

Students enjoy international breakfast.  
**INTERNATIONAL WEEK / FEATURES/ PAGE 5**



College football fans demand playoff system.  
**FOOTBALL / SPORTS / PAGE 7**

Kevin Goodlett works hard at Montage.  
**MONTAGE / FEATURES / PAGE 5**



# The St. Clairion

Volume 10, Issue 3 - January 2009 - Upper St. Clair High School Pittsburgh, PA 15241

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

## Obama creates his dream team

By: Marni Schreiber  
News Editor

President-Elect Obama has not had much time to rest since his enormous election victory over Senator John McCain on November 4. Since then, Obama has been busy making appointments and decisions that could affect his entire term as president.

One of Obama's most important choices, due to the current economic crisis, is his Secretary of the Treasury. With many men under consideration, Obama finally decided on the president of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, Timothy Geithner.

Obama hopes that Geithner and his team will be able to help settle the economic crisis the

country has fallen into. Geithner explains that "We're going to need to change a whole bunch of aspects of our financial system. We should not have a system that's this fragile, that causes this much risk to the economy" (www.time.com).

In addition to the Treasury Secretary, the position of National Economic Council Director will also be vitally important. Obama has chosen the controversial Lawrence Summers, the former Treasury Secretary under Clinton.

Summers is more than qualified for the position and has already been advising Obama on the crisis. Of



President-elect Barack Obama and vice-president elect Joe Biden arrive to announce more cabinet nominees on Monday, December 15, 2008, in Chicago, Illinois. Lisa Jackson, left, former head of New Jersey's environmental agency, is Obama's choice as EPA administrator. Carol Browner is to lead a White House council on energy and climate. (Nancy Stone/Chicago Tribune/MCT)

his time off, Summers said that he had "spent the last several years thinking about a range of the issues from globalization to the financial crisis to American health-care and energy policy. I'm glad to be in a position where I can use some of that thinking to help shape public policy" (www.boston.com).

The position of Secretary of State, of course, is also of extreme importance. And Obama has chosen none other than Hillary Clinton to take this esteemed position.

Of course, Clinton is extremely qualified and deserving of this position. Current Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, explains of Clinton: "I know her to be

somebody who has what you need most in this job: which is a deep love of the United States of America" (www.news.bbc.co).

Clinton has recently said that "The American people have demanded not just a new direction at home, but a new effort to renew America's standing in the world as a force for positive change" (www.news.bbc.co).

There have been many other appointments made by Obama to make his perfect team. Most notably, the appointment of Governor Janet Napolitano (D-Arizona) as Homeland Security Secretary, Governor Bill Richardson (D-New Mexico) as Commerce Secretary, and Robert Gates, a left over of the Bush Administration, as Defense Secretary.

## Upper St. Clair students travel to aid children in the Dominican Republic

By: JP Gooderham  
Editor-in-Chief

In the fall of 2008, a group of Upper St. Clair students, teachers, and parents traveled to the Dominican Republic once again. Kids Helping Kids spent a week in the island nation providing services ranging from medical support to transporting supplies to the island's inhabitants, plagued by the many problems that widespread poverty entails.

Senior Alexa Bartusiak notes, "I decided to go because my best friends went on the trip last year, and told me it would change my life. I wanted to experience what they said was the best week of their lives and better people's lives, even if just in a small way."

While the group certainly gave a lot of needed assistance to those they visited in the Dominican Republic, the students believe they took away many positive ideas from the experience. Brian Gaudio, a senior, explains, "I took away a lot from the trip. I realized from the trip that I was lucky to be born in the United States. I could have just as easily been born in the Dominican Republic, and I

would have no opportunities to succeed in life. I know I have to take advantages of the opportunities I have been given as a result of being born into a family in a place like Upper St. Clair."

Bartusiak expresses a similar feeling: "We're all so grateful for what we have now. I'm thankful for having a Dad, because in [the



USCHS students enjoy the beauty of the Dominican countryside. Photo courtesy of Lisa Volpatti

Dominican Republic], fathers don't really stick around, so going down there with my Dad made it a really special experience." She also feels that "becoming friends with all the locals was really amazing considering they don't speak English, so some of us became really good Spanish speakers through talking with them. It was great seeing how happy we made the people there. One day my dad gave a boy a bag

of beef jerky and he ran off with it and shared it with his friends. They all smiled and ate it. It was really nice seeing how happy they were to have something to eat."

Gaudio states: "My favorite thing about the trip was interacting with the people. It is really refreshing to see that the people's attitude about life was so positive.

Even though the people have so little, they are still very willing to give to you."

He also believes that the trip taught him that "helping others really makes you happy. A lot of what I do for fun in my community doesn't give me the same satisfaction." He clarifies, "I was guilty of this too, but a lot of us have always lived in this type of lifestyle. I learned that there is another side to the coin. The trip really opens your eyes to how lucky you are, but the feeling of helping others is very genuine. It gives you a new outlook on life."

Chrissy Rojcewicz, a senior, notes that "The students who went on the trip definitely had a noticeable change in attitude after returning."

Kids Helping Kids will return to the Dominican Republic in the spring of 2009.

## STAND "stands against" genocide

By: Greg Schlosser  
Sports Editor

Every other Thursday, students from all grades gather in room 127 to raise money and discuss what needs to be done to end genocide in the world. These students focus on the areas of Darfur, Iraq, Sri Lanka, Somalia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

"STAND is a club that tries to raise awareness of instances of genocide throughout the world and to raise money for the victims of genocide," stated Vice President of the club Sam Humbert.

STAND is "entirely student-run, led by a Leadership Team of college and high school students around the country who are dedicated to ending genocide. Through daily emails, weekly conference calls, and once a semester strategy retreats in Washington, D.C., the STAND Leadership Team develops, implements, and delivers campaigns and materials to chapters all over the world" (www.standnow.org).

And to reach some of these goals, STAND has some different means of raising money. For example, STAND has an event called STAND FAST, which encourages students to give up something for the day (like ice cream or coffee), and donate the money to stopping genocide around the world. Also, STAND plans to have a Darfur Dance in the spring and has bake sales at points during the year.

Even though students join STAND to stop genocide, some have other reasons to support STAND as well. For example, member Christina Hlutkowsky joined because "it's a good cause and I am helping people that are less fortunate than me."

"I joined because [stopping genocide] is important to me and I want to make a difference," said Humbert.

Despite having a serious tone, STAND has a lighter side as food and fun often make its way into the meetings. For example, STAND just had an end-of-year party to celebrate their first semester success.

Panther  
Predilections

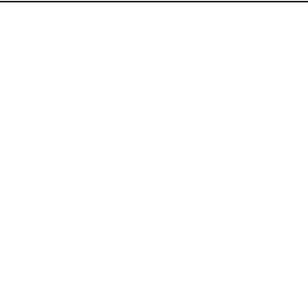
What is your New Years  
Resolution?



“I want to be an intern at  
CMU”  
– Dan Ryave  
Freshman



“Continue giving love to  
my amazing family.”  
– Sarah Ismael  
Sophomore



“To notice what I don’t  
normally notice.”  
– James Leyden  
Junior



“I don’t believe in making  
them because I always  
break them.”  
– Christine Prorok  
Senior

By: Madeline Kushner &  
Alaina Zemanick  
Photographers

Desk of the Editor

Students should get active in  
fighting global warming

By: JP Gooderham  
Editor-in-Chief

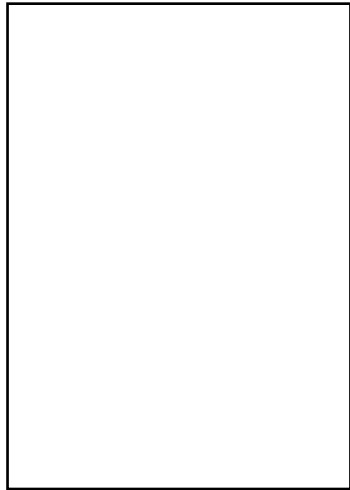
The earth is undergoing an unprecedented change in climate. While scientists, policy-makers, and the general public often disagree over the cause of this change, that fact is undeniable.

