuter train skipped through a red light and collided into a freight train. The wreck, killing twelve, and injuring 135, was recorded as the worst train accident since 1993 Railroad (www.reuters.com). workers in California are temporarily banned from using cell phones on duty. This fatal crash would never have happened if the driver had been paying more attention to his job and less to his

Recently, many laws restricting cell phone usage while driving have been enacted. As of October 2008, California, Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, Utah, Washington State, Alaska, Minnesota, and Louisiana have all banned the use of hand- held cell phones

while driving (www.iii.org). Some states, such as Connecticut and the District of Columbia, fine drivers for the use of cell phones and other distractions, such as applying makeup, or reading and writing behind the wheel (www.cbsnews.com).

When students were asked if they had ever been in a car while the driver was texting, three out of five answered that they had. Two of the three students who answered yes said that the driver was a teenager. These results show that an increasing number of students in the high school alone are texting while driving, and this needs to change. Teens need to realize the importance of concentrating while on the road. Is it worth getting in a deadly crash to carry a conversation with a friend?

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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

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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

#### Obama was the right choice for America

By: Marni Schreiber News Editor

Near midnight on November 4, 2008, poll results revealed that Senator Barack Obama would be the first African-American President of the United States. America wanted change, and they will truly get it under President Obama.

After Obama's inauguration in January, he will face a nation in an economic crisis and violent conflicts in the Middle East; however, Obama has plans to bring the country out of its downward spiral.

In confronting the nation's economic crisis, Obama has said that "The fundamentals of the economy have to be measured by whether or not the middle class is getting a fair shake" (www.ontheissues.org).

Under the Obama administration, 95% of working Americans will receive a tax cut. A tax cut of over \$500 will be given to single workers, and \$1000 will be given to working couples (www.barackobama.com).

With Obama's tax policy, only those who make over a quarter of a million dollars a year, the wealthiest 2% of families in America, will potentially see tax increases. Even with this increase, Obama's tax plan has the wealthiest American's paying 39% lower taxes than they would have under Bush's proposed policy in his 2001 tax cut (www.barackobama.com).

Obama has recently appointed his economic team, consisting of Larry Summers, Timothy Geithner, Christina Romer, and Paul Volcker. This highly educated and praised team will be able to aid the country out of the deficit it has fallen into too.

One plan Obama has to help bring the country together on his economic plans is to work across party lines. In a recent interview, Obama has said that "We have a consensus, which is pretty rare, between conservative economists and liberal economists, that we need a big stimulus package that will jolt the economy back into shape. Across the board, people believe that this stimulus is critical" (www.washingtonpost.com).

There is also another very explainable reason the United States has fallen into so much during the Bush Administration: the trillions of dollars spent in Iraq. Once in office, however, Obama will focus on safely ending the war in Iraq and divert focus on the more pressing matters in the Middle East.

According to Obama, "My first order as Commander in Chief will be to end the war in Iraq and refocus our efforts on Afghanistan and our broader security interests. Let me be clear-my plan would not abandon Iraq. It is in our strategic interest to maintain a residual force that will go after al-Qaeda, train Iraqi security forces and protect U.S. interests. But we must recognize that the central front in the war on terror is not in Iraq, and it never was. The central front is in Afghanistan and Pakistan" (www.time.com).

In addition to taxes and the

war, Obama wants to focus on bringing health care to every-

In one of his debates, Obama said that healthcare "should be a right for every American. In a country as wealthy as ours, for us to have people who are going bankrupt because they can't pay their medical bills-for my mother to die of cancer at the age of 53 and have to spend the last months of her life in the hospital room arguing with insurcompanies because they're saying that this may be a pre-existing condition and they don't have to pay her treatment, there's something fundamentally wrong about that" (www.ontheissues.org).

Under Obama, his administration will provide "affordable, accessible health care for all Americans, builds on the existing healthcare system, and uses existing providers, doctors and plans to implement the plan" (www.barackobama.com).

Barack Obama will make sure that every American can afford to have healthcare. Under Obama's plan, if one already owns healthcare, he can keep his current provider but will most likely get a reduction in the cost. If one cannot afford healthcare currently, under Obama, that person can be given the same healthcare that is given to governmental officials.

Education is another high priority for the Obama administration. Obama believes that there needs to be a "truly historic commitment to education a real commitment will

require new resources and new e f o r m (www.education.com).

Obama wants to invest in early education and enhance the United States' mathematics science departments, allowing the country's youth to have a better chance of competing with foreign powers in those fields.

Also on Obama's agenda is job creation here at home, an effective energy plan, and a secure Wall Street and the housing market.

America got it right when they chose Barack Obama to be their next leader. He is the man who will bring the country out of war and out of debt. He is the man who will make healthcare a right and not a privilege. And he is the man who will enhance education and give benefits to veterans.

America truly got it right when they chose Barack Obama, the man who will restore this country's status in the international arena: "to those who would tear the world down: We will defeat you. To those who seek peace and security: We support you. And to all those who have wondered if America's beacon still burns as bright: Tonight we proved once more that the true strength of our nation comes not from the might of our arms or the scale of our wealth, but from the enduring power of our ideals: democracy, liberty, opportunity and unyielding hope" (www.edition.cnn.com).

#### Panther Predilections

What is your favorite thing about Thanksgiving?

"The delicious mashed potatoes." -Val Repischak Freshman

> "The apple pie." – Vijay Venkatesan Sophomore

"Being with my family." – Eleni Romanias

## Junior

"Sticking my hand inside a turkey." – Tommy Hoffman Senior

By: Madeline Kushner Photography Editor

#### Changes need to be made in NFL officiating

By: Dallion L. Townsend **Opinions Editor** 

For most of the NFL season, fans have oohed-and-aahed over bone-crunching hits as the National Football League wrote out notices and fines to players involved in these types of vicious hits. Bob Smizik noted in an article for the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette that these hits are dangerous because the players are now "bigger, stronger, and faster."

Smizik has a great point, and obviously hits are going to be higher on the Richter Scale because of the monstrous size of the players in the league today. Hines Ward of the Pittsburgh Steelers is the best blocking receiver in the NFL and was fined twice for illegal blocks in the middle of the season. Neither play was flagged during the game, but Ward was notified by league officials days after the fact that his hits were indeed illegal.

To the teams who suffered at the hands of Ward, "the sixth lineman," they got a letter from the league that they apologize that the calls were missed. How

many times have we seen this happen? A call was missed, one team suffers, and then they get a letter of apology from the NFL that the game may have been altered by the human error that comes along with having human refs. And nothing else comes with it, no records changed, no statistics fixed, just a form letter with Roger Goodell's signature on it for teams to hang on their refrigerators as a reminder of "what could've been."

Sticking with Hines as an example, he had a would-be 62 yard catch in the home opener against the woeful Houston Texans and he was accused of "pushing-off" of a defender because the linebacker, DeMeco Ryans, lost his balance (www.steelers.com). Ward too, got a nifty letter of apology.

