



The St. Clairion

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

Ji-li Jiang captivates audiences

By: Marni Schreiber
News Editor

On Friday March 6, Ji-li Jiang, the acclaimed author of the memoir *Red Scarf Girl*, visited Upper St. Clair High School and held three different in-class field trips for students to attend. Jiang was able to captivate her audiences all three times with her insight and raw truths.

The first assembly, mods 3-4, brought the largest crowd of students. Jiang explained much of her life during this assembly, and gave background to *Red Scarf Girl*. She talked about the Cultural Revolution through the eyes of a child, an experience not told very often in literature.

Jiang was also able to answer the question on the minds of the many students who have read *Red Scarf Girl*: what happens at the end? In the novel, readers are left when the young Ji-li Jiang is facing a terrible choice, to protect the honor of her family or to help jumpstart her career. The reader never finds out the decision Jiang makes. Junior Natasha Nagpal explains that “one of the main reasons I wanted to go to the assembly was to find out which path Ji-li Jiang chose in the end of the novel.”

In the first assembly, Jiang revealed to the stunned audi-

ence that she did not denounce her family, as may have been the easier and clearly safer choice to choose. Jiang later explained in the writer’s workshop that she chose to end the novel at that point because of

her lack of experience in writing, especially in America.

“I had never written a book before. I knew that in writing there had to be a climax and I thought that this choice I had to make was my climax,” Jiang explained to the group of students at the writer’s workshop.

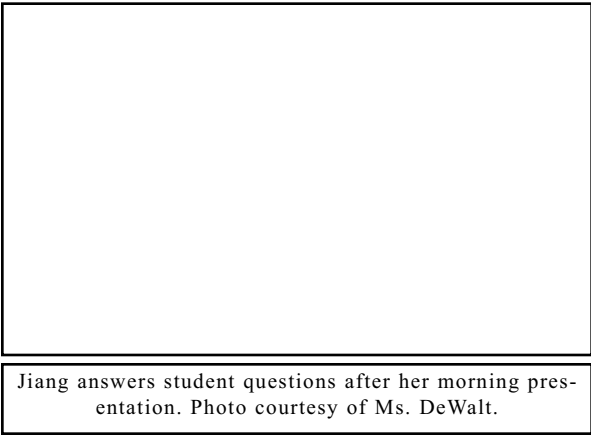
Jiang also went on to explain how hard it was for when she first moved to America with limited English vocabulary and very little money; all factors explaining why she waited so long to write her memoir.

Jiang was also able to give many Upper St. Clair students

an insight into her culture and the Cultural Revolution. Mary Eddins, a junior, exclaims that “I have always been interested in Asian studies, and Ji-li Jiang was able to help me see the Cultural Revolution in a different light.”

Nagpal goes on to say that “one of the most shocking things Jiang said was that she has forgiven Mao Tse-tung. Jiang told us that she believed Mao was only human and humans make mistakes.”

In all of her assemblies and workshops, Jiang was able to influence and inspire the students in the crowd. She answered questions, gave advice, and provided insight to one of the darkest times in Chinese history.



Obama administration overturns Bush stem cell restrictions

By: Alaina Zemanick
Features Editor

On March 9 President Barack Obama revoked the restrictions on stem cell research set eight years before by America’s former president George W. Bush (*Associated Press*). Prior to this executive order by Obama, no government funds were allowed to benefit any research in the stem cell field. Now, scientists will have more freedom concerning these scientific studies.

“At this moment the full promise of stem cell research remains unknown and it should not be overstated,” President Obama stated, “But scientists believe these tiny cells may have the potential to help us understand and possibly cure some of our most devastating diseases and conditions” (www.bbc.co.uk).

Scientists are rejoicing over Obama’s new edict. With the latest government endowment, they will have the opportunity to discover treatments for painful, incurable diseases such as Parkinson’s disease and Huntington’s disease.

Jan Nolta, director of the stem cell research program at University of California at Davis, said, “It’s wonderful. We are elated. Now that we can use the federal funds, it will just go so much more quickly” (*Associated Press*).

Despite the praise from scientists, conservative political leaders are sounding off about their distaste for Obama’s new measure. Republican Representative Tom Price from Georgia, who is the chairman of the Republican study committee in the House of Representatives, declared

that stem cell research will “force taxpayers to subsidize research that will destroy human embryos” (www.dallasnews.com).

“President Obama’s order places the worst kind of politics above ethics,” affirmed Wendy Wright, president of Concerned Women of America, “Politics driven by hype makes overblown promises, fuels the desperation of the suffering and financially benefits those seeking to strip morality from science” (www.dallasnews.com).

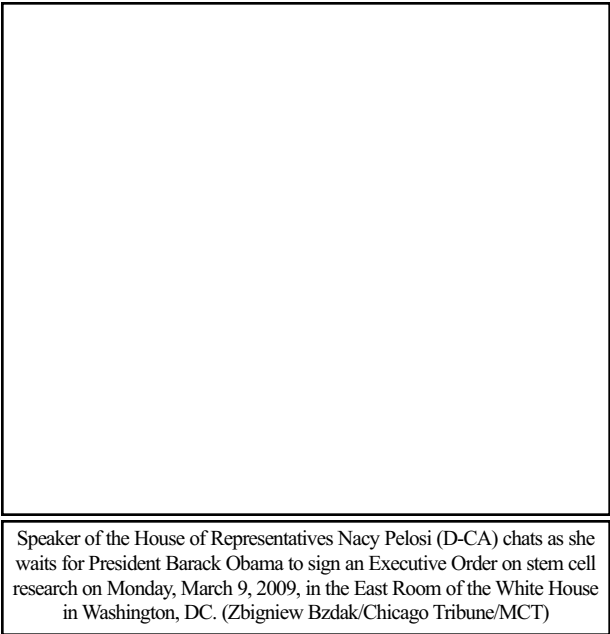
Regardless of the disapproval, democrats are proud of Obama for revoking Bush’s former law.