A December 16, 2008, report found that “More than 2 trillion tons of land ice in Greenland, Antarctica and Alaska have melted since 2003, according to new NASA satellite data that show the latest signs of what scientists say is global warming” (www.associatedpress.com).

After hundreds of years of consuming and destroying the earth’s natural resources while releasing harmful elements into the environment, the negative consequences are beginning to show. In many scientists’ opinion, these contributions by man are directly responsible for the dramatic environmental changes that threaten life on earth.

Though some claim that these dramatic changes may be a nat-

ural part of life, global warming advocates see an underlying motive driving the argument. David Laurie, founder of Stop



Editor-in-Chief JP Gooderham

Global Warming, reports, “Exxon Mobil [...] has done everything possible to muddle public understanding of global warming and stifle any serious effort to solve it. It has run ads in leading newspapers [...] questioning the role of man-made emissions in global warming, and financed the work of a small band of scientific skeptics

who have tried to challenge the consensus that heat-trapping pollution is drastically altering our atmosphere. The company spends millions to support groups such as the Competitive Enterprise Institute that aggressively pressure lawmakers to oppose emission limits” (www.washingtonpost.com).

Though the global warming debate will inevitably continue for years, many students have accepted the fact that man has, in fact, at least partially created the current problem.

As a new generation prepares to join “adult society,” we have a responsibility to help in solving the global crisis.

Professor Robert Turner of Colgate University explains, “We need to be more mindful in our every day lives; monitor how much you drive, use less heat in your home by turning down the thermostat and making sure your house is properly insulated, and don’t hesitate to let politicians know the importance of environmental issues” (www.blogs.colgate.edu).

Though, as students, we nei-

ther own homes nor have a significant voice in politics, we may still take steps to limit our contribution to the problem. As Turner notes, we may advise our parents to use less heat in our homes, or our teenage drivers may strive to carpool or find other means of travel.

StopGlobalWarming.org also recommends encouraging your family to recycle household waste if you do not do so already, using reusable products for drinking and eating (for instance, packing a lunch in a lunchbox instead of a paper bag), or encouraging legislators to take action on this issue.

In our own school, we have access to numerous paper and plastic recycling bins provided by our school’s club, which ensure that students have the opportunity to help.

Global warming is a problem that lacks any quick or simple solution. However, humanity, as a whole, must begin taking steps to address the problem, or we will inevitably face the consequences for the rest of our lives and the generations that follow.

Talking on behalf of innocent animals

By: Marni Schreiber  
News Editor

There are many Americans every year that visit a traveling or stationary circus in their town. While the circus may seem like a fun way to spend the afternoon as a child, or even an adult, one should think twice before going to a circus with animal performances. Audiences should ask themselves if tortured animals are worth the entertainment.

Some of the most popular attractions at the circus involve the elephants and tigers performing. While it may be funny to some, the fact is that those animals are forced to do those tricks day after day, while living in inhumane conditions, and being whipped and tortured if they do not do the trick correctly.

Well it may seem obvious to say, wild animals are not accustomed to jumping through hoops or standing on their heads.

To force these animals to do such rudimentary tricks, extreme and extremely harmful measures need to be taken.

Caught on tape, elephant trainer Tim Frisco was heard explaining to a fellow trainer to “Sink that hook into ’em. When you hear that screaming, then you know you got their a t t e n t i o n ” (www.circuses.com).

Trainers do not only use hooks to rip through an animal’s skin as a matter of training: “Animals are beaten, shocked, and whipped to make them perform—over and over again—tricks that make no sense to them [...] Trainers drug some animals to make them ‘manageable’ and surgically remove the teeth and claws from others” (www.peta.org).

Even when an animal is not performing, they are not much better off.

The living conditions for circuses are all but humane. The animals used in a traveling show are forced into tiny com-

partments which are hardly wide enough to turn around in. The animals are not given an adequate amount of water or food to drink, and are not given the precautions to deal with the extreme weather of the winter (www.starbreezes.com).

Elephants, because they are so big, usually receive the harshest treatment: “Elephants are kept with their feet chained down for long periods of time. Baby elephants are prematurely removed from their mothers for the purpose of early training” (www.starbreezes.com).

The effects of living in a circus not only affect the animals physically, but mentally as well. Because the animals are not given the proper exercise, food, or living conditions, they begin to self-mutilate (www.downbound.com).

In addition, one might be curious as to what happens to the animals after they “retire” from performing. With circus animals, “[a]s with many other forms of animal ‘entertain-

ment’, once the animal can no longer perform, it is not much value to the circus. They may be permanently caged, sold to a game farm to be hunted, or sold to a lab” (www.starbreezes.com).

Some steps to stop these inhumane practices are to spread awareness, sign petitions, organize rallies, boycott, and talk to lawmakers for support.

Another option is to simply urge people to go to animal-free circuses.

It is everybody’s responsibility to try and stop this total mistreatment and exploitation of innocent animals.

Dr. Desmond Morris, an anthropologist, animal behaviorist, and author, sums it up: “The idea that it is funny to see wild animals coerced into acting like clumsy humans, or thrilling to see powerful beasts reduced to cringing cowards by a whipcracking trainer is primitive and medieval” (www.circuses.com).

The St. Clairion  
Upper St. Clair, PA

Editor-In-Chief  
JP Gooderham  
Opinions Editors  
Dallion L. Townsend  
News Editor  
Marni Schrieber  
Features Editor  
Alaina Zemanick  
Sports Editor  
Greg Schlosser

Assis. Sports Editor  
Nick Buzzelli  
Entertainment Editor  
Ali Cupelli  
Front Page Editor  
Julianne Tarullo  
Photography Editor  
Madeline Kushner  
Photographers  
Madeline Kushner  
Alaina Zemanick  
Sponsor  
Ms. Caty DeWalt

The St. Clairion staff is made up of students who are committed to producing a newspaper for their fellow students that provides entertainment, self-expression, and relevant information in a fair, honest, thorough, and respectful manner.  
The newspaper is financed by the sale of advertisement space to local businesses. Advertising rates will be sent to any business upon request.

The St. Clarion is a forum for student expression. Opinions expressed in by-lined articles are those of the authors, not necessarily the entire St. Clairion staff.  
Letters to the editor are encouraged. All letters should be signed and submitted to The St. Clairion mailbox in the main office.  
Obscene, libelous, or otherwise inappropriate letters will not be printed.

St. Clairion Editorial

# Honor Code has commonly missed value for students

The announcement that students would be required to write the Honor Pledge on every classroom assignment had left a lot of students upset, and understandably so.

Who wants to spend the extra time memorizing and writing the pledge on tests when some of us are already pressing for time to finish our work? The buzz has died down a bit, but according to Dr. Ghilani, the discussion in the beginning of the year was actually a positive.

“The fact that students are actually talking about it is really a positive thing. It shows that they understand that we are planning on doing something about one of the biggest problems at the high school,” stated Dr. Ghilani.

According to our Middle States Assessment from last year, just under 70% of the students in the high school admit to cheating in some form.

Assistant Principal Mr. Palmer explains, “We did a lot of research including bringing in an expert from Duke University through a grant from the community foundation of Upper St. Clair. Her findings were that cheating

was a problem in the very competitive environment of our high school.”

Most students participate in many activities, hold after school jobs, and have very little free time to take care of homework.

In this environment, students are more likely to copy homework in homeroom or free periods to catch up on work they may have missed or ignored the night before.