And in Week 11 against the Chargers, All-Pro safety Troy Polamalu made a spectacular play and brought back a fumble for a last second touchdown as the "Bolts" attempted to lateral their way to the endzone. However, a call was made that the first lateral was an illegal forward

pass and after review, the touchdown was taken away. The day after the game, the NFL released a statement saying that the call was missed and the score should have counted. And because of that miscue, the NFL offered that they will "tweak" the current review system and allow for a second visit at the replay booth after the replay official converses with the rest of the referees (www.espn.com).

Ed Houchili was the center of criticism after two blown calls in a span of four weeks that arguably altered the course of the game. San Diego got its apology letter in the mail the day after the tilt against the Denver Broncos in Week 2, and everything was cleared up, right? No. Instead, Houchili is perceived as an awful official after eighteen years of commendable refereeing experience, in which he has blown very few calls and has also officiated two Super Bowk

The NFL is the only major sports league in North America in which the referees are not on the payroll as fulltime employees, in large part because of the fact

games are only played on Sundays, Mondays, and Thursdays after Thanksgiving for only 27 weeks per year.

Ed Houchili is only human, and calls are missed every game, in every sport. There are probably blown calls the fans miss because the calls don't have an obvious effect on an outcome of a game. NFL referees should sit down with the NFL front office and standardize a system in which to call illegal hits and put the referees on a fulltime payroll.

While in this "should-be meeting," the idea of the same officials working with each other throughout the season should be removed.

Since the crews work with each other for an entire season, officials tend to base calls on familiarity with who they're working with, and by breaking up the officiating crews, this familiarity will go away and force the refs to make calls based more so on judgment instead of their co-workers. The NFL should not change the way the game is played, but instead, how the game is officiated.

News Page 4 December 2008

#### It is time to spread awareness

By: Marni Schreiber News Editor

Even though November was the chosen month to spread awareness for two very real and increasingly harmful diseases, students need to keep spreading the word during the month of

December. Alzheimer's and Pancreatic Cancer should be the topic of discussion these months.

In 1983, President Ronald Reagan chose November to be the month to spread awareness about the seriousness of Alzheimer's disease. When Reagan designated this month, there were fewer than 2 million diagnosed Americans with Alzheimer's. Today,

there will be an estimated 5, 2008, in Charlotte, North Carolina. eleven to sixteen million

people with this terrible disease (www.alz.org).

Alzheimer's disease is an "irreversible, progressive brain disease that slowly destroys memory and thinking skills and, eventually, the ability to carry out the simplest tasks of daily living. In most people with AD, symptoms first appear after age 60" (www.nia.nih.gov).

Scientists have not yet discovered the cause or cure for

Alzheimer's, but research is constantly being done to learn more about the disease, and how to prevent and treat it.

The remebrance month was meant to be a "time to remember those who are living with the disease, thank those who care for them, and recognize

there are more than 5 mil- Barbara Drum, left, helps her mother Ruth work a puzzle in lion Americans with the community/activity room at The Court at SouthPark, an Alzheimer's, and by 2050 assisted living facility for the memory-impaired, November

> those who are seeking solutions to its cure and prevention" (www.accessexcellence.org).

In addition to being the Alzheimer's awareness month, November was also the month designated to spread awareness about another serious disease, pancreatic cancer.

Pancreatic awareness month helps to spread awareness about this deadly disease and raises money to help scientists conduct research to help find a cure. The Pancreatic Cancer Action Network is asking that during the month of November, people tell their friends about the disease, contact elected officials, write to an editor of a newspaper, and donate money to help spread awareness about

> the severity of Pancreatic Cancer (www.pancan.org).

> An estimated 37,680 will be diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in 2008, and of those people, 34,290 will die from the disease. One out of seventy five men and women will be diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in their lifetime and there is only a 5.1% survival rate of living five years after the diagnosis (www.seer.cancer.gov).

With pancreatic cancer being the fourth leading cause of cancer deaths, it is becoming even more

imperative to spread awareness. The Pancreatic Cancer Action Network emphasizes that "The louder you raise your voice, the faster we can advance research, support patients and create hope" (www.pancan.org).

Even though it is no longer November, students should still take measures to spread the word about these deadly diseases spreading across the country.

#### Cruel conditions continue in puppy mills

By Julianne Tarullo Front Page Editor

The Amish are known for their gentle and peaceful ways; however, very few know about the Amish's harsh injustices towards dogs in puppy mills. The horrible cruelty to the breeding dogs in these mills is widespread across America should be looked at more closely.

Breeding dogs in puppy mills are born and raised for one reason: to breed. The Stop Puppy Mills organization says, "Life is particularly bad for 'breeding stock,' dogs who live their entire lives in cages and are continually bred for years, without human companionship and with little hope of ever becoming part of a family." Living in sickly conditions, the breeding stocks have no veterinary care, no treats or toys, and beds (www.stoppuppymills.org). These dogs are forced to breed as much as possible, and when they are no longer able, they are killed.

When a shopper enters a pet shop and sees the adorable face of a puppy staring back at him, the shopper may find it hard to walk away without the pup. But do any of these shoppers know where the puppies came from? Back at the mills, the

On October 24th, Darnell

Donerson and Jason Hudson,

the mother and brother of

Hudson, were found dead at

their home in the South Side of

star

Alaina Zemanick

Features Editor

Dreamgirls

breeding dogs suffer under the horrible conditions, often producing puppies with diseases and behavioral problems (www.dachshund.org).

But why are these facilities so often associated with and run by the Amish? The answer is unknown. However, some say that the Amish people have a different perspective on animals and their place in life. The Pennsylvania Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement cites an extreme amount of these cruel facilities in Amish areas. There is an estimated operating 243 kennels in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, and 470 in Holmes County, Ohio.

Recently, legislation has been introduced that will protect the rights of animals in the puppy mills. The Puppy Uniform Protection Statute introduced September 20th, 2008 will close a loophole in the Animal Welfare Act that currently allows commercial breeders to keep their breeding dogs in unacceptable conditions. "The legislation will require that any breeder who sells more than 50 dogs per year direct to the public through internet sales or other outlets be inspected and licensed by the United States Department of Agriculture" (www.akc.org).

This misfortune comes at a

high-point in Hudson's career.

Her new movie, The Secret Life

of Bees, was just released with

much praise, and her song,

"Spotlight" hit number one on

Billboard's Hot R&B/Hip Hop

services

for

#### PNC and National City merge in struggling economy

By: JP Gooderham Editor-in-Chief

On October 24th, the PNC Financial Services Group announced that it would purchase another local giant in the banking industry, National City. Following the Wall Street crisis earlier in the fall, PNC was given the opportunity to expand after receiving aid from the federal government.

"PNC Financial Services Group became the first industry player to unveil an acquisition concurrent with an announcement that it will receive funds from the Troubled Asset Relief Program. The Pittsburgh bank revealed plans to scoop up struggling regional bank National City for about \$5 billion in stock. At the same time, it said it would sell \$7.7 billion of equity treasury' the (www.usnews.com).

In the end, the sale valued National City's stock at \$2.23

per share, and created the fifth largest bank in the United States, with deposits accumulating to over \$180 billion (www.cnn.com).