“Sometimes medicine advances through inspired discoveries in the laboratory, and sometimes through brilliant insights at the patient’s bedside,” stated Senator Ted Kennedy of Massachusetts, “But today, an extraordinary medical breakthrough was achieved with the stroke of a pen. With today’s executive order, President Obama has righted an immense wrong done to the hopes of millions of patients” (www.msnbc.msn.com).

Senate Majority leader Harry Reid was happy to hear of Obama’s new action, “President Obama today offered the hope of better treatments and cures to millions of Americans suffering from debilitating diseases. I applaud President Obama for restoring scientific integrity to government and ensuring we value science over ideology” (www.msnbc.msn.com).

Even though Obama’s decree allows some scientific liberty concerning research, Obama ensured that human cloning would not be included in this funding.

“[W]e will ensure that our government never opens the door to the use of cloning for human reproduction,” Obama said. He also stated, “it is dangerous, profoundly wrong, and has no place in our society or any society” (i2.democracynow.com).



Chris Brown, Rihanna relationship takes a rocky turn

By: Julianne Tarullo
Front Page Editor

Who would have thought the fun-loving and “well behaved” couple, Chris Brown and Rihanna would be strung in such a dramatic situation? The February 8 scandal, in which Chris Brown allegedly assaulted artist Rihanna (Robyn Fenty), has only gained increasing attention since the event. The two stars have a difficult road ahead of them, coping with the situation, while fans everywhere watch their every move.

The early morning of February 8, the couple could be heard fighting throughout Hancock Park, Los Angeles. The stars both cancelled their Grammy performances, which were to be held that evening, due to the “ugly scene that left Rihanna bleeding and bruised” (www.latimes.com).

Rihanna has told police that while the two were fighting, Brown said, “I’m going to kill you,” with his hands around her neck. Rihanna said she had been choked into unconsciousness (www.comcast.net).

“If convicted, Brown faces anywhere from probation to a maximum four years and eight months in state prison, DA spokeswoman Sandi Gibbons said” (www.people.com).

So what happens to the teen idols from here? With the “good boy” look no longer going for Chris Brown, endorsements, such as Doublemint Gum and “Got Milk?” have already dropped their campaigns featuring the artist. But this is just the beginning. The artist’s whole career may be affected by the recent incident. The *Los Angeles Times* says, “Marketing experts

experienced with celebrity endorsements predicted companies would avoid additional deals with both and would be especially wary of working with Brown.”

“Words cannot begin to express how sorry and saddened I am over what transpired,” Brown apologized. “I am seeking the counseling of my pastor, my mother and other loved ones, and I am committed, with God’s help, to emerging a better person” (www.upi.com).

“I didn’t believe it,” Rihanna’s father, Ronald Fenty, stated. “They seemed pretty happy [when I saw them together in July]. I don’t know what went wrong... You think you know somebody, but you really don’t” (www.justjared.buzznet.com).

However, just three weeks after the attack, Rihanna and Brown reunited. “‘They’re together again. They care for each other,’ says a source. The on-again couple are currently spending time together at one of Sean ‘Diddy’ Combs’s homes, on Miami Beach’s Star Island” (www.people.com).

Brown’s trial which was to be held on Thursday March 12, was postponed until April 6. Brown and attorney Mark Geragos were “granted a continuance to 6 April, after reports suggest Geragos is keen to strike a plea deal with prosecutors to keep his client out of jail” (www.femalefirst.co.uk).

Students at the high school have an opinion on the matter. Sophomore Marie Lehman says, “Rihanna is dumb for going back to Chris Brown. If he does it once, he’ll do it again.” Expressing similar views, sophomore Jacob Millorino adds, “Bad RiRi, bad.”

Panther
Predilections

What are you looking forward to most for next year?

“I want to be as successful as I can possibly be. But I’m really looking forward to getting ready for college, since that is down the road as well.”
– Ben Reicher
Freshman

“More free time.”
– Megan Small
Sophomore

“More of a challenge since most of my classes have been too easy.”
– Steve Long
Junior

“Not having Mr. Bennett as a teacher.”
– Alivia Kandabarow
Senior

By: Madeline Kushner,
Dallion L. Townsend,
and
Alaina Zemanick

Desk of the Editor
Stranded: Students in Upper St. Clair should have sidewalks

By: JP Gooderham
Editor-in-Chief

For students at Upper St. Clair High School, the community’s lack of sidewalks is basically a fact of life. Although this may not seem like the most pressing issue that the township faces, the inability of students and other members of the community to travel by foot safely and effectively is, in many ways, very significant.

Students who hope to save money by avoiding high gas prices or who do not own a car are, of course, severely limited in their options of traveling the streets of Upper St. Clair. Small trips such as a visit to a friend’s house or walking by foot to school become nearly impossible. The environmentally conscious face a similar dilemma as it is nearly impossible to avoid being forced to use a car and contribute to numerous negative environmental trends.

Why are sidewalks so important? Many students could not imagine walking or biking fre-

quently given the current state of Upper St. Clair’s roads. Senior Kristen Kish explains that she would prefer a community with more sidewalks so that students do not run the risk “of being hit by a car.”

Editor-in-Chief JP Gooderham

On a similar note, senior Emma Watts views sidewalks as an important asset to students “because we are not allowed to drive to school.”

While some students may be disappointed that they cannot travel to school in the morning

without having their parents drive them, the unavailability of sidewalks poses a serious problem for students who stay at school for extracurricular activities.