Dr. Ghilani and Mr. Palmer set up the Ethics Committee which is made up of students, teachers, parents, counselors, and members of the administration.

The Student Honor Pledge and Beliefs Statement are two of the products from the committee.

Mr. Palmer adds, “One thing we are going to do is track, over time, our progress based on the number of cheating referrals to see if we’re progressing towards our Middle States goal.” Dr. Ghilani explains that the number of students who turned themselves in this year for cheating has increased drastically since the new policy has been implemented.

Pledges, particularly of this

variety, are usually reserved for colleges and private schools. “Students are still in the ‘St. Clair bubble’ and we don’t feel that we would be doing justice to them on issues of cheating and plagiarism at the college level where the consequences are much more severe—namely expulsion,” states Mr. Palmer.

However, this policy will not be a “cure-all” for this problem. “I do not think this will completely curtail cheating. We feel that a constant reminder [...] can go a long way in creating a culture of trust and integrity amongst our students,” suggests Mr. Palmer.

He also explains, “I’m not solving all cheating issues at USC—that’s not the case. But even as adults and educators, we need to take responsibility for curbing cheating.”

As educators, the teachers can take some responsibility as well.

For example, English teacher Mr. Sabram makes multiple versions of the same test to curb cheating. Foreign language teacher Ms. Rennhoff prefers to assign in-class essays over take home essays because it is a lot easier

to find methods of cheating at home with modern technology like e-mail and instant messenger. She also suggests that keeping a vigilant eye on students who are taking tests in class will go a long way in catching them in the act.

Let’s face it. Most students have copied homework at some point or another, and writing the honor pledge is a pain at times.

But if we get caught cheating here, we get a call home and a few mods of detention. However, as Mr. Palmer mentioned, the consequences from “bad academic decisions” lead to automatic expulsion in institutions of higher learning.

Like it or not, Upper St. Clair High School is academically challenging. Teachers often correctly suggest in class, that they teach a certain way to prepare students for college.

Write the honor pledge. Instead of ripping the men in charge for putting the policy into effect, thank them. They have already established a competitive academic environment for us and they are doing everything in their power to give us yet another edge. Appreciate it.

## Panther Predilections

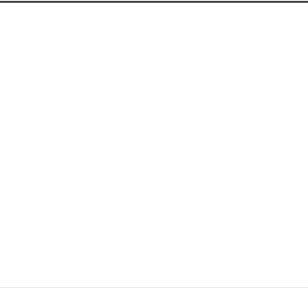
What is your New Years Resolution?



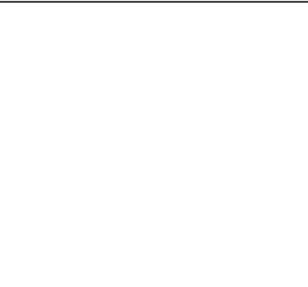
*“I forget what they were.”*  
–Liz Alterr  
Freshman



*“To release the demo for Loose Interpretation.”*  
– Gordon White  
Sophomore



*“To take the ultimate SMEZ Group photo.”*  
– Emily Summers  
Junior



*“I want to be Greek.”*  
– George Zanic  
Senior

By: Madeline Kushner & Alaina Zemanick  
Photographers

# Energy drinks are dangerous to health

Vijay Viswanathan  
Guest Writer

High doses of caffeine can cause cardiac arrhythmia (Sudden Adult Death Syndrome), a condition often caused by amphetamines like “Speed” (www.ajcn.org). This condition is due to too much electrical action going on in the heart. It’s basically a seizure for the heart, and often causes cardiac arrest and death. (http://www.ajcn.org). In 2000, Ross Cooney, a healthy Irish basketball player, died a couple hours after he and his friends consumed four bottles of Red Bull (www.medicalnewstoday.com). An autopsy diagnosed the cause of death as cardiac arrhythmia. These tragedies are not as uncommon as you would believe. In addition, caffeine is often used as a natural pesticide to paralyze and kill bugs. Drinking energy drinks is a lot like drinking DDT, only this time it’s from a colorful aluminum can.

An acute caffeine overdose is when the average human consumes (American Psychiatric Association). The mellow symptoms of this overdose are restlessness, nervousness, and anxiety. One of the main reasons that people use energy drinks is to stop these symptoms. The severe outcomes are gastrointestinal problems, muscle twitches, irregular heartbeat, psychomotor agitations (random, involuntary, erratic motions). Large overdoses can

even cause depressions, psychosis, mania, hallucinations, delusions, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, panic disorder, or Phobias. A popular energy drink called Wired X-344 has 344 milligrams of caffeine (www.wiredenergydrink.com).

This alone could cause any of these symptoms. High caffeine usage over time can result in peptic ulcers, esophagitis, and gastroesophageal reflux disease (www.csmc.edu).

Recent studies are proving that caffeine is hauntingly similar to street drugs. The American Psychiatric Association conducted a recent study that suggests that frequent caffeine users show withdrawal symptoms, an indicator of addiction. Caffeine is also a stimulant, like its more feared counterparts nicotine, cocaine, methamphetamine, or ecstasy.

Thirty-one percent of teenagers say that they use energy drinks (www.livescience.com). That means that over 7.1 million teens use energy drinks. The energy drink industry now produces over \$3.4 Billion-a-year, and has grown by 80% since last year. Some energy drinks are so “extreme” that they have titles like “Cocaine Energy Drinks” (a company whose motto is, ironically, “The Legal Alternative”). Do you want to risk your health? The choice is yours.

# Proposition 8 is blatant attack on civil rights

By: Marni Schreiber  
News Editor

Proposition 8, a California ballot proposition banning same sex marriages in the state of California, was passed by a vote of 52.3% to 47.7% on November 4, 2008 (www.vote.sos.ca.gov).

Prop 8, however, is a shameful attack on civil rights for many California citizens.

In May of 2008, the California Supreme Court ruled that a limit on marriage would violate the equal protection clause in the California Constitution.

Before the vote on the 4th, ultra conservative and Christian organizations such as ProtectMarriage.com and WhatisProp8.com ran dirty and utterly untrue advertisements to try and trick people into voting “yes” on Proposition 8.

These, along with many other conservative groups ran advertisement all across California. One theme of these dirty advertisements was the idea that children will be forced to learn about gay marriage in school.

Proposition 8 has absolutely nothing to do with education. As a matter of fact, California law prohibits their students to be taught anything about health or family issues without parental

consent.

Concerned parents were afraid that their children would be taught about gay marriage, churches were afraid they would lose tax-exemption status, and that incidents like at the one Massachusetts school would happen in California.

Prop 8 has nothing to do with churches or schools; it is a civil rights issue.

It is completely unjust and unacceptable to discriminate against a certain group of people, and prohibiting gay couples to marry is a blatant prejudice. A distinct group of people are given lesser rights based on their sexuality, which is no different than lesser rights based on race, religion, or sex; all of which have been outlawed in our country’s constitution.

When Proposition 8 was voted into law, the final statement from the no on Prop 8 campaign explained that this vote was a vote “YES to bigotry, YES to discrimination, YES to second-class status for same-sex couples” but “[b]ecause of the struggle fought here in California — fought so incredibly well by the people in this state who love freedom and justice — [the] fight for full civil rights will continue” (www.noonprop8.com).

US reaching an exit strategy for Iraq

By: Madeline Kushner  
Assistant Entertainment Editor

On November 16, after a year’s worth of discussion, the Iraqi cabinet declared that there was an agreement between United States and Iraq on an evacuation plan for American troops. The plan stated that the American forces are to be withdrawn from Iraq by December 2011 (www.cbsnews.com). The plan still has to be voted on by the Iraqi Parliament, which will take place the week of the 24th (www.post-gazette.com).