However, while the future of National City seems much brighter under the strength of PNC, the long-term impact of the merger is unclear. In fact, as Steve Shore, a principal at Capital Bluemark Beachwood, explained, "You'll see a very large institution (PNC) replace a great and longstanding institution. I don't see much of a difference from a real estate perspective if you were in a good market" (www.crainscleveland.com).

On the other hand, the fallout of the deal is still being felt for National City Corp. "A lawsuit filed in federal court in Pittsburgh by shareholder Martin Sheerer [...] accuses the Cleveland bank of fraud by misrepresenting its condition in the months prior to the deal with PNC last Friday. National City statements and omissions 'induced' Sheerer and 'thousands of unsuspecting shareholders' to buy or hold their stock, then were hurt by the stock's continued decline' (www.pittsburghlive.com).

Another lawsuit was filed against the struggling bank soon after. A "shareholder sued National City in federal court in Wilmington, Del., alleging it breached its fiduciary duty by failing to obtain a better deal. PNC's offer is 'unfair and grossly inadequate,' said the lawsuit. It also accuses CEO Peter Raskind of 'self-dealing,' and objects to golden parachutes totaling over \$41 million for the banks top three executives" (www.pittsburghlive.com).

Fortunately, National City will most likely settle the lawsuits without significant damage, and may begin to improve, once again, under the leadership of

Hudson family and friends arrive at the Apostolic Church of God on Chicago's South Side for the funerals of Jennifer Hudson's mother Darnell Donerson, her brother Jason Hudson and her nephew Julian King in Chicago, Illinois, on Monday,

## November 3, 2008. (Michael Tercha/Chicago Tribune/MCT)

Jennifer Hudson's family tragically murdered

charts.

Funeral

Jennifer

Chicago, according to the Associated Press. Hudson's nephew, Julian King, was originally missing, but the search ended when his body was found in a white SUV that had gone missing from the scene. King was found with a bullet in his head (www.cnn.com).

The massacres seem to be the consequence of domestic abuse, says Monique Bond, a police spokesman (Associated Press).

Through her tough time, Hudson is continuing to "[remain] strong for her family," says another spokesman of when the Hudson had to identify King, "It was very clear that she was the leader. She held hands with her family. It was obviously a very emotional m o m e n (www.telegraph.co.uk).

Donerson, Hudson, and King were held at Apostolic Church of God in Chicago on November 3rd. Many mourners waited outside for Jennifer Hudson to give her their sympa-

"She needs us right now," said Shenika Bowers. "She needs support from everyone who she can get it from. I cannot imagine how she feels but I do feel for her" (AP).

Currently, King's stepfather, William Balfour, is held in custody for suspicion of slaughtering the Hudson family and for a parole violation. There have been no charges filed against him as of yet, but he was previously busted for possession of cocaine in June of this year durhis parole (www.ibtimes.com).

#### Residents take precautions after dangerous wild animal sightings

Julianne Tarullo Front Page Editor

After several alerts of hazardous animals in the area, Upper St. Clair and near-by residents are not so keen on letting their pets roam free through their backyard woods. In the past year, numerous sightings of coyotes, bears, and other wild animals have been reported throughout the Pittsburgh area.

Recently, more than a dozen cats have gone missing in two Mt. Lebanon neighborhoods. Residents believe these disappearances are due to the surplus of coyotes in the area. One resident in Upper St. Clair tells of her two cats who were recently attacked by a coyote. She now insists on keeping a close eye on her remaining pets (www.thealmanac.com).

The number of coyotes in Pennsylvania has drastically increased over the years. The Pennsylvania Game Commission reported about 100 coyotes in Pennsylvania in the 1970's and between 20,000 to 30,000 today. According to Tom Fazi, a conservation officer with Pennsylvania Game Commission, coyote harvests have tripled since the beginning of the 1990s. Coyotes are known to hunt down foxes, rabbits, sheep, fawns, and pets, in partic-

(www.pittsburghlive.com). In addition to coyotes, the number of bears in the Pittsburgh area is also increasing. In a neighboring area, Fayette County, the Game Commission averages two to three complaints a day from residents reporting bears ripping through their garbage or roaming through their backyards.

The Post Gazette reports that "Pennsylvania's black bears are reproducing at a younger age and having larger litters of cubs than anywhere else in the United States. With the recent mild winters and ample food supplies, the males aren't truly hibernating, and are naturally dispersing into areas where they haven't traditionally roamed before" (www.postgazette.com)

Recently, there have also been rumors of a rabid fox inhabiting the Deerfield Manor area of Upper St. Clair. This sighting should not be taken lightly and potential dangers of this fox need to be recognized. Pets and children could be seriously injured by this animal, and parents should be taking all precautions necessary.

#### USC seniors take initative in this year's election

By: Alaina Zemanick Features Editor

According to a CNN poll, nearly 18% of voters on Election Day 2008 were aged 18-29. Two of these individuals were Christine Prorok and Kevin Goodlett, both USC seniors and Obama supporters.

"I voted for Barack Obama because I believe that America needs a change," says Prorok, "After eight years of a Republican in office, I found that I largely did not agree with the Bush administration."

Goodlett expressed similar thoughts to Prorok's: "I believe [Obama] can bring some positive change to our nation and the world."

Prorok and Goodlett expressed similar values to those of most youth voters. The same CNN poll states that 66% of voters aged 18-29 selected Obama as their president, while the other 31% supported Republican candidate John McCain.

Obama also connected more with younger voters, too. Jim Demers, a strategist for Obama's campaign, stated during the campaign, "Young people connect with Barack Obama better than any other candidate. If this guy wins, it would be the first time since the Vietnam War that the youth vote made a difference" (www.msnbc.com).

To these two students, voting this year has been a great privilege, especially to Prorok: "Voting is often taken for granted, but I think that is extremely important for Americans to voice their opinions in elections."

Both students feel as though more young people stepped out to the polls this year to have their voices heard.

"They know [voting] is important," states Goodlett,

"and I have seen the polls. So, I know more did."

"I think that more young people voted in this election, first of all, because it was a presidential election," continues Prorok. "This election prompted a lot of discussion among young people because their futures will be greatly influenced by the policies of the person elected president for the next four years."

As Obama followers, the two were very pleased with the outcome of this year's election.

"Since Obama won by such a landslide, I think that the American people are ready for change and trust Obama to implement that change," expresses Prorok. "Also, the fact that an African American was elected president is an extremely significant step for our country."

Goodlett agrees, "I think that this will do wonders for our country."

#### **Teacher's Lounge**



#### Mr. Martocci, Social Studies Teacher

Your mustache has become infamous among your students. What was your inspiration?

My wife and kids. During the first week of summer, I was very lazy and didn't shave, and my wife suggested growing a goatee. So, I started a goatee, but my daughter didn't like the goatee, and I made a mustache. The last week of summer, I was deciding whether or not to shave it off for school, and I said, "What the heck?"

#### What is your favorite historical era and why?

The early 1900's and the Industrial Era. I like Labor history and the concept. I am very interested in such events as the Homestead Strike.