Without being able to walk (especially when confronting the notoriously busy McLaughlin Run Road or the sidewalk-less Morrow Road), ambitious students are forced to wait for their parents or jockey for rides with classmates.

Of course, a well-developed network of sidewalks would alleviate this problem in many cases.

Senior Chrissy Rojcewicz cites her experience with sidewalks as a reason to expand our system of sidewalks. She states, “There is a sidewalk in my neighborhood, and I know that I am lucky just for that. I think adding more sidewalks would be very useful.”

For a separate reason, senior Jay DeGregorio agrees. He explains, “It would be one way to encourage physical activity while discouraging the use of

cars, which is a big plus for the environment.” In a world that faces increasing issues with obesity and sedentary lifestyles, making it easier for all community members to be active is certainly important.

Aside from the health and environmental impact of sidewalks, perhaps an economic incentive exists as well. B.J. Griffith, a senior, argues that Upper St. Clair would see “a huge influx of families from Mt. Lebanon. They would have nothing after that.”

Though stealing Mt. Lebanon’s thunder may appeal to many students, it is not surprising that many families would be attracted to Upper St. Clair homes due to an expanded network of sidewalks.

Overall, the township should certainly consider the available options for improving and expanding our sidewalks.

With more options for traveling inside of USC, community members and especially students would experience numerous significant benefits.

Omnibus Spending Package costs more than just the \$410B price tag

Dallion L. Townsend
Opinions Editor

Adding to his track record of big spending, even though he has only been in office for a few months, President Obama has proposed another stimulus package filled with well over 9000 earmarks totaling close to another \$8 billion.

Let’s see a couple examples of these “special projects.”

\$3 million for shrimp aquaculture? \$1.7 million for swine odor and manure management service? Chuck Schumer (D-NY) stated, “So much focuses on those little, tiny, yes, ‘porky amendments’-the American people really don’t care!” (www.foxnews.com).

It is almost a sure thing that every tax payer in this country would not want to see their hard-earned dollars ripped from them, only for their money to be put to such great uses.

Hawaiian Senator Dan Inouye (D) added \$238,000 for canoe trips in his state (www.cnn.com). Honorable cause, but this is not the bill to have it

pushed through.

Your state’s primary means of revenue is through tourism. If you cannot have it funded in your own state, then do not go

President Barack Obama signs an Executive Order. (Zbigniew Bzdak/Chicago Tribune/MCT)

to Washington for it.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid asked for \$143 thousand for the Las Vegas National History Museum. It is Las Vegas. How many people visiting Las Vegas are going to choose to visit a museum over spending time at a casino? Think about it for a second; the tourist driven economy of Nevada will not suffer if a

museum, a museum that can be seen almost anywhere across the country, is not on the list of attractions.

Of this \$410 billion bill, sixty percent of its earmarks (\$4.6 billion) came from the Democrats.

That means forty percent of this wasteful spending comes from the Republicans. \$3.1 billion of the pork in this bill was added by them.

For example, Senator Thad Cochran (R-MS) backed a \$950 thousand amendment for a nature education center. Another example is Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC) who asked for \$950,000 as well. He wanted a convention center in Myrtle Beach (www.msnbc.com).

Cities, historically, fund their own arenas and convention centers. Why not get the funding from local taxpayers to pay for their large-scale buildings, instead of banking on the government writing out another check, forcing the rest of the nation to pick up the bill.

Here is another piece of pork proposed, and passed, by the GOP. Representative Barbara

Graham (R-WY) asked for another \$190,000 Buffalo Bill History Center in her state (www.news.yahoo.com).

If she cannot get the financial approval from her own state, why do people from the other forty-nine states have to be burdened by its cost?

This bill seems to be nothing more than an excuse for those in power to get more power and for them to push through their special interest projects at the expense of the taxpayers.

Mr. Obama, what do you care about the fate of the taxpayers?

Your job is guaranteed for at least until 2012. Having spent nearly \$1.3 trillion in your first month and a half, you are on pace to spend close to \$62 trillion in taxpayer money by the end of your first term in bailouts alone.

So that \$10 trillion national debt you keep referencing will be dwarfed by your irresponsible spending in no time. We elected you to help us out of this recession.

Do your job as you promised.

The St. Clairion
Upper St. Clair, PA

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

The St. 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

Sexism is one of the largest problems facing America today

Even though there is the impression that women in today’s society are equal to men, this assumption is incredibly false. Looking through a history book, it is clear that women were not treated equally to men, but even in today’s workforce, the same discrimination is present. It is pathetic and extremely sad that in the 21st century, women are still seen as inferior to men. It is shocking to see that some people believe that there is no sexism left in America today. These people can not see that the discrimination against women is still one of the biggest problems this country faces. In the 21st century, women are pushed under the rug more than any other group in America. “Gender is probably the most restricting force in American life, whether the question is who must be in the kitchen or who could be in the White House.