The plan that was devised between the U.S. and Iraq for the war, which has lasted for five and a half years, was voted on by the twenty-eight members of the Cabinet ministers in Iraq. It was said that twenty-seven of the twenty-

eight Cabinet members voted in favor of the new proposal for withdrawal of the American troops from the region (www.post-gazette.com).



Capt. Andrew Chovancek (center) plans a search of a Baghdad rail yard with Iraqi police and Iraqi army officers. (Adam Ashton/Modesto Bee/MCT)

A few Shiite politicians stated that an important feature in the Cabinet’s decision was the agreement of three conditions proposed by a very important Shiite Cleric, Grand Ayatollah

Ali al-Sistani. The Shiite Cleric made sure that the three conditions were carried out: Iraqi sovereignty, clearness, and a majority’s support for the pact.

The plan implied a set date for the complete evacuation of American forces. The plan also stated more limitations for American troops in Iraq. The plan was said to have taken initiative on January 1, 2009. The plan then goes into detail about how all U.S. troops must be taken out of the metropolitan areas in Iraq by June 30. The deadlines that are explained in the proposal were considered a bit rushed from the perspective of the Bush Administration. “We’re boxed in. We have a highly difficult set of issues to deal with here. We can’t settle for just anything that gets us out of Iraq,” states an administra-

tion official (www.nytimes.com).

Iraq was also granted jurisdiction concerning cases involving critical crimes that were executed by American soldiers who were not on duty at the time. In addition, the jurisdiction granted to Iraq, the Shiites, and Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki were working towards the goal of making an agreement with the United States stating that Iraq’s safety was to assured (www.post-gazette.com).

Michael O’Hanion, an Iraqi expert, explains that “this vote shows that the Iraqis have figured out how to stand up for themselves, to Iran and to the U.S.” (www.post-gazette.com).

President Bush exclaimed that American troops promised to “stay until the job is done” in Iraq. But if the Iraqis do not establish government that they can run themselves, the US forces may enhance their force in Iraq (www.nytimes.com).

Economic downturn continues in the fourth quarter

By: JP Gooderham  
Editor-in-Chief

The economic woes that have changed the shape of markets across the world continued, unfortunately, into the fourth quarter without any sign of stopping.

Indeed, in a survey conducted by the Federal Reserve of Philadelphia on the state of the economy, the experts were strongly convinced that the U.S. has officially entered a recession. “The forecasters think the recession started in April 2008 and will last 14 months. Thirty-five panelists say their forecasts reflect the influence of a new fiscal stimulus package. The size of the stimulus package is estimated at \$211 billion. Out of this amount, the forecasters predict that \$69 billion will go toward government consumption and gross investment, \$54 billion will go toward transfer payments, and \$71 billion will be used for tax cuts” (www.philadelphiafed.com).

In addition to these troubling predictions, economists have also observed the largest market decline in years. “The troubled U.S. economy posted its biggest drop in seven years, according to a government report” (www.cnn.com). Moreover, the “gross domestic product, the broadest measure of the nation’s economic activity, declined 0.5% in the three months ending Sept. 30, according to the Commerce Department” (www.cnn.com).

Fed Governor Lyle Gramley explains, “We are looking at an economy that is not only in a recession, but a recession that is deepening rapidly. It certainly is a gloomy report, but not I guess worse than what you would expect given the data coming in” (www.bloomberg.com).

While the market has not rebounded over the past several months, some experts are optimistic that the government’s efforts to revive the housing and lending markets may stabilize the economy. “The housing market may finally be getting some relief, with lower mortgage rates already encouraging refinancing and Treasury officials considering ways to entice new buyers” (www.nytimes.com).

However, the government will “have a number of obstacles, the biggest being borrowers’ worries that the economic downturn will affect them. Meanwhile the best interest rates will go only to borrowers in sound financial shape. And even if the efforts go as planned, they may not help the most distressed homeowners” (www.nytimes.com).

On balance, the fourth quarter marked continued economic despair. As President-elect Obama prepares to take office with a new economic team, the American public will certainly be waiting to see if Obama can bring the economic change necessary to regain stability.



The Ultimate Summer 2009  
6 Awesome days in Washington DC

You will

- See all that is Washington
- Have fun with students from across the country
- Earn credit from University of Virginia
- Get the inside scoop on your government
- Be with our fun staff 24-7
- Join our 650,000 alums

Dates

- June 7-12
- June 14-19
- June 21-26
- July 2-7 (with National Fireworks July 4th)
- July 12-17

Come alone or with your friends!

Program Highlights

- Capitol Hill
- Supreme Court
- White House
- National Mall & Museums
- Arlington Cemetery
- Evening Socials
- Pentagon 9-11 Memorial
- Air Force Memorial
- Iwo Jima Park
- Vietnam War Memorial
- World War II War Memorial
- Jefferson Memorial
- Lincoln Memorial
- FDR Memorial
- DC Neighborhoods
- Student dance

Close Up Academy • 800-256-7387 • CloseUp.org



Skiers hit top slopes in Pennsylvania

By: Julianne Tarullo  
Front Page Editor

For some, the cold dreary months of winter are dreaded and torturous, but for many, this snowy period is the greatest time of year. Skiers and snowboarders everywhere hit the slopes soon after the first big snowfall of the year in anticipation of their favorite sport. Mountains all over Pennsylvania provide a variety of different slopes for all abilities. Whether looking for a resort with sloping hills or black diamonds, your perfect mountain awaits you.

When looking for beginner slopes and family friendly activities, head to the heart of the Pocono Mountains. Alpine Mountain is the perfect place to teach beginners how to ski and experience their first slopes. The mountain offers programs such as “Just for Kids,” where children, ages four to twelve, are introduced to the sport through a four week program. Alpine Mountain has 21 slopes and five chairlifts. In addition to skiing, your experi-

ence can include snowboarding and tubing. Also, check out the half pipe and terrain park (www.associatedcontent.com).

Located in the scenic mountains of Northeast Pennsylvania, Jack Frost Big Boulder is the most popular ski resort in Pennsylvania. For the price of one, skiers get to experience two mountains with skiing, snowboarding, and tubing. The area has over 40 slopes ranging from beginner to expert. This resort is known for its variety in activities, such as winter paintball games, and snowmobiling (www.jack-frostbigboulder.com).

Rated number one in Pennsylvania, Blue Mountain Ski Resort provides skiers with a enjoyable thrills. The mountain holds the reputation for the highest vertical drop in all of Pennsylvania at 1,082 feet. This resort offers 33 trails, three of them over a mile long. Unlike the long wait to get up the mountain at other resorts, Blue Mountain has 10 lifts, including the high speed detachable Six Pack Lift. When skiers get hungry, they can

head to either the upper or lower mountain lodge. Both lodges provide a warm, smoke-free environment where skiers can relax and fuel up for the afternoon. The many dining opportunities nearby the resort will also keep the long term visitors satisfied (www.tripcart.com).

For a quiet and relaxing day on the slopes, take a trip to Eagle Rock Ski Resort. The spacious skiing and short lines will make your experience comfortable and stress free. This resort has activities for everyone, including a spa and fitness center, casual dining, swimming pools, and not to mention the ski slopes. The 14 slopes of the resort range from beginner to expert, appealing to all different abilities (www.pennsylvania-skiresorts.com).

Many students at the high school enjoy skiing and participate in ski club. One student said, “I definitely like Jack Frost Big Boulder.” Mario Arjona commented, “I like Seven Springs because it is the only slope that can handle my intense shredding abilities.”

International Education Week exposes students to new cultures

By: Julianne Tarullo  
Front Page Editor

Every year, Upper St. Clair High School celebrates relations that exist between many nations around the world. International Education Week at the high school provides students with an opportunity to embrace the diverse cultures around them and learn about different global relations. Activities took place throughout the week of December 1-5, giving students a greater learning experience about how we are related to the many different cultures of the world.