With a recent presidential

#### election, who is your favorite president and why?

Teddy Roosevelt because of how he used the position [of president] to make an impact in regards to positive changes in society. He made wrongs

## How do you balance being a school teacher and assistant athletic director?

It's busy, but you have to use whatever time you have. I have kids and balance schoolwork and sports. The challenge is fun.

## What advice do you have towards current high school students?

Work consistently, consistently challenge yourself, do what's right, and not giving into peer pressure to set a course of success in life.

#### Students under stress from lack of sleep

By: Julainne Tarullo Front Page Editor

High school life can be rough. Staying up until 12:30 AM to finish that lab report and waking up at 6:30 AM to catch the bus in the morning is not the most pleasant of circumstances. It's no wonder teens all hit the hay for at least a half an hour as soon as they come home. However, life doesn't have to be this tiring. With a few tips, teens can get their workload under control and stay awake in school.

Many teens feel that getting up in the morning is a painful process. They also find it hard to concentrate in class. These are all symptoms of lack of sleep. According to Teens Health, most teenagers need about 8 ½ to nine hours of sleep each night. However, this is a constant struggle when the teenage body won't allow itself to fall asleep as early as adults or children. Because their brain hormone melatonin is produced later at night than kids

and adults, teens find it harder to fall asleep early in the evening. While children and adults can easily get to sleep around 9:00 pm, teenagers normally don't fall asleep until around 11:00 pm (http://kidshealth.org).

Teens Health also says that over 20% of students fall asleep in class. When asked if they get the right amount of sleep for teenagers, nine out of ten students said they did not. With a lack of sleep, most teenagers will feel moody or even depressed. So, how are students supposed to get the sufficient number of hours of sleep? One way to help the body sleep at night is to not take those 30 minute cat naps when getting home from school. In addition, experts say exercising right before bed will make it harder to fall asleep, but activity right after school will help the body to get a better sleep.

With schoolwork, after school activities, jobs, and sports, students certainly have a full plate. So when is the ideal time to tack-

le that homework and get one more thing out of the way? Parent Center says the best time for teens to work on homework is right after school. This time is ideal because the student brain is still in school mode, so it won't lose focus (http://parentcenter.babycenter.c om).

Another way to lower the stress levels of day-to-day teenage life and get more sleep is to not procrastinate. All kids have heard this before throughout their life, so why not take the advice? One student replies, "Most of the time, I just don't feel like working, so I put it off so I only have to work on it for one day." However, saving a project for the night before it's due will just add to the stresses of life. In addition, the Parent Center says that taking a break when teens get home from school is not a bad idea. Students can eat a snack and take a break from the long school day, and then get cracking on that project.

#### Health USC: Marijuana

By: Steve Garbin Guest Writer

Kids in Upper St. Clair smoke marijuana. I don't see any benefit in using some clever tone of phrase to pirouette around the issue – tempted as I was to slip in a "purple haze" or "half baked" allusion. Maybe my eagerness to use such a reference is in and of itself a revelation about our teenage culture and the misinformation about marijuana that is being dealt around faster than hash brownies.

Movies that use marijuana consumers as their chief protagonists ("Pineapple anyone?) often Express" focus on the psychoactive joys associated with smoking cannabis. The ridiculous and comedic actions of the characters, and their view of marijuana as an idyllic miracle drug that can make anything funnier and everything more entertaining often overshadow any truths about the effects of the drug. Euphoria, relaxation, and an increased enjoyment of humor are all reported short term effects of marijuana that are viewed as desirable. The long term psychoactive effects of cannabis, on the other side of the music, are a bit more serious than a weekend high; psychosis, anxiety (that's what you wanted to reduce, right?) and depression all potentially loom in the future for users.

The physiological effects of smoking marijuana don't even have a short term upside, and this is the area where culture seems to be most confused about cannabis. I have been told countless times about how marijuana is "all natural," "cannot harm you" and "has no negative effects." In fact, I am sure that while

reading this article some of my peers will continue to deny the adverse effects of marijuana in an attempt to justify their poor decision making - it is only my hope that that comment may shock them enough to continue reading. In terms of chemical toxicity, smoking a joint is just as bad for your health as smoking a cigarette. Cannabis smoke contains twenty times the ammonia, and five times the nitrogen oxides and hydrogen cyanide that cigarette smoke contains. Most nitrogen oxides, and hydrogen cyanide are extremely toxic, and not exactly "natural" substances for a human to have in his or her bloodstream.

Now for the big one: smoking marijuana will give you lung cancer just like smoking cigarettes will give you lung cancer. Regular inhalation of any variety of smoke has been constantly linked to lung cancer and; actually, smoking marijuana will give you cancer quicker than smoking cigarettes will. This is because most people who smoke marijuana tend to inhale a larger volume of smoke than their nicotine-addicted counterparts.

So, while marijuana is dangerous in many of the same ways that, say, alcohol is dangerous (they both impair judgment and motor coordination) it also shares many deadly side effects with its hazy cousin the cigarette, notorious for its noxious effects and general repugnancy. The appeal of possibly screwing up your life for a few short bouts of euphoria and relaxation is lacking, and I'm not so confident that that prospect would ever be humorous...even if I was high.

#### Clarion Choir belts its heart out

By: Alaina Zemanick Features Editor

During the early hours of the morning, the sophomore girls in Clarion Choir wake up their tired Tiffs Kitner.

minds with the singing of various songs for their pleasure. Conducted by their beloved choir director, Ms. Lorraine Millovac, the students enjoy their time with

her in

classroom.

with class.

the Picture Taken By: Madeline Kushner

"We love Millie a lot!" says Sarah Nadler, Vice President of

Clarion Choir.

"How can you not love Millie?" asks Anna Mittelman.

Even though singing plays a large role in Clarion Choir, most students like warm-ups the best. Whether the girls sing the solfege scale or do "The Lacki" (a choir

stretch named after a student teacher), the girls look forward to this period of time.

"I love 'The Lacki' and the massages during warm-ups!" exclaims Tiffs Kitner.

"The stretches during warm-ups are my favorite part," adds Carly Straight in accord with Kitner.

Though Clarion
Choir might be
slightly laid back,
the songs the
group sings are
definitely the

opposite. From a poem written by Jewish children held hostage during the Holocaust ("Inspiration of Hope") to a beautiful Latin piece ("Panis Angelicus"), each song proves to be a challenge for the girls but one they want to overcome

"I give them music from my women's choir at Pitt," admits Millovac, "they sing advanced level music; they are very talented."

"I love 'Inspiration of Hope," Mallory Winner states, "the notes are so simple, but the message is so profound."

Alyssa Zakaria continues, "I like Panis Angelicus because it's so pretty."

The singing is not the only thing that brings the sophomores to class every day. The connections between the girls and Millovac in the choir are something that is unique.

"We are like one big family," explains Maria Alessi.

President Lisa Moore elaborates, "It is such an honor to be president because I love everyone here, and I love to sing!"

Millovac agrees with her students, "They are awesome. Clarion Choir keeps me young!"

Overall, Clarion Choir proves to be a favorite class of all of the members. Jen Lloyd can sum it up best, saying, "Clarion Choir is crazy fun!"