This country is way down the list of countries electing women and, according to one study, it polarizes gender roles more than the average democracy” (www.nytimes.com) For instance, look at women in the work place. Even though the number of women working is increasing and there are more women in college than men, women are paid significantly lower for the same work that a man completes. If a man and a woman do the exact same job and hold the exact same position, the woman is only paid 77 cents to the dollar the man makes (www.cluw.org). Pay is not the only discriminatory factor in the current work place. Board positions are almost always given to men over women, even if the woman is more qualified. At Heidrick & Struggles, one of the world’s best executive-search firms,

there is only one female out of a ten person board: “Catalyst calculates that, at this rate, it will take 73 years for women to achieve parity with men at the board level” (www.portfolio.com). Sexism is not only seen in the work place, but is also found in the expectation for women to stay at home and raise the family. In the last census (2004), results showed that there were 5.4 million “stay at home moms” and only 98,000 “stay at home dads” (www.census.gov). Why is it that men think that the woman’s responsibility is to stay at home with the kids and that the men have to be the ones who “bring home the bacon?” In the 21st century, one would think that the stereotype that all women can do is stay at home, cook, and clean, would be broken. Men, however, are not entirely

to blame in this situation. There are many women who either truly wish to stay at home or those who buy into the hype that this is their only responsibility. Even though society does put this pressure on women, it is about time that women stood up for themselves. A woman should ask herself, “Why can the father not stay at home with the kids?” It should not simply be assumed that it is the woman’s responsibility. The idea of sexism, to many, may seem to have disappeared. People may view March, “Women’s History Month,” as a reminder of past discrimination, but that the country has moved past this sexism. These people are wrong. Women should not only have a month. Everyday, people should be reminded of how discriminated women were in the past, and, unfortunately, how repressed women are today.

Snow days are not always worth the day off

By: Nick Buzzelli
Assistant Sports Editor

Every now and again during the winter, Pittsburgh receives a strong snowfall and the township maintenance trucks have a hard time keeping the roads clear. During this time, students rejoice because of a snow day. Although many students enjoy the idea of sleeping in and having a chance to go out and play in the snow, the snow days start to add up in time. Sometimes, however, the snow days have to be made up at the end of the year, usually delaying the start of summer break by few days.

Dustin Tropp, a sophomore likes snow days because “It gives you a break from school during the middle of winter, which is usually the hardest time of the year. During this time, I usually have a lot of projects and papers to work on for various classes,” Tropp says. He went on to say, “A day at the end of June is a lot easier to make up than one during the winter months.” Although it is nice to have a snow day every once and a while, having too many can delay summer break. Having summer start a few days later does not sound too bad, but if they are carried over

into the following week, it can start to feel like an eternity. An alternative to the snow day is the all so common two-hour delay. Two-hour delays are just as popular as snow days but they do not have to be made up at the end of the year. The delays hold-back the start of the day by two hours, giving students more time to sleep. Sophomore Alex Clelland likes two-hour delays better than snow days saying, “Two-hour-delays give students a short break from waking up early in the morning but they do not have to be made up like snow days, so it does not delay

the start of summer vacation.” Other schools around the country, in areas where winters last long and are harsh, are proposing a change to their school’s daily schedule. School have planned to extend the school day a few hours longer for the students to get in the required hours in the classroom (www.ksbitv.com). An alternative to two-hour delay is the built-in-snow days, which would extend the year longer but the snow days would not have to be made up (www.wtvh.com). Every student loves a snow day, but when it comes to making the days up in June, that’s a different story.

Obesity epidemic sweeps the nation: Are Americans handling the situation?

By: Madeline Kushner
Assistant Entertainment Editor

In today’s society, about sixty six percent of all adults, who are either twenty years or older, are obese or overweight (www.cdc.gov). Every one in three children are also obese or at least overweight (www.kid-shealth.org). As a result to the obesity epidemic, nearly 400,000 Americans die per year (as of 2004) from being overweight or obese (ww.nytimes.com). To fight the label of obesity, many Americans participate in some form of weight loss program such as Weight Watchers or NutriSystem. So, nearly \$48.6 billion (as of 2005) with a growing rate of 7.9% is spent on some form of weight loss programs while \$3.5 billion are put towards surgery (as of 2004) (The US Weight Loss and Diet Control Market). What Americans are failing to realize is that diet programs do not always work. Only about five percent of dieters find

themselves with successful results (www.freeweightloss.com). The lack of results could be due to the message that is seen in many weight loss programs’ commercials such as NutriSystem or Slim Fast. The message can vary from commercial to commercial, but all of the messages have the same feel. The message can say, “Results not typical,” when the spokesperson has lost a substantial amount of weight, or “Exercise 30 minutes daily,” when discussing a food related program. The lack of results when dieting can also be a result of the small 4.4% of diet plans that actually involve medical input (The US Weight Loss and Diet Control Market). “In order to be successful in any weight loss program,” says Dr. Donald Kushner, founder of the weight loss program Wise About Weight, “three key components need to be addressed: nutrition, fitness (the average

person should exercise 150 minutes per day), and behavioral change. Successful weight loss can only occur when more calories are expended than consumed.” Without successful weight loss tactics, one can be put at risk of serious health issues. For instance, men who are younger than 65 years of age have a greater risk of being diagnosed with coronary heart disease (CHD) compared to ideal weight. These overweight men must also suffer from the fear of dying as a result of CHD (Handbook of Obesity Treatment). Another risk that needs to be taken into account when battling obesity is the risk of hypertension and diabetes (Handbook of Obesity Treatment). Health, not outer beauty, should be the primary motivation for someone to lose weight. Health issues that result from obesity should be the main focus for inspiration to lose weight. But, one of the most common reasons people want to lose

weight is to improve their appearance. So, with a more appropriate motive for weight loss, a person can hope for better results and ease when it comes to the steps required to lose weight. Americans need to realize that obesity can turn into a serious problem if it is not treated properly. By just taking the easy way out, such as a diet plan that uses small portions or a nutrition bar that curbs hunger, the results that want to be reached will not be seen. Kirstie Alley, the former spokesperson of Jenny Craig, was one of the many people who only had short term results. Ally was then removed from the campaign because the actress had gained back her former weight, a problem commonly seen in Americans today. If one were to trace the path of a very commercialized weight loss program, it would prove that these programs have short term results rather than the long term ones that were being hoped for.