The week kicked off with a “Where in the World have we been?” slide show provided by Mrs. Smigel on Monday. Students could also visit the foreign language tables all day with Ms. Wolf and Mrs. Ali. The tables were run by students fluent in a foreign language.

Students could visit these tables and learn about the different cultures and languages of kids at our school.

Tuesday began with a foreign language breakfast for students at the high school. The meal was provided for the internationally adept students who take two or more languages. The morning included crepes provided by Ms.

Wolf. These students, who exceed language expectations, have a very positive attitude toward their language aspirations. When asked how taking

more than one language will help in the future, junior Caitlin Reid answered, “It will help me with international studies.”

Sophomore Julia Pasquale added, “Latin helps on the SATs and colleges look for strength in languages.”

When questioned on the best thing about taking two lan-

guages, junior Marissa Murin commented, “You get to have fiestas in Spanish and cheese fetes in French.”

On Wednesday students heard speeches from several different organizations and guest speakers. Presentations included Globalization and Business, World-Wide Environmental Protection and Energy Research, Chinese Arts, Kids Helping Kids, Carnegie International Art, and Pittsburgh 250 Years (Past and Future Connections to the World). Sophomore Kevin Christie, who saw the Kids Helping Kids presentation said, “It inspired me to do good in the world.”

IB Future Problem Solving Program with Schenley was held on Thursday, and Friday saw a regional conference sponsored by the World Affairs Council as an in-school field trip with Mrs. Chothani. Another “Where in the World Have We Been?” slide show was presented on Friday wrapping up the week. And, of course, international cookies were sold in the lobby.

The high school literary magazine explodes with creativity

By: Alaina Zemanick  
Features Editor

*Montage*, the high school literary magazine, is an up-and-coming club for all those interested in creative writing. As one of the several high school literary publications, students may be asking, “What really is *Montage*?” Many members answer from the general answers to the most outrageous responses.

“A philosophical question that can’t be answered,” says sophomore Megan Small.

Senior Kevin Goodlett adds, “[*Montage* is] a collective of intelligent people.”

*Montage* includes a staff of over 12 people, publishing an

annual issue of prose, poetry, artwork, and even musical pieces. The job seems hard, so why did the workforce behind *Montage* actually join?

“The blindfold and ropes were very convincing,” jokes Kent Berthoud, a senior.

Goodlett states, “My friends were in it.”

“Why else?” asks Small, “[*Montage*] is a love writing and everything else that comes in the *Montage* bundle.”

Even if there is an eclectic

group of students in *Montage*, there are numerous reasons why their peers should take part in the action.

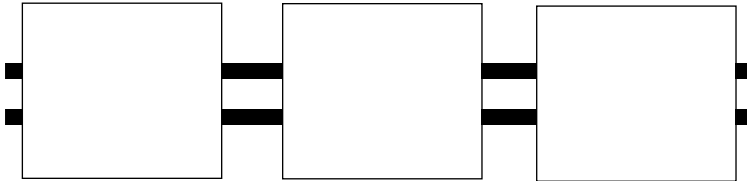
“For their health,” advises Berthoud.

“It is loads of fun!” exclaims Small, “and it is an interesting way to meet new people.”

Goodlett continues, “I think it is a very special thing to have your own work submitted.”

To submit a creative piece to *Montage*, drop it in any of the boxes around the school marked “*Montage*” or hand it in to an English teacher.

Teacher’s Lounge



Mr. Peskorski, engineering and architecture teacher

What is your favorite building from an architectural standpoint?

Frank Lloyd Wright’s Falling Water, for sure. I take my students on a field trip there annually,

What is your favorite sports car and why?

The Corvette because it is a unique american sportscar with a V8 engine. It also has a great sound.

What is your sport to participate in and why?

White water rafting.

I enjoy the challenge against nature, and it’s a good way to be alone and think.

If you could invent something and make a million dollars, what would you create?

A simple process for changing salt water to fresh water.

What would you do if computer’s disappeared?

I would be in the unemployment line.

Starbucks causes Americans to turn over a new leaf

By: Madeline Kushner  
Photography Editor

A common way for a person to start his or her day is with a cup of coffee. Nearly 83% of people in the United States drink coffee. Of those 83%, nearly 90% of the coffee drinkers go to Starbucks to satisfy their coffee needs (starbucksbusinessplan.blogspot.com). So, it is no wonder that good deeds can be accomplished through Starbucks, thanks to its large number of customers.

In Loveland, Colorado, the good deeds of the citizens were all carried out while customers were in line at the drive-through at a Starbucks Coffee. These good

deeds consisted of a person waiting in line at the Starbucks drive-through. When the person pulls up to the window to pay, they are then awarded with a surprise when the cashier tells them that the person who was in front of them in line had already paid for their beverage.

“We pulled up to the window and when we get to the window, the girl in the window says ‘there’s no charge today.’” Lindell Green was free of charge because the woman who was in the drive-through line in front of him had paid for Greens’ drink herself. “It almost [...] took my breath away for a minute. It was such a wonderful surprise,” says Lindell Green, who experienced the generosity at the Starbucks first hand (www.cnn.com).

Green then decided to continue to good deed by passing it on to the person behind him. Green proceeded to pay for the person behind him’s drink.

A worker at the Starbucks in Loveland said that this act of kindness has now become a very common occurrence. The worker stated that this act of charity has continued through a line in the drive-through that consisted of fifteen cars (www.cnn.com).

“The way our economic world is kind of in the pits right now, I think something like this shows how many good people are out there,” says Green (www.cnn.com).

Paying for someone else’s beverage is not the only way that someone can make a difference through Starbucks, though. Starbucks also sells the bottled water brand



Starbucks cups display their appreciation for the “Red” campaign.  
Photo by: Madeline Kushner

known as Ethos Water which gives money to help children around the world get cleaner water. Starbucks is contributing to the “Red” campaign as well. From November 27, 2008 to January 2, 2009, Starbucks will be selling their coffee in special “Red” cups in honor of the campaign. So, with each purchase made at a Starbucks, 5 cents will be donated to help save lives in Africa.

Starbucks also plans to do good by recycling their cups. In 2007, Starbucks recycled nearly 70% of its cups. By the year 2015, Starbucks hopes to recycle 100% of its cups. In the year 2015, Starbucks would also like to try and contribute one million hours of its time to the community by performing simple acts of community service (www.starbucks.com).

## 2008 brought long lasting toys

By: Julianne Tarullo  
Front Page Editor

It seems hard for teenagers these days to get through the day without using at least one of their many electronics. Highest on this list of favorites among teens are mp3 players, digital cameras, and cell phones. 2008 has continued a new era of technology bringing today's most popular teen essentials.

At the top of this year's most popular cell phone list sits the Apple iPhone. Named *Time* magazine's Invention of the Year in 2007, the phone includes features that appeal to both teenagers and adults (www.time.com). The phone functions as an iPod, a cell phone and an internet device. Other features include text messaging, camera phone, visual voice-mail, email, web browsing, and local Wi-Fi connectivity. In July of 2008, the iPhone 3G was released, bringing the device faster 3G data downloads, GPS, and a better battery life (www.gizmodo.com). As of June 2008, Apple had sold 4

million iPhones (www.iphone.macworld.com).