#### Students opt for fun winter break destinations

By: Madeline Kushner Photography Editor

Page 6

At Upper St. Clair High School, winter break ranges from December 24 to January 4. So, students are rushing to make plans during the holidays.

Majority of the students at Upper St. Clair High School have decided to travel to different places. There is no specific theme to any of these locations, such as warm or cold, except for the fact that the students go so they can spend time with their family.

However, a number of students do decide to leave home for the holidays. Four out of nine students at USCHS have decided to travel to a place outside of Pittsburgh, but whether that place is Florida or a colder and closer place, such as Cleveland, varies among students.

Hanna Friedlander, a sophomore at Upper St. Clair High School, opts for a colder vacation. "My favorite thing to do during winter break is to go skiing with my mom," says Friedlander.

The other five students surveyed about where they like to go during winter break, though, said that they have decided to stay home for the holiday. Since winter break lasts for twelve days, some students like to take advantage of the long break to recuperate after a stressful semester. For finals and the endless homework and tests that students are given can be very stressful.

An example of staying home

for the holidays is seen in Jordi McDonough, a senior at

USCHS. "I really like spending any free time I have in the winter sitting around and watching movies. That or having snowball fights," explains McDonough, a member of the group that opts to stay put during winter vacation.

Also sharing the same love for the snow is Rocky Paterra, a junior at Upper St. Clair High School

"I like to bring out my inner child and go down with my friends to those huge hills in South Park and go sled riding," says Paterra.

Overall, majority of students enjoy staying home during the break, like McDonough and Paterra, because of the stress of the academic semester at Upper St. Clair High School.

#### outside of can be very stressful. the academ

Thanksgiving food has hit the table

By: Marni Schreiber News Editor

Thanksgiving, also commonly known as Turkey Day, was originally intended to be a day for Americans to remember their humble beginnings. However, in this generation, only one thing is on everyone's mind on Thanksgiving: food.

A Thanksgiving dinner table can be recognized by signature Turkey Day favorites: turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, and pumpkin pie. While the potatoes and pumpkin makes sense when talking about the harvest, the tradition of serving turkey has never been fully understood.

One of the more common explanations for the serving of this dish is that in the 16th cen-

tury, Queen Elizabeth popularized eating geese during the harvest time. However, when the pilgrims came to America, geese were too hard to find, so the settlers began eating turkey to celebrate the harvest (www.coolquiz.com).

Even though turkey may be the main dish at Thanksgiving dinner, it may not necessarily be the favorite. Stuffing, another Turkey Day staple, may take preference on one's dinner plate.

According to Marissa Murin, a junior at the high school, "stuffing is my favorite because it is savory and luscious and hits the spot every time no matter what. Hot or cold, it's so good."

Other students agree with Marissa's argument that stuffing truly is the best Thanksgiving food. Sarah Walters- Slezak explains that stuffing is her favorite because "I rarely get it, and my grandmother's recipe is amazing."

Even with stuffing on the table, another favorite Turkey Day dish is the ever-popular mashed potatoes. Senior Danny Poljak explains that he likes mashed potatoes because "you don't have to chew them. Put garlic, salt, and butter on them because that is like the steak fries from Outback."

With so many delicious options, however, it may be too hard to think of just one favorite Thanksgiving food. When asked her favorite, junior Olivia Lammel explains that she "thought about it for ten minutes and really can't decide. They're all so good."

#### The Dutchess royally flushes auidences

Madeline Kushner By: Assistant Entertainment Editor

The Duchess strode into theatres on October 10, making a grand appearance just as the true Duchess of Devonshire, Georgiana Spencer, would have during the 18th century. In the film, Keira Kinghtley takes over the reigns as the Duchess of Devonshire. Although the original Duchess was known as a very celebrated woman in 18th century

England, Keira Knightley portrays the character in a very delightful way.

Knightley's costar, Ralph Fiennes raved about Knightley saying, "Why she works is that she just loves that character. She's completely comfortable playing it. You could take all of the clothes away, and it has to do with her belief in the character" (www.yahoo.com).

The Duchess was originally popularized as a novel written by Amanda Foreman. The novel was awarded the

Whitbread Prize, a great honor in Britain. Like most good novels, *The Duchess* was then adapted into a motion picture by Jeffrey Hatcher and Anders Thomas Jensen, and was adapted and also directed by Saul

In the movie, Knightley's character is tricked into a loveless marriage with the Duke of Devonshire played by Ralph Fiennes. After some time has passed, and a bumpy road has been traveled, the Duke grows tired of Georgiana because she has failed to produce a male heir. So, he turns to Georgiana's best friend, Lady Elizabeth Foster, otherwise known as Bess, who is played by Hayley Atwell. Georgiana then finds comfort in her friend and true love, Charles Grey, played by Dominic Cooper.

One of the most memorable things about the movie was not just the actors, but the costumes that Knightley was dressed in. Knightley was seen wearing a wig that was two feet tall.

Knightley commented on the wigs saying, "People kept shouting 'timber!' as I walked past" (www.latimes.com).

The Duchess recieves a four out five stars based on the movie's overall story and the actors' portrayal of the characters.

## Fashion prodigy Marc Jacobs furthers his elevated status with fabulous collections

By: Alaina Zemanick Features Editor

Design icon Marc Jacobs was extremely busy in September, providing fashion lovers with three incredible collections from his self-named line, Marc by Marc Jacobs, and the everso-powerful house of Louis Vuitton. With each runway show receiving praise from the common folk to American Vogue's editor-in-chief Anna Wintour (Style.com Video), Jacobs is sure to stay seated on the throne of American fashion.

Marc by Marc Jacobs, Jacobs' laid back and less expensive collection, produced some of the most marketable apparel for this spring season. The clothing, which included dainty baby doll dresses and light denim outerwear, will drive profit from Marc Jacobs devotees around the globe. The accessories appeared to be well-acquainted with its fellow clothes as well with hints of quirkiness (the Marc by Marc Jacobs mascot, Miss Marc, was sewn on the bags) and a large touch of cool.

The artistic values of Jacobs were best displayed in his Marc Jacobs and Louis Vuitton collections. His brilliant Marc Jacobs collection, which combined several inspirations ("America, womanly, Broadway, Perry Ellis, country, naïveté..." he told Style.com), could arguably be the best show of the season. The models looked similar to Mary Poppins, wearing tipped straw

hats and huge bags that could almost have an endless bottom. Bold prints, such as neardowdy florals and country plaids, mixed in the most fashionable way possible. Jacobs left audience members stunned with the inventiveness behind the collection.

December 2008

"Yet somehow," comments British Vogue's Lauren David Peden, "[the collection] all worked. Beautifully. More than beautifully, in fact; it was nothing less than a tour de force" (www.vogue.co.uk).

Audiences proceeded to be wowed by Jacobs a couple weeks later at his Louis Vuitton ready-to-wear show in Paris. He combined the themes of Vuitton's home of Paris and tribal living into one suprisingly, elegant collection. The clothes were created of bright purple and orange fabric and sewed in the most simplistic shapes possible. The showstopper was the most sophisticated shoes to be seen by fashion viewers in ages; feathers poured off the t-strap heels with several ropes and beads accompanying them.