Panther Predilections

What are you looking forward to most for next year?

“I’m excited about having more free mods next year!”
– Natalie Kubera
Freshman

“Driving.”
– Brennan Butler
Sophomore

“Doing musical with my sister.”
– Molly Jones
Junior

“Bringing the Stanley Cup back to Pittsburgh.”
–Sidney Kushner
Senior

By: Madeline Kushner,
Dallion L. Townsend,
and
Alaina Zemanick

Submarines collide in the Atlantic

By: Madeline Kushner
Assistant Entertainment Editor

On February 12, 2009, a French and a British submarine collided in the Atlantic Ocean while performing two separate patrol operations (www.nytime.com).

The submarines came out of the accident with small damages done to the vessels; the destruction was not fatal because the vessels were traveling at a fairly slow speed. The French sub, Le Triomphant, had damage to its sonar dome, according to the French defense ministry. Despite the damages to the vessel, Le Triomphant was still able to return to its base located in Brittany, without any assistance. However, while the British vessel, the HMS Vanguard, had to be towed back to its main base located in Faslane (www.VOANews.com).

The vessels also managed

to return to their home bases without any injuries to their crews of 250 members, as well. The submarines did not sustain any damages to the nuclear cargo which, in turn, promised that the crews were not exposed to any unsafe nuclear energy (www.nytimes.com).

Both submarines were carrying loads of nuclear cargo during the collision. More specifically, Le Triomphant, a nuclear powered vessel to begin with, was transporting 16 nuclear warheads. The British submarine, the HMS Vanguard, was also said to be hauling similar cargo. During patrolling missions, the two submarines are required to carry a specific type of cargo including nuclear warheads (www.time.com).

The collision did manage to raise questions about the submarines' missions as well. Military specialists questioned the safety of the submarines. The well-being

Four day work week is a success

By: Marni Schreiber
News Editor

Starting in the summer of 2008, Utah became the first state to enforce a four day work week for state employees. The goal of implementing this experiment was to see how the change would effect energy consumption and utility costs. Because of the promising results, more states are now beginning to look into this concept, and the experiment may become permanent.

The Governor of Utah, Jon Huntsman, explains that with this policy, "he's making the change to reduce the state's carbon footprint, increase energy efficiency, improve customer service and provide workers more flexibility" (www.usato-day.com).

For the 17,000 state workers in Utah, a new work week is

now being imposed. Instead of working five eight-hour work days, workers now work four ten-hour work days, having Friday now count as a part of the weekend (www.cnn.com).

Now, six months after the start of the experiment, the results are proving to be very promising. According to the *Associated Press*, since the start of the program, Utah has "cut greenhouse gas emissions by more than 12,000 metric tons, reduce gasoline consumption among commuting employees by 744,000 gallons annually and pump as much as \$3 million into the economy from workers who have to spend less money on gas. The state is also saving more than \$200,000 on janitorial contracts" (www.msnbc.msn.com).

With these remarkable results, more states and cities have begun to look in to imple-

menting a similar program. New York City, one of the most highly populated cities in America, is considering a four day work week to help with the labor costs of the city.

"Labor is the city's single largest expense, accounting for \$35.2 billion of the \$60 billion it's spending this year," explains the *New York Post*. However, by "[s]witching 40,000 non-essential employees to a four-day, 36-hour work-week would allow the city to [...] save \$32.6 million next year and \$61.3 million in 2011" (www.nypost.com).

Also, according to the *Associated Press*, the state of Hawaii tried a four day work week in the fall, and states such as Washington, West Virginia, and Virginia, are all looking into the idea of implementing this altered work week for state employees (www.msnbs.msn.com).

of the vessels was put into question because not even NATO is aware of the submarines that take part in patrolling missions. NATO was not given information stating that the two submarines were carrying nuclear weapons (www.nytimes.com).

As a result, both Britain and France have asked to have the nuclear warheads be removed from the vessels. The purpose of this removal is to prevent any radiation or nuclear warheads from sinking to the bottom of the ocean if an incident similar to this were

to ever occur again, even though the incident was deemed a very unlikely occurrence (www.nytimes.com).

Even so, France has refused to better their communications to prevent another accident from occuring (www.time.com).

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U.S. relations improve in Indonesia after visit by Clinton

Marni Schreiber
News Editor

Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton finished her trip throughout Asia, and one of her main stops was Indonesia. Clinton explains that under the new Obama administration, Indonesia will play, “as a democratic and mainly Muslim country [...] a key role in the new US administration’s foreign policy” (www.channel-newsasia.com).

Indonesia is a crucial ally to the United States, acting as both a trade partner and an enforcer of regional security in East Asia. Since the Indonesian revolution in 1998, the country has had a multi-party democratic system of government, making it the third largest democratic country in the world, as well as the largest Muslim state.

It was vitally important for Clinton to pay a visit to this thriving democracy on her tour through Asia in an attempt to show that the United States, under Obama, will not ignore the interest of Muslim state as was done under the Bush Administration.

Indonesia will play a very important role in the upcoming

US policy in East Asia. By reviving relations with Indonesia, the United States will “begin the process towards



Hillary Clinton appears on the “Female Force” comic cover illustrated by lead artist Vinnie Tartamella. (Carey Wagner/South Florida Sun-Sentinel/MCT)

acceding to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in South East Asia, which would potentially commit the US to renouncing the use of force and agreeing not to interfere in the region” (www.abc.net).

Equally significant, while Clinton was in the country, she

stressed the United States’ desire to develop a democratic government in Myanmar with the cooperation of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Indonesia proves that a large Muslim state can adapt to and accept democratic principles, and should be used as an example around the world. Clinton exclaims that “[a]s I travel around the world over the next years, I will be saying to people, ‘If you want to know whether Islam, democracy, modernity and women’s rights can co-exist, go to Indonesia”” (www.abc.net).