Digital cameras are also a must have for teenagers. The Canon PowerShot A590 IS is the best rated camera of 2008. The camera is known for its great picture quality and performance. The device also offers a plethora



of features including optical image stabilization, face detection, red-eye correction and more. In addition to its great value, the camera provides the user with the option of full manual control or automatic setting (www.consumersearch.com). Everyone knows teens cannot survive without music blasting in their ears every bus ride. Most of these teenagers have some sort of iPod. The most popular iPod of 2008 is the iPod Touch. This multitouch screen device has a large

capacity, web browsing and YouTube applications, and iTunes Wi-Fi Music Store. The device comes in 8, 16, and now 32 GB of flash memory. The second generation iPod now has external volume controls, and a built-in speaker due to popular demand (www.apple.com).

2008 introduced wildly popular electronics that will be used for many years. What will 2009 bring? The newest iPod, the Nano-Chromatic, is expected to be a hit. With its vibrant colors and new aluminum body and an accelerometer, the iPod will appeal to

many, especially teens (www.ubergizmo.com). Nikon Coolpix S60 attracts many to its slim surface design and easy accessible touch controls (www.ashtonscoolpix.com). In addition to these items, 2009 is sure to bring technology to a new level.

Students at the high school keep up with the new electronic fads. One student said she was hoping to get a Canon PowerShot. Another student said she really wanted a purple Nano-Chromatic.

## USCSERVES! serves the community

By: Madeline Kushner  
Photography Editor

As part of the Upper St. Clair High School experience, students are asked to join various after school clubs and activities. On November 26, USCSERVES! had its first meeting. The club's president, Sidney Kushner, discussed up-coming events and new community service activities to be carried out during the year.

USCSERVES! meets at least once a month and

going to be picked up by needy families who either could not afford to buy food for themselves, or to the elderly who cannot travel to the supermarket themselves due to their old age.

After about an hour and a half, the canned food was ready to be picked up the following morning. But, the help that the

club members provided was not nearly as rewarding as the thank you given by the regular volunteers that help at the food pantry monthly.

USCSERVES! members bundle up food at the Food Pantry.  
Photo by: Madeline Kushner

is sponsored by principal Dr. Ghilani. It is a community service club that tries to do as many community service activities in the area as possible. Also, the club tries to come up with many new activities to do throughout the year as well such as Tye-Dying with kids at Boyce Middle School and then donating the Tye-dyed clothing to Pittsburgh Children's Hospital.

USCSERVES! went to their first event in December, helping the Peters Township Food Pantry pack up canned food goods. The food was then

way to get community service hours and help those who need it," says Tatiana Bravo, a participant at the Food Pantry.

USCSERVES! more recent events include gift wrapping at the Galleria Mall on December 14th, 19th, and 21st. In addition, USCSERVES! plans to return to the food pantry monthly starting with January 8th. But, the most anticipated event coming up is that USCSERVES! will carry out is the tye-dying event that will occur at Boyce Middle School during the spring when meetings are so people go.

750,000 satisfied students can't be wrong!



# DriversEd.com

## Drivers Ed - anytime, anywhere you want.

### Take 25% Off!

Use the discount code PA2007A when you sign up.



## Pitt basketball sets its sights on the Final Four

By: JP Gooderham  
Editor-in-Chief

The University of Pittsburgh has fielded men’s basketball teams over the past decade that have brought the program to historic heights. Despite numerous successes in the regular season, Pitt has been unable to advance to the Final Four at the NCAA tournament.

Of course, the current Pitt squad hopes to change that. This season, Pitt’s collection of proven veterans and talented newcomers may be the recipe for success. At the end of last season, Pitt fans were delighted by the return of Sam Young whose NCAA career may have ended had he chosen to enter the NBA Draft. “Even though the Panthers persevered through demoralizing injuries to Mike Cook and LeVance Fields and won the Big East Conference Tournament – a third straight title game berth – a second

round loss in the Big Dance to Michigan State has Young and company thinking about what could have been” (www.sportsmemo.com).

Additionally, many players, fans, and experts are convinced that this could be Pitt’s greatest season to date. By early January, Pitt was ranked as the best team in the nation in the ESPN/USA Today coaches’ poll. “

For the first time in 101 seasons of Pitt basketball, the Panthers are No. 1, making the jump from third in the ESPN/USA Today coaches’ rankings on Monday after previously unbeaten North Carolina (to heavy underdog BostonCollege)and Connecticut (to Georgetown) lost in the past week” (www.espn.com).

Despite earning the respect of coaches and the media, the Pitt team did not allow the initial success to change their strategy. Sophomore DeJuan Blair explains, “We could lose tomorrow and be 25th or

something. That’s cool we’re up there. It is good hype for the school, but it only counts if you keep it for a long time” (www.post-gazette.com).

Indeed, while the Panthers may be one of the strongest teams in the nation, they will be forced to face many of the country’s most successful programs during the Big East season. “Whether you’re talking first five or all 25, the Big East is the power player in the ESPN/USA Today coaches’ poll” (www.espn.com). The historically strong conference, where Pitt will see most of its toughest contests, rewrote the record books early on in the season due to dominant performances by many of its members. In the first media ranking in January, Big East teams possessed nine spots in the top 25.

Despite the high ranking, Pitt is dedicated to preventing another national title opportunity from slipping away.

## Checking out the Penn State recruiting trail

By: Greg Schlosser  
Sports Editor

With the likes of Jordan Norwood, Deon Butler, Derrick Williams, A.Q. Shipley, and Anthony Scirrotto all leaving after this year, Penn State needs to fill a lot of holes in order to stay in the race for the BCS National Championship every year.

So far, Penn State has had one five-star prospect, Eric Shrive, commit. The offensive tackle who stands at a beastly 6-7 and 300 lbs. will fit in nicely with the smash mouth style of football that Penn State plays. “I have a great motor. It never stops. I play to the whistle on every play and I love to run block. I’m a pretty good pass blocker too, though,” said Shriver (www.scout.com).

On the list of four stars that have committed to PSU are Curtis Dukes, Glenn Carson, Darrell Givens, and Mark Arcidiacono (www.scout.com). Dukes, a big bruising back at 235 lbs will give a nice thunder/light-

ning feel to an already strong backfield of Evan Royster and Stefon Green. Givens, the number nine cornerback in the nation will add to an already deep secondary. As a junior in high school, Givens had 82 tackles and three interceptions (www.scout.com).

Carson, the no. 7 linebacker in the nation, looks to carry on the tradition of great linebackers at “Linebacker U.” In 2007, Carson had 66 tackles for his high school team(www.espn.com). Rounding out the four-stars is offensive tackle Mark Arcidiacono, who is 6-5 285 lbs. As a junior in high school, Arcidiacono was second-team all-league. Also, Arcidiacono benches 330 and squats 465.

However, Penn State has not made any big splashes at the receiver position yet, despite losing three key seniors in Butler, Williams, and Norwood. Although, Penn State is in the running for wide receivers Justin Brown and Bryce McNeal, both four star recruits.

## Bowl Championship Series disappoints fans once again

By: JP Gooderham  
Editor-in-Chief

The Bowl Championship Series system of ranking NCAA football teams has been, by far, the most debated issue in college football since its inception. For conferences that boast multiple talented teams and even conferences that lack prestige but possess a standout program, the BCS system has become a nightmare.

President-elect Barack Obama, during ESPN’s broadcast of “Monday Night Football,” told fans: “I think it is about time we had playoffs. I’m fed up with these computer rankings and this and that and the other. Get eight teams — the top eight teams right at the end. You got a playoff ” (www.latimes.com).

While Obama may not be a sports analyst or football expert, he expressed a concern similar to many college football fans. As some contend, “The saying in college football goes, ‘The Bowl Championship Series (BCS) rankings result from voting, popular opinion, and pulling a rabbit out of a hat’. Many people believe the BCS, a system where a number seven seed is able to

capture the second spot instead of the fourth seed, is ludicrous” (www.sportales.com).