For his Louis Vuitton apparel, Jacobs commented, "Little Parisienne princess, no?" (www.style.com).

As his work demonstrates, there is no doubt that Jacobs could be called the king of fashion. The idea can best be supported by a more famous Jacobs worshipper, Victoria Beckham: "He's Marc Jacobs. He's a genius" (www.wwd.com).

#### W. shows an inside look into the life of a controversial president

By: Marni Schreiber News Editor

Oliver Stone's newest political film, *W.*, starring Josh Brolin as George W. Bush and James Cromwell as George H. W. Bush, may turn a few heads with its portrayal of the soon to be ex-president of the United States. The film depicts bush as a "boozing womanizer, a spoiled son of power and privilege" until "Jesus Christ and a little lady named Laura [...] steer him down the path of righteousness and over to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue" (www. movies.nytimes.com).

Stone starts the movie in a presidential meeting following 9/11, but soon flashes back to the Bush of his younger years. These flashbacks also show how Bush's relationship with his father has influenced him greatly.

In fact, W. could be described as a "as a father-son story [...] the young George W. is severely chastised by his patrician father for his wayward behavior" (www.variety.com).

The film flashes back and forth between the Bush in the White House and the Bush who is falling in love and trying to stop his partying ways. But, "When the Texas flashbacks finally catch up with the Washington, D.C., framing device,

the film suddenly becomes a half-documentary about the Iraq war, changing the tone as well as the upclose-and-personal feel" (www.variety.com).

Viewers who expect a movie which completely bashes Bush for his incompetence to regulate the economy, his utter ignorance in entering a war which cannot be won, and his idiocracy of his continuous attacks against the middle class, may in fact be a little dissapointed.

While Stone does have scenes which show Bush as the "the drunk, ascending to the highest office in the land as if by birthright, only to discover that he's in way over his head," Stone also takes a more sympathetic view by explaining how Bush is "an unlikely underdog, the younger son apparently incapable of maintaining an honorable family's traditions, always coming up short in his father's cold, judgmental eyes" (www.cnn.com).

All in all, the film received a wide variety of reviews; some exclaiming the film as brilliant, but many saying it was a dissapointment. Even with the difference in reviews, *W*. is still a film worth seeing because of its "balanced look at the life (as opposed to the politics) of the current president of the United States" (www.themovieblog.com).



## Panther baseball prepares for upcoming season

By: JP Gooderham Editor-in-Chief

The Upper St. Clair Panther baseball team has been led by many star athletes over the years, but the team has often struggled to find the success that the players think they are capable of. While the 2009 season is still several months away, the varsity team is already preparing for this year's campaign.

Christian Wheeler, a senior and the team captain, explained, "As a team, we hope to make it to the playoffs by improving our record. These last two seasons, our performance hasn't taken us to the postseason."

With many strong local rivals, the road to a championship will certainly be challenging. However, as Wheeler explains, "I think we have a pretty strong chance at our first goal, which is to capture the section title. After that, I think there is definitely a strong possibility that we will win the WPIAL championship."

Senior Brian Gaudio believes that "there is definitely a lot of room for improvement on our squad, but I think that we will get it done this season."

Senior Scott McMurtry explains that the team has been "revamping the workout program. We have a definitely intensified it a bit. I think the players, especially the pitchers, will have greater endurance in games."

The team's greatest strength this season may very well be its leadership from seasoned veterans. Wheeler contends, "Three out of four infielders will be returning to the field this year. I also have a lot of confidence in guys like Scott McMurtry who can be trusted to make the play at the end of the day."

As a pitcher and captain, Wheeler also believes that he brings an unparalleled leadership to his team: "Let's face it, when the game is on the line, they want the ball in my hands."

He explains that because the team has played together for several years, "We are definitely a strongly bonded unit on the field"

While pitching has been one of the Panthers' greatest weaknesses over the past several years, a strong staff may help to bring the team to victory. Wheeler argues, "This pitching staff is the best in the section, hands down. [Matt] Fraudin is going to be unbelievable. Roberto [Capriotti] and Scott [McMurtry] are going to really step up their games this year and give us some wins."

However, even though this season may look bright for the graduating class, some members of the team are worried about what the future may hold for the Panthers baseball squad. Wheeler concludes, "The team is losing so many strong pitchers this year. The pitching staff next year could be pretty shaky unless some players step up. Hopefully, the best works out for those teams."

#### 2008 World Series suffers a "no hitter"

By: Tyler Feldman Guest Writer

After many surprises during the 2008 Postseason, the biggest shocker came when two heavily favored underdogs won their way into the World Series. Those two teams were the Philadelphia Phillies from the National League and the Tampa Bay Rays from the American League. Phillies, who had not won a World Series in 20 years and the Rays, who had not had a winning season since the start of their franchise in 1998, caused a ridiculous drop in television ratings for this year's World Series.

Only the true fans know the miraculous story of the 2008 Tampa Bay Rays. After being in the dumps for the past nine years, the Rays, with new management and new players, came out and won the American East Division: probably the hardest division in the Major Leagues. Unfortunately, many people did not know and did not follow the success story of the 2008 Rays, causing many analysts to believe that that was one of the reasons for the huge drop in ratings.

As well as the Rays lack of popularity, another problem was that the Phillies do not have a storied history in baseball. Most notably, the Phillies were the first team in over 100 years of baseball to reach 10,000 losses, a difficult feat to come by.

The problem with playoff baseball is that it ties into the start of the football season. That reason is a big problem because football is the most

The Phillies take the field at Citizens Bank Park (Courtesy of Scott Wescott)

popular sport in America. Another wall that had to be climbed during the 2008 World Series was the weather. The problem was not apparent in Tampa Bay because the ballpark is indoors, but it was a much bigger issue for the games that were played in "Philthadelphia." The weather was so cold and rainy that Game five of the World Series had to be postponed in the sixth inning due to a down-

pour. The weather was so bad the next day that the game had to be postponed again. The game was not completed until Monday, October 27. Game five ended in the least magical World Series clincher in the history of baseball. The game was long overdue and the weather became too much of a factor.

This has made Major League Baseball and the Commissioner Bud Selig to think about how to make October better. One idea that has been discussed heavily since the end of the 2008 season is the idea of moving the World Series to a neutral site, like the way the NFL does the Super Bowl. However, this does not sit well with several baseball fans because they feel that if their team makes it to the World Series, they shouldn't have to drive to some picked-out-of-ahat site to play postseason ball. Also, while the Super Bowl is just one game, the World Series could be up to seven games. Moving the World Series to a neutral site would ruin the atmosphere of what baseball is all about, passionate fans cheering on their team in their hometown.

Hopefully by next year baseball will get back on track and make people want to watch baseball again.

## Pitt football surges back to victory; returns to post-season bowl

By: JP Gooderham Editor-in-Chief

In 2004, the University of Pittsburgh returned to national prominence by capturing the Big East conference title and advancing to the Bowl Championship Series' Fiesta Bowl. Following a crushing defeat at the hands of the Utah Utes led by Alex Smith and coach Urban Meyer (who went on to be drafted in the NFL's first round and capture a BCS Championship respectively), the Pitt football program has changed rapidly. Before the 2005 season, head coach Walt Harris left the team, and was replaced by Dave Wannstedt, a former player for the University of Pittsburgh during the 1970s.