The Indonesian Foreign Minister Hassan Wirajuda go even further by explaining that “As we [Indonesia] have proven, democracy, Islam and modernity can go hand-in-hand. Indonesia can be a good partner for the U.S. in reaching out to the Muslim world” (www.huffingtonpost.com).

As can be seen by Clinton’s visit, the Obama Administration’s foreign policy in Asia will not solely focus on China, like under the Bush Administration, but will reach out to all the countries of Asia.

Plight of Blagojevich continues to spark controversy

By: JP Gooderham
Editor-in-Chief

Arguably the most well followed political storyline in recent months owes the downfall of Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich. Blagojevich, already impeached from his position and banned from running for any other political position in the state of Illinois, alerted federal investigators when allegedly attempting to sell the vacant seat of Barack Obama.

In one of his final acts in office, Blagojevich defied Democrat leaders and angered critics by appointing another politician to take the vacant seat in the midst of the investigation. Roland Burris, named by Blagojevich to the position, drew harsh criticism and protest in the following months. Initially, Burris incited opposition merely as a result of his association to Blagojevich and the question of whether or not an illegitimate and corrupt governor could rightfully appoint a Senator. Critics contend that “Gubernatorial appointments to fill U.S. Senate seats are undemocratic and, in extreme cases — i.e., in Illinois — ripe for corruption” (www.washingtonpost.com). As a result, commentators believe “A special election would give the power to fill a vacant Senate seat to the voters” (www.washingtonpost.com). Nevertheless, with no legislative change in sight, it appeared that the issue would eventually die down.

However, Burris caught national attention once again after evidence suggested that Burris may have also been a contributor to Blagojevich. “Burris has been under a cloud of suspicion since he was appointed by former Gov. Rod Blagojevich to replace President Obama in the Senate. That cloud grew more menacing...in the wake of conflicting testimony and a follow-up affidavit by Burris to the Illinois House panel that voted to send impeachment articles to the state Senate that expelled the governor — in part over allegations he tried to sell the seat for fundraising cash” (www.foxnews.com). These allegations occurred after Burris

admitted to having “looked into mounting a fundraiser for Rod Blagojevich...at the same time he was expressing interest to the then-governor’s aides about his desire to be appointed” (www.reuters.com). Despite the fact that Burris considered making a financial contribution to the embattled governor, “Burris has said he neither paid nor promised Blagojevich anything for the appointment” (www.reuters.com).

In addition to politicians on Capitol Hill as well as members of his own party calling for Burris’s resignation, the Senator also lost support of Chicago’s black community due to the allegations. However, “Burris has resisted calls for his resignation. He met Sunday with about 50 black ministers. The Rev. Leonard Barr says the group urged Burris to stay put. Another minister told The Associated Press last week that some clergy wanted Burris to r e s i g n ” (www.chicagotribune.com).

Blagojevich has also managed to remain in the news due to high public interest and absurd antics. For example, “The Joliet JackHammers, a minor league baseball team in Illinois, has reportedly offered Rod Blagojevich a contract for the 2009 season. Blagojevich’s publicist said he wasn’t sure how serious the team’s offer was, but that the ex-Illinois governor would be interested” (www.cbsnews.com).

The ex-governor also attempted to gain support by lashing out at his critics by using personal attacks. Blagojevich “attacked the lawmakers who served as his judge and jury in removing him from office, contending ‘a bunch of them are cheating on their spouses, a lot of them drink in excess, very few of them know what’s going on”” (www.chicagotribune.com).

In wake of his downfall, Blagojevich has threatened to write a book in order to unveil the flaws of his peers in the Illinois legislature. “‘I’ve got my crayons ready, I’m ready to write it. I’d like to tell those stories,’ Blagojevich said during a Wednesday interview on WLS Radio’s ‘The Don and Roma Morning Show”” (www.associatedpress.com).

President Obama signs questionable stimulus bill

By: Madeline Kushner
Assistant Entertainment Editor

On February 17, President Barack Obama signed the stimulus bill worth \$787 billion, at a length of 1,100 pages, into law. The bill’s intent is to help the economic situation and put the country on the right “road to recovery” (www.nytimes.com).

The bill is considered one of the largest programs designed to help the economy since the New Deal was created by Franklin Roosevelt. The bill, despite its size and importance, is considered to be done very quickly. The bill was signed not even a month after Obama’s inauguration (online.wsj.com).

During Obama’s speech pertaining to the bill, areas were stressed, such as education and energy conservation

(www.nytimes.com).

The bill’s intentions also include a large sum of money going towards citizens who are receiving unemployment benefits, food stamps, and medical care. Another portion of the money from the bill will be used for transportation purposes, such as repaving roads and constructing bridges (www.msnbs.msn.com). The bill also dedicates a sum of about \$282 billion to tax cuts (online.wsj.com).

Despite the bill’s good intentions, the stimulus package has caused some controversy in the Congress. Both parties believe that the bill has good intentions when it comes to fixing the nation’s economic situation. But when the plans for the action were finally constructed, only three Republicans in Congress

gave their consent: Senators Susan Collins, Olympia Snowe, and Arlen Specter (www.msnbc.msn.com). The rest of the Republican Party believed that the bill was a waste of money (www.nytimes.com).

Brendon Gallagher, the vice president of the Young Politicians Club and a sophomore at USCHS states that : “The economic stimulus package will create jobs, but I believe it will ultimately fail. The best way to stimulate the economy is to give the money to the people.”