Indeed, the BCS system is notorious for its complex method of combining multiple rankings systems while implementing its own computer ranking system to



Oklahoma head coach Bob Stoops, right, speaks as Orange Bowl Committee President S. Daniel Ponce, left, listens, during a media conference at the Seminole Hard Rock Casino in Hollywood, Florida, Wednesday, December 10, 2008. Florida and Oklahoma will play in the 2009 FedEx BCS National Championship Bowl. (John VanBeekum/MiamiHerald/MT)

judge teams. As a result, popular and successful teams have consistently been left out of BCS bowl games due to arbitrary factors like the strength of another team’s schedule or the respect

earned from coaches and media over the course of the season.

While many individuals recognize the problem, the BCS has done little to improve its system. In fact, many fans see the process as a method for generating profits for sponsors rather than a process of selecting the best teams in college football. “Aside from the broken record that continues to shriek controversy, this season the BCS is unsuccessfully successful. With the greed of wishful hopes of obtaining a national championship invitation notwithstanding, the five BCS bowls will be a treat for a nation starving for the magic and allure that Boise State brought to the table two years ago” (www.uwire.com).

The controversy is ignited annually when successful teams are either snubbed from BCS bowl games or allegedly denied the right to compete for the BCS National Championship.

Despite the objections of college football fans, it appears that there is no end in sight for the BCS system. The college football faithful may only hope that the leader of the Western world will influence the NCAA.

## Boucher brings veteran leadership to the Penguins blue line

By: Nick Buzzelli  
Assistant Sports Editor

On November 16, 2008, the Penguins said goodbye to a veteran defenseman in return for another. The Penguins sent 15 year NHL veteran Darryl Sydor to the Dallas Stars in exchange for Philippe Boucher, a defenseman who was just two seasons removed from scoring a career high 19 goals. Both players are receiving the same salary; so the trade acted as a swap of veteran blue liner(www.sportsline.com).

Darryl Sydor came to Pittsburgh at the start of the 2007-2008 seasons after playing with numerous NHL teams,spanning 15 seasons. Sydor was a member of the 2003-2004 Tampa Bay Lightning team that captured Lord Stanley’s cup. Ironically, the veteran defenseman had played for the Stars nine seasons before returning for a third stint in 2008. Because of limited playing time in Pittsburgh, Sydor now has a chance to be an “everyday defenseman” in Dallas. “I wanted to extend my career, and that wasn’t going to happen in Pittsburgh,” said

Sydor after the trade (www.associatedpress.com).

During the 2007 and 2008 season, Sydor rotated at the defenseman position. Despite the fact that he has been a solid blue liner throughout his NHL career, the 36 year old has played a bigger role on the defensive side of the puck. Sydor has made a name for himself as a “defensive defenseman,” working to prevent goals rather than score them.

Philippe Boucher is another veteran NHL’er that will bring just the same amount of leadership to a team that is chalk full of young players. Although the 6 foot 3 Boucher has the physical size needed to play the position at the professional level, he still has been criticized for not using his size to his advantage. Boucher’s career season came in 2006-07 while playing in Dallas. During that season, the Quebec native posted 32 assists and 51 total points (www.hockeydb.com). While Boucher has all the offensive and defensive tools to be an asset to the Penguins, only time will tell if the trade will make the Pens a better team.

## Penguin’s vintage jerseys make comeback

By: Nick Buzzelli  
Assistant Sports Editor

The city of Pittsburgh has had a long tradition of hockey, dating back to years before the Penguins franchise was born, and this season the Pens are trying to get in touch with some local hockey history. The Penguins will sport their new third jerseys for select home games this season. The “old school” jerseys were last worn at the 2008 Winter Classic.

Although it is unknown by most hockey fans, the people of Pittsburgh have been watching the game since 1915, two years before the NHL formed. The Pittsburgh Yellow Jackets were members of the United States Amateur Hockey Association. Long before the Penguins skated in the NHL, the Pittsburgh (hockey) Pirates were the area’s original National Hockey League club (www.pittsburghhockey.net). The team folded in 1930 and it would

not be until 1967 that the fans of Pittsburgh could again watch NHL hockey.

When the Penguin’s franchise was first born, the original uniform colors were white and Columbia blue. The club’s alternate sweaters were first worn during the 1968-69 season, which was the franchise’s second year in the league. In 1972 the organization removed the circle with “Pittsburgh Penguins” around it.

The last time the Penguins

would wear their original blue and white colors on Civic Arena ice would be January 27, 1980. T

The Pens debuted their black and gold color scheme in 1979 because the Steelers and Pirates both won a championship that year. At the time of the jersey change, the Boston Bruins first complained to the league because the Penguins had used their uniform colors, but the NHL let the Penguins keep the colors because the Pittsburgh Pirates of the NHL

had worn black and gold in the early years of the league.

The Penguins were first going to bring back the “vintage style” sweaters in 2003. Team president David Morehouse decided to use the Winter Classic jerseys as an alternate because “the uniform looks tremendous, and it also is a great tribute to our heritage” (www.pittsburghpenguins.com). The team will wear the blue uniforms on selected home games this season.

<h2>Before They Were Seniors</h2> <p>By: Ali Capelli Entertainment Editor</p> <div></div> <div></div> <div><p><b>Initials:</b> QCB <b>Birthdate:</b> June 19, 1990 <b>Best Friends:</b> Ashley Garruba, Lauren Baumann, Gage Colagelo, Natty Evangelista, Gabby Repic, and Alex Smith <b>Favorite Color:</b> Blue <b>Best High School Memory:</b> Lunch 11-12 <b>Favorite Extracurricular Activity:</b> Art club, Simming and diving <b>Favorite Teacher:</b> Miss Milovac <b>Years in USC:</b> Whole life <b>Future Plans:</b> College</p></div>		<h2>Robert Pattinson dazzles fans as <i>Twilight</i> hits theatres</h2> <p>By: Julianne Tarullo Front Page Editor</p> <p>Edward Cullen. Beautiful, pale, and perfect in every way, except for the fact that he is a fictional character. The vampire that so many teenage girls have somehow fallen in love with is brought to life in this season’s box office hit, <i>Twilight</i>. Robert Pattinson, who plays Edward, makes quite a name for himself in this action packed, modern day love story. For many, he is the closest thing to Edward Cullen.</p> <p>On its opening weekend, <i>Twilight</i> made \$70.55 million. With its built- in fan base from the novels, the movie was bound to attract millions of viewers. But did the film meet the novel’s and the fans’ standards? Answers may vary, but no one can deny that Robert fit his part very well. Movie theaters full of screaming girls serve as evidence.</p> <p>The rising star made his first major appearance playing the role of Cedric Diggory in <i>Harry Potter</i></p>
---	--	--