Under Wannstedt, Pitt consistently failed to advance to postseason bowl games, and disappointed many optimistic fans during each season. Fortunately, after closing the 2007 season with an unexpected victory over national championship-bound West Virginia University, Pitt returned to the winning tradition for the first time under Wannstedt during 2008.

"The Panthers (7-2, 3-1 Big East) assured themselves of their first bowl bid and winning season in coach Dave Wannstedt's four years, using Louisville's numerous mistakes — including two fumbled punts — to overcome LeSean McCoy's careerlow 39 yards rushing" (www.espn.com).

Indeed, Pitt's victory over Louisville, traditionally a powerhouse in the Big East conference, guaranteed the team a spot in the postseason. However, with only a single loss in the conference at that point, the team set its

The Pitt Panthers get ready to take the field (Courtesy of Marissa Murin)

sights on capturing another Big

East title in the pursuit of anoth-

er BCS bowl berth.

In addition to an impressive win over Louisville, Pitt also defeated the highly ranked South Florida Bulls during an away game in October. The victory

against South Florida automati-

cally placed Pitt in a position to

capture the Big East title. To finish the season, Pitt will face Cincinnati, West Virginia, and Connecticut – all have been considered contenders for the Big East title over the course of the season.

Pitt's success, in many ways, has been the result of strong leadership from seniors, as well as some young stars. Of course, this leadership has led to many accolades and awards in addition to victories. "The Maxwell Football Club today announced that Pitt senior middle linebacker Scott McKillop and sophomore tailback LeSean McCoy are semifinalists for two of the country's most prestigious player-ofthe-year awards. McKillop is one of 15 semifinalists for the Chuck Bednarik Award, annually presented to the country's Outstanding Defensive Player of the Year. McCoy is one of 15 players named a semifinalist for the Maxwell Award, given to the Collegiate Player of the Year" (www.pittsburghpanthers.com).

Though this season has proven to be substantially better than the last several for the Panthers squad, the team still has numerous obstacles to overcome in order to establish the team as a national threat and able to reach a BCS bowl consistently.

## Lance Armstrong announces return to pro-cycling

By: Madeline Kushner Photography Editor

On September 9, Lance Armstrong announced to the public his return to pro-cycling. As a result of this decision, Armstrong plans to go for an eighth win at the Tour de France.

"[The Tour de France] is the intention, but we've got some homework to do over there," says an Armstrong spokesperson, Mark Higgins (www.kansascity.com).

Armstrong, who first retired in 2005, feels that despite his age, he can still race. "Look at the Olympics. You have a swimmer like Dara Torres. Even in the 50m (freestyle) the 41-year-old mother proved you can do it," said the cyclist in an interview with Vanity Fair.

A friend of the Tour de France winner, George Hincapie, is also very excited for Armstrong's return. Hincapie feels that Armstrong has, "done more than anything anybody's ever done for cycling" (www.poligazette.com).

Winning the Tour de France is not Lance's main reason for reentering the cycling game; his main concentration is cancer. In addition to Armstrong's foundation, LiveStrong, which donates its profits to cancer research, Lance wants to spread cancer awareness through his cycling (www.poligazette.com).

"It's now time to address cancer on a global level," announced the cyclist.

Armstrong was originally diagnosed with testicular cancer in 1996. The cancer then spread to his lungs, abdomen, and brain as well. Armstrong then underwent surgery and took a drug called VIP to eliminate the cancer in his lungs. Fortunately, the treatment worked and Armstrong was able to go on and win seven Tour de France races.

As a result of Armstrong's battle against cancer, he feels it is his responsibility to spread awareness of the growing cancer epidemic sweeping the world. It was estimated that over one million Americans have been diagnosed with cancer this year. Within that one million, though, only half have survived (www.cancer.org).

Throughout the world, the epidemic is even larger. Lance Armstrong himself said in a press conference that nearly eight million people are diagnosed with cancer worldwide.

Armstrong will begin his return to cycling by racing in Australia at the Tour de Under on January 18-25 (www.tourdownunder.com).

### **Before They Were Seniors**By:J.P. Gooderham

Editor-in-Chief

**Initials:** CTR

**Birth date:** 6-16-91 Best friend(s): Amy Twerdok and Kate Lester First word: Outside Favorite color: Pink! Best high school memory: Music Dept. trip to Disney

Favorite extracurricular activi ty: CHANGES club

Favorite teacher: Mrs. Robbibaro

Years in USC: My whole life Future Plans: Peace Corps

The Express: A story of triumph and tragedy

By: Nick Buzzelli **Assistant Sports Editor** 

World

One of the newest inspiring sports films this year is the The Express, which tells the story of Ernie Davis, the first African American to win the Heisman trophy. Along his journey, Davis faces racism and adversity. Gary Fleder directs the heart-warming motion picture which stars Rob Brown and Dennis Quaid. The film derives the title from a book called the Elmira Express, by Robert C. Gallagher.

In the film, Ernie Davis is shown growing up in Uniontown, Pennsylvania with his grandparents. Once Ernie learns the story of Jackie Robinson, the first African American to play Major League baseball, he knows he wanted to be an athlete. After moving to Elmira, New York to live with his mother and step-father, Davis found his passion for football. When Ernie was a senior in high school he received over 50 scholarship offers from some of the top football programs in the country, which was rare for a black athlete at the time. Davis ultimately chooses to attend Syracuse University, hoping to follow in the footsteps of

**Birth date:** 8-27-91 Best friend(s): Mary Kate Billotte, Grace Hardwick, and Christine Prorok

**Initials:** GAP

First word: Apple Favorite color: Green Best high school memory: Hanging out with friends

Favorite extracurricular activitv: Crew Favorite teacher: Mr. Miller

Years in USC: 5 1/2 Future Plans: College for **Elementary Education** 

Orangemen great, Jim Brown.

Ernie Davis led Syracuse to a National Championship in 1959 during his sophomore year, and as a senior he won the most covanent award in college football, the Heisman trophy. Upon winning the Heisman, Davis became the first African American to be awarded the trophy. While Ernie was in New York to accept his award, President John F. Kennedy requested to meet the top college football player. Ernie Davis was drafted by the Washington Redskins in 1962 and then almost immediately traded to the Cleveland Browns where Ernie Davis and Jim Brown were projected to be one of the best running back duos in football histo-

The film received both positive and negative reviews, with the average review score (wwwmoviefone.com). Express is criticized for a scene in which West Virginia fans were shown throwing trash at the Syracuse players. Fans and former players in attendance during the game noted that the scene did not actually occur. Mountaineers and Orangemen played their 1959 meeting in Syracuse, instead of in West

#### New best sellers spark teen interest

By: Julianne Tarullo Front Page Editor

Looking for a good read? Whether searching for adventure and survival, fantasy, or an emotional heart- wrencher this season has it. This fall brings a plethora of teen novels ranging from fantasy fiction, to chick lits in a variety of stories bound to capture the attention of teenage readers.