When passing through the Senate, the stimulus bill received a vote of 60 to 38. On its journey through the House, not a single Republican voted in favor of the bill (www.nytimes.com).

Wildfires heat up tragedy all over Australia

By: Julianne Tarullo
Front Page Editor

On February 17, the human death toll, caused by the tragic wildfire disasters in Australia, reached 200. The raging fires, which began on February 7, have affected families and homes across Australia leaving behind stories of tragedy and loss.

“Australia’s populous east coast has been beset by weather extremes of fiery drought and torrential rains that scientists argue are being exacerbated by

c l i m a t e c h a n g e ” (www.iht.com). Australia is known for having some of the worst wildfires in the world, and it is not uncommon for there to be several outbreaks every fire season. These fires are usually caused by a variety of uncontrollable factors such as lightning strikes, or sparks from machinery, power lines, or vehicle crashes (www.australiasevereweather.com).

However, not all wildfires begin because of natural or accidental causes. Many believe the recent destruction may have

been intentionally started. The Herald Tribune said, “Thirty-nine bodies have been recovered from the village of Marysville, which was almost completely razed by a fire that the police believe was deliberately set, but the authorities have said the final count there could be as high as 100” (www.iht.com).

As for the suspected arson, which caused one of the deadly fires, Brendan Sokalukd has been arrested and charged with arson causing death. Sokalukd was thought to have started a fire in the Gippsland region east

of Melbourne. This fire killed at least ten people and destroyed 200 homes (www.iht.com).

Phil Cambell, a State Emergency Service spokesman says that in the northwestern part of New South Wales, the Bourke region was declared a natural disaster area because of the flooding of 20 homes and government buildings (www.iht.com). In southeastern Australia, fires near Melbourne burned 850 square miles of land, ruined over 750 homes, and left 5,000 people homeless, according to the Victoria

Country Fire Service (www.msnbc.msn.com).

Recalling a horrific moment of escape, survivor Jack Barber says, “All around us was 100-foot flames ringing the oval, and we ran where the wind wasn’t. It was swirling all over the place. For three hours, we dodged the wind” (www.msnbc.msn.com).

However, many victims of the disasters have not been lucky enough to escape. In addition, police say that the death toll will rise even more after uncovering more of the disaster zones.

Forensics team prepares for another successful postseason

By: JP Gooderham
Editor-in-Chief

With two state titles and dozens of qualifiers to the national championship in the past four years, Upper St. Clair’s forensics team has been arguably one of the most successful competitive activities at the high school. Though the forensics team, which competes in speech and debate events throughout the school year, does not attract large crowds of screaming fans, the team’s members often prepare as though it did.

Essentially, forensics includes two distinct activities: speech and debate. Speech competitors are responsible for performing works of literature (including genres like drama or humor) by acting while debaters, as the name suggests, discuss and argue issues of public policy and philosophy. The members of the team meet three times each week to practice performing their pieces or hone the debate skills. Despite

the necessary time commitment, members of the team are often pleased with the success and camaraderie found at local tournaments.

Sophomore Vijay Venkatesan was recruited to the team by his brother Akhil, a member of Upper St. Clair’s class of 2008. Venkatesan, a participant in his first season as a member of the Lincoln-Douglas debate squad, says, “I wanted to challenge myself outside of the classroom so I thought that forensics would be a good fit.” He

also was motivated to join the team because of the life-long benefits that debate provides. He states, “I hope to become a better and more effective speaker and debater through forensics.”

Sophomore Evan Pye, a public forum debater, shares a similar story: “My sister was part of the forensics team for all four years of her high school career. I saw her practicing and going to all of the tournaments on weekends. She seemed to have so much fun with forensics.”

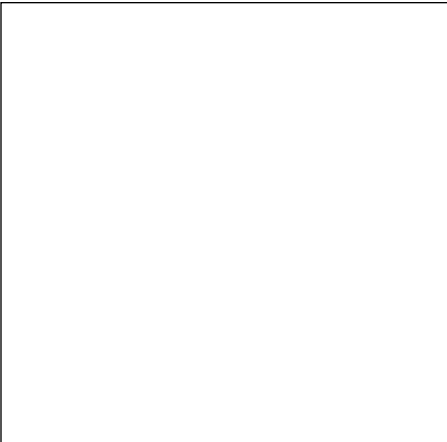
Other members of the team were motivated to join and become more involved because of a natural affinity for the activity. Mishan Blecher, a senior who performs in a “duo” format with senior Brendan McNally, explains that he was attracted to the team because of “The same things that attracted me to the twenty some other clubs I signed up for at the beginning of freshman year: blissful, blinding naiveté and a pocket full of free time. But, unlike a score of my original clubs, forensics stuck.

Sometimes I feel like forensics was made for me, but more accurately (and less egomaniacally) I was likely made for forensics.”

Pye, like many members of the team, is motivated by the pursuit of victory and the thrill of success. He explains, “Winning is always the best part of competing on the Forensics team. Being called up to the stage of a high school auditorium to receive a trophy is the perfect reward for all of the work you put into forensics. Forensics also

lets you experience that most Saturdays. Forensics is one of the best clubs for rewarding you appropriately for the level of commitment you put into it. The competition is always tough, but enough hard work results in a reward that makes everything worthwhile.”

Though veterans have loved participating, some competitors are worried about the team’s current trend as participation declines. Blecher claims, “I wish that the team had the same fire it did in my underclassmen year. I know that all it would take is a few inspiring people for the rest to rally behind. USC has the talent to be big, but the team seems to be shrinking a rate comparable to the economy. What we need is a stimulus package.”



Freshman Vijay Viswanathan debates in the Upper St. Clair Forensics team. Photo courtesy of: JP Gooderham

Is beauty worth the risk?

By: Julianne Tarullo
Front Page Editor

Today it is very common for women to go to the hair salon, get their hair and nails done, and think nothing of it. However, these days, there are many risks associated with looks. Infections, bodily damage, and illnesses can all result from simply getting a manicure or whitening your teeth.

Women everywhere think it is necessary to have that Hollywood white smile to look good. Therefore, teeth whitening products are selling more than ever before. But what most women do not know is that these procedures can permanently damage their teeth. Whether using over the counter products or having your teeth professionally whitened, unlike the positive effects, the negative effects are very permanent.

According to *Associated Content*, “Peroxide will whiten the teeth over time, but during that time, other problems will arise, and more often than not, these problems are irreversible. Tooth and gum sensitivity is the number one complaint and problem. If people continue to use whiteners after noting sensitivity, permanent nerve damage and tooth loss may be next” (www.associatedcontent.com).

A visit to the nail salon also opens your body to risks. If the utensils the manicurist is using

are not completely sterilized between uses, diseases and infections can easily be transferred. “Bacterial, fungal, yeast and viral infections (including things like hepatitis C, staph infections and warts) can be transmitted via unwashed hands and unsanitary instruments (this can occur with overzealous manicuring — if, for example, too much of the cuticle is cut or pushed back too far)” (www.msnbc.msn.com).

In addition to hair damage and allergic reactions, the most severe result of hair dying is cancer. Though there is much dispute over whether or not artificial coloring causes breast cancer or bladder cancer, it is proven that there is a direct connection to non - Hodgkin’s lymphoma. Research published in the *American Journal of Epidemiology*, proves that “the risk of suffering from non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma increased with 19% in individuals that use hair color from time to time, while those who get their hair dyed on a regular basis - like monthly - the risk of cancer raises to 26%” (www.news.softpedia.com).

In addition to the risk of cancer, Ms. Wolf comments, “If you dye your hair, you can’t donate it to locks of love!” When students were asked if they would dye their hair knowing the risks of cancer, 4 out of 5 answered no.

World decides to turn off lights for better Earth

By: Madeline Kushner
Assistant Entertainment Editor

On March 28, 2009, from the hours of 8:30 to 9:30 pm, every city around the world will be asked to participate in Earth Hour (www.esurance.com). The intent of the movement is to allow the people of the world to show their concern about the climate situation of today’s world by switching off their power for a total of one hour (www.worldwildlife.org).

In last year’s Earth Hour, over 400 cities, over thousands of businesses, and over 50 million people turned off all of their lights. Even famous attractions and historical landmarks turned off their power. For example, even the Coliseum in Rome, the Empire State Building in NYC, the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, and the Sydney Opera House switched off their power (www.worldwildlife.org).

This year, over 250 cities spread throughout 74 countries have already agreed to participate in Earth Hour. Cities, such as Moscow, Hong Kong, Nashville, Las Vegas, and Mexico City, will shut down their power. The participation of

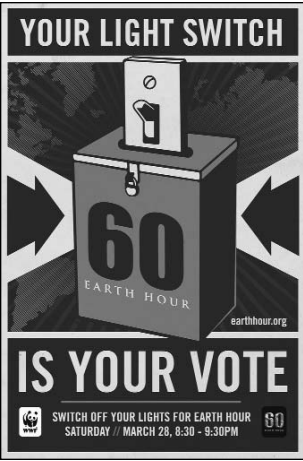
these large metropolises is considered vital. This December, in Copenhagen, climate legislation and international agreements will be discussed at the Global Climate Change Conference (www.worldwildlife.org).

Participants in Earth Hour will be asked to take a vote when turning off their lights: if they choose to keep their lights on, they will be voting for global warming, if they chooses to turn off their lights, they will be voting against global warming or otherwise known as “Vote Earth” (www.earthhour.org).

“I think it is a good cause,” explains Hanna Friedlander, a sophomore at Upper St. Clair High School, “because in that one hour, people can conserve a ton of energy which, in the long run, helps the environment.”

In addition to switching off lights, contributors can also sign up at Earthhour.org and receive advice on how to reduce the amount of carbon used every day. Participants can also find a guide on the site which states how Earth Hour can be celebrated in a hometown (www.worldwildlife.org).

Participate in Earth Hour and visit Earthhour.org to get more information.



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Panther baseball prepares to battle on a new diamond

By: JP Gooderham
Editor-in-Chief

In a historic move, the Upper St. Clair Panthers will begin their upcoming baseball season on a brand-new field. Located at the new Mayview recreation development, the field will solve many of the issues that the team has faced on past fields, while giving players and fans numerous advantages.

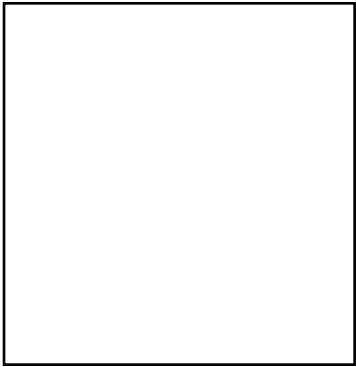
In past years, the Panthers have competed at the field in Baker Park. According to senior Scott McMurtry, the field was terrible because “the outfield was always either as hard as a rock or a complete swamp.” In many cases, players felt that their games were adversely effected as ground balls became increasingly hard to handle, which allowed batters to hit easy singles.

Senior Roberto Capriotti comments that the best feature is “the grass infield. You get true hops on this field because it doesn’t turn into concrete when the weather changes like Baker.”

Pitchers at Baker ran into similar problems. McMurtry argues that “the mound was twice as high as it should be. The new field is much better. This mound is