<h2>Gossip Girl: Is it the next <i>Sex and the City</i>?</h2> <p>By: Alaina Zemanick Features Editor</p> <p>Today, everyone talks about Gossip Girl, the television about spoiled Upper East Siders that New York Magazine named “the Greatest Teen Drama of All Time” (www.nymag.com). Of course, the show has all the tricks: perfect drama, beautiful people, and undoubtedly brilliant clothes. Does that just remind you of—oh yeah, <i>Sex and the City</i>! But, though two totally different TV shows, can Blair Waldorf fill the Manolo Blahniks Carrie Bradshaw left behind?</p> <p>The similarities are undeniable; the setting of New York provides the perfect scene for both of the shows. The exclusive private schools are right down the street from the lavish penthouses of the spoiled rich teens that inhabit them on Gossip Girl, and Carrie conveniently takes a dreamy horse-and-buggy ride through Central Park with Mr. Big. Even though the fashions might be on two diverse scales, both Gossip Girl and <i>Sex and the City</i> have some of the largest influences on style through the media. <i>Sex and the City</i> brought Manolos and Louboutins to the general public and made the show’s stylist, Patricia Field, a fashion icon (www.about.com). On the other hand, Gossip Girl has more sensible items for their viewers, and</p>	<p>the ghost designer behind Eleanor Waldorf, Abigail Lorick, creates her own line of clothes, most of which are featured on the show (www.gossipgirlreport.com).</p> <p>The two also contained a key to success: interesting actors. Not only do fans tune in to see their favorite stars on television, they are just as intrigued to see the characters’ portrayers off the screen. Sarah Jessica Parker, who played Carrie Bradshaw in <i>Sex and the City</i>, catapulted herself into the limelight after the success of her show and became iconic in terms of her style. Currently, the rising stars of Gossip Girl might be following Parker’s footsteps. Blake Lively, more commonly seen as Serena van der Woodsen, garners the December 2008 issue of W magazine as well as being called “the hottest high school senior on television” (www.wmagazine.com). The Gossip Girl cast, including Lively, also finds itself among other higher named celebs in the tabloid mill of Hollywood. Lively along with her co-stars Leighton Meester (Blair Waldorf) and Taylor Momsen (Jenny Humphrey) frequent the style pages of popular magazines, such as Teen Vogue (www.teen-vogue.com).</p> <p>Significant differences are to be noted as well. <i>Sex and the City</i> is directed more towards an older audience and proves to be more</p>	<p>comedic than dramatic. Plus, <i>Sex and the City</i> has a more relatable aspect to it, allowing female viewers to empathize with the awkward romantic situations the <i>Sex and the City</i> women find themselves in. The fans of the show can laugh at their circumstances of Carrie, Samantha, Charlotte, or Miranda but know how it feels at the same time.</p> <p>Gossip Girl, in contrast, possesses more of a soap opera style. The dating drama and teen tension between the characters are those only the normal individual can dream about. Alcohol flows without care, Barneys is only a limo ride away, and parents will always pay off your detention. The viewer thinks, “If only, if only...” but turns on the television to catch up the character’s situations.</p> <p>So, the question still needs to be answered: will Gossip Girl be the next <i>Sex and the City</i>?</p> <p>In contrast to Bravo’s statement, because the two cater towards different audiences and have divergent genres, Gossip Girl might have to hold off on buckling their stilettos yet. Only time will tell if the show can be as infamous and legendary as <i>Sex and the City</i>, but presently, Gossip Girl just runs slightly behind its competitor. So, Blair, wait until next season’s Manolos get shipped into Saks; these shoes are just a size too big.</p>	<h2>Australia does not rock theatres from down under</h2> <p>By: Madeline Kushner Assistant Entertainment Editor</p> <p>On November 26, Australia opened in theatres (www.imdb.com). But even though the movie starred two of Hollywood’s biggest actors, the film received mixed reviews.</p> <p>Though the film’s story had depth and was a fairly good idea, its length and execution was a bit lacking. Instead of being a regular love story with a war twist, the movie involved about three different stories and ended up having a duration of three hours. The long duration became a downfall for the film.</p> <p>“The movie was good but it started to lose my attention halfway through,” says Hanna Friedlander, a viewer of the film.</p> <p>The movie starts by telling the story of Nullah (played by Brandon Walters), an indigenous Australian. In the beginning, Nullah explains how his story starts with Lady Sarah Ashley (played by Nicole Kidman). Lady Sarah Ashley and her husband own a ranch in Australia known as Faraway Downs, but when Lord Ashley goes to work on the ranch and does not return, Lady Ashley travels from Britain to Australia to fetch her husband.</p> <p>When Lady Ashley arrives at Faraway Downs, she is given word that her husband has sent a man, the Drover (played by Hugh Jackman), to bring her to Faraway Downs to meet her husband. But, when the two arrive at Faraway Downs and realize that Lady Ashley’s husband has been murdered, the two, along with some work hands at the ranch, must move Lady Ashley’s herd of cattle from</p>	<p>to be there” (www.latimesblogs.latimes.com). <i>Twilight</i> fans all over the country are now wild fanatics of Robert Pattinson because of his role as Edward Cullen. But is it hopeless to think he could ever live up to the expectations the novels have set? In an interview with <i>The Sunday Paper</i>, Robert answers this question, “I wouldn’t say hopeless. I sort of expected a certain amount of criticism, and even appreciated it. I mean, I was almost embarrassed even going into the audition. Edward’s described as this perfect man, with an impeccable face and body. Everything about him is just amazing. There’s no way I could ever live up to that [laughs]” (www.twilightersanonymous.com).</p> <p>However, girls at the high school think he does. Sophomore Sammie Teel says, “His lack of hygiene makes me swoon.” Maggie Simpson adds, “His manly physique in <i>Twilight</i> makes him redicalus in the eyes of the teenage girl.”</p> <p>Faraway Downs to Darwin so the cattle may be shipped to the soldiers fighting in World War II.</p> <p>During the journey, many obstacles are overcome and a love interest forms with the Drover and Lady Ashley. Nullah also assumes the role of the son that Lady Ashley never had. The movie then continues to go into the start of World War II and how the “family of three” survives the war (www.australia.com).</p> <p>Though the movie’s plot does sound interesting, by the time the Drover and Lady Ashley reach Darwin, the movie feels as if it should be over. But, when that point is reached in the movie, there is still another hour and a half to go.</p> <p>“Luhmann [the director] just doesn’t know when enough is enough,” explains Sean O’Connell, a film critic. “Long after the drive has reached a satisfying conclusion, Australia continues to slog through a drawn-out rescue mission, comeuppance for a villain who’s already been served, a near-death experience for Ashley, and a Japanese aerial invasion that marks Australia’s entrance into World War II” (www.filmcritic.com).</p> <p>In addition to the movie’s extremely long run time, the movie also failed to have realistic sets in many of the scenes as well. Throughout a decent amount of the movie, one could easily tell that the scenes were shot in front of a green screen. This caused the movie to lose a lot of its credibility.</p> <p>The film’s overall review would stand at a five out of ten for it had a good intention and good execution, but overall, it is just too long and unrealistic.</p>
--	--	--	---	--

<h2>Stephenie Meyer’s new book <i>Midnight Sun</i> to be on hold “indefinitely”</h2> <p>By: Ali Cupelli Entertainment Editor</p> <p>Stephenie Meyer’s new book <i>Midnight Sun</i> to be on hold “indefinitely.”</p> <p><i>Midnight Sun</i> was supposed to be the new novel to the <i>Twilight</i> saga by Stephenie Meyer. It was a retelling of the events of <i>Twilight</i> from the view of Edward (www.wikipedia.com).</p> <p>However, something terrible happened to Meyer’s book. On August 28, 2008, Meyer told <i>Twilight</i> readers, on her website that <i>Midnight Sun</i> is “on hold indefinitely” (www.stephe-</p>		<p>niemeyer.com). This is because the first twelve chapters of the book were leaked onto the Internet illegally. She feels that if “she tried to write <i>Midnight Sun</i> now, in my current frame of mind, James would probably win and all the Cullens would die, which wouldn’t dovetail with the original story” (www.stepheniemeyer.com).</p> <p>After the leak, Meyer did make the twelve chapter draft available on her website. She did this out of fairness to her readers, since the book came out before its planned publication date. Meyer believes that she knew the person who leaked the</p>	<p>manuscript onto the Internet. However, she refused to give any names because she did not think that leak had any malicious intentions.</p> <p>In November 2008, Stephenie did an interview with <i>Entertainment Weekly</i>. She said that “It’s really complicated, because everyone now is in the driver’s seat. [...] I do not feel alone with the manuscript. And I cannot write when I don’t feel alone” (www.ew.com).</p> <p>Her goal for is to keep it under wraps for two more years and then begin the book again when she feels it has been forgotten.</p>
---	--	---	---