When looking for an action novel with a twisted scenario, check out The Hunger Games. Suzanne Collins gives the reader a taste of cruelty and competition in this gripping novel about a fight for survival. In the future nation of Panem, sixteen- year- old Katniss is chosen to use everything she knows to survive during the annual Hunger Games, an intense battle to death, which the totalitarian government uses as a means of threat to the people (http://www.barnesandnoble.com /subjects/teens/index.asp).

Gossip Girl meets Harry Potter. In the new Blue Bloods Virginia where the film portrays. Dick Easterly was the Syracuse quarterback that day and feels ashamed that the film would present the scene that way. "I apologize to the people of West Virginia because that did not happen," Easterly said (www.dailymail.com).

Mickey Furfari was in the press box during that game. "It's pure fiction," said Furfari, who has been covering WVU football for over 62 years. "Ben Schwartzwalder would turn over in his grave about this."

Unfortunately, during preparations for the college football All-star game, Ernie Davis was diagnosed with leukemia. Originally, team owner Art Modell projected Davis to only miss one season, but in 1963 at the age of 23, Ernie Davis died from acute monocytic leukemia. His number 44 is now retired by Syracuse University and the Browns retired his number 45, although he never appeared in a game for Cleveland. Ernie Davis came from a small coal mining town to the top ranks of college football. The Express is an inspiring true story about one man's struggle to play the game that he loves.

#### The Haunting of Molly Hartley fails to "haunt" audiences

By: Ali Cupelli Entertainment Editor

"I know what you are," says the voice haunts Molly Hartley the whole movie. The Haunting of Molly Hartley is about a seventeen year old girl who is disturbed by memories of when her mother tried to stab Molly (Haley Bennett) to death with a pair of scissors. Chelsea Bain of Boston Globe commented that "Molly Hartley is dull at worst and surprisingly spooky at best" (www.metacritic.com).

At the beginning of the movie, a girl is walking through the woods and eventually meets with her boyfriend. Her dad

catches her with her boyfriend and tells her that they need to leave. The two get into the car and he begins to ramble on about how she cannot turn eighteen because she will die. The girl is very confused and does not understand what her father is saying. The two then get into a car accident and the girl dies. The opening has no relevance to the rest of the movie and just makes the plot even more confusing than it already is (www.eonline.com).

Quite frankly, this movie was absolutely horrendous. It's supposed to be a haunting of Molly Hartley, but it just turns out that she is just going insane. She has visions of her psycho mother,

she hears voices, and she sees things that should not be seen. Whenever Molly's mother appears one cannot be sure whether Molly's mom is actually there, or it's just a figment of her imagination.

Liz Grodin, a senior at USCHS said that "Chace Crawford is gorgeous, but the plot was really stupid."

Melissa Ebeck, also a senior at USCHS noted that "the plot was really confusing. I had to ask my friend several times what was going on."

The whole movie was full of annoying characters, scary music, and cheap thrills. When the movie ends, one is shocked and unable series by Melissa de la Cruz, action combines with chick lit to form an intriguing tale of a young vampire girl unraveling the secrets of her ancient past. In the first novel, Blue Bloods, Schuyler Van Alen discovers mysterious secrets of her background, teaming up with an unlikely ally from her private New York City school. The second novel in the series, Masquerade, takes readers on an expedition to Venice, Italy, while Schuyler hopes to find explanations for mysterious deaths of young blue bloods. This October, Revelations revealed another teenage tale of suspense, when the vampires find themselves fighting an ancient nemesis in Brazil (http://melissadelacruz.com).

This season, Brisingr by Christopher Paolini, ranks among teen bestsellers. This novel is a classic adventure novel that seems to be a hit among young adults. Eragon and his dragon, Saphira, encounter life threatening experiences and adventures leading to a tangle of promises and sacrifices (http://www.borders.com).

Released in August, Identical, by Ellen Hopkins brings an emotional journey about two twins and the problems they endure. Kaeleigh and Raeanne suffer through life each with deep secrets that seem to be haunting them. Their family appears to be picture perfect, but nothing is as it seems in this powerful novel of revenge and jealousy. Readers will find this book filled with intensity and emotion while following the girls' twisted lives (http://www.fantasticfiction.com

Recently, students have been interested in a number of different books. When asked what novels they were interested at the time, several students replied that they were reading the Twilight series by Stephenie Meyer. Another student said she was reading This Lullaby by Sarah Dessen. Other students said that they were really interested in reading The Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins.

#### Mamma Mia parties in Pittsburgh

By: Madeline Kushner

Assistant Entertainment Editor

On November Mamma Mia made a reoccurring appearance at the Benedum Theatre in downtown Pittsburgh. The musical was part of the "Broadway across America"

Mamma Mia, featuring 22 of ABBA's hit songs, originally opened in London on March 23, 1999, in the Prince Edward Theatre.

Mamma Mia, originally starring Lisa Stokke and Siobhán McCarthy, chronicles a daughter (Sophie) and her marriage. But, before she gets married, Sophie would like to figure out who her true father is, for her mother (Donna) had overlapping relationships with three different men (Sam, Bill, and Harry). So, after discovering her mother's diary, Sophie decides to invite all three of her possible dads to her wedding. But what Sophie does not realize is the chaos she has just brought to her small Greek island. Sophie and her mother then embark on a journey of true and self (www.mamma-mia.com).

In the Pittsburgh version, Sophie is played by Rose Sezniak and Donna is played by Susie McMonagle. The two are accompanied by an amazing cast that truly makes the show enjoyable to the eyes and ears. In addition to the show's fabulous upbeat songs and stellar choreography, the production is accompanied by great acting. But what truly made the show so great is the witty sarcastic remarks made by almost every character in the

to understand what was just watched. Not only was this movie a terrible horror flick, but its biggest problem was that the movie was extremely forgettable. Questions, such as "What was that?", "Uh what just happened?",

By the end of the night, the audience was dancing in their seats and fighting the urge to sing along to the well-known tunes. When the curtain call came, not only did the cast receive a standing ovation, but the cast also preformed two encore songs, during which six of the main characters came out sporting, neon, seventies attire.

At the end of the show, McMonagle briefly explained about the "Equity Against Aids" Foudnation. The foundation raises money through different companies across America to help fight aids. So, at the end of the show, a few actors rushed off stage with buckets and stood by the exits of the theatre. The actors collected money for the cause and sold some special edition memorabilia from the show.

To add to the show's popularity, Universal Pictures adapted the show into a motion picture. The movie featured many big names, such as Meryl Streep as Donna, Amanda Seyfried as Sophie, Pierce Brosnan, Colin Firth, Dominic Cooper. The movie also grossed about \$63 million in the first week (www.thenumbers.com).

"It is a ridiculously fun movie to see with your friends," says Kate Groschner, a sophomore at Upper St. Clair High School.

Even though the movie did cut out about half of the songs from the show, it was still a success. The movie received a four out of five in a review given by the New York Times (www.nytimes.com).

Who is the idiot director that filmed this movie?" and many others, arise as soon as the credits roll. The Haunting of Molly Hartley is not worth the \$10.00 ticket price. Do not waste the time or the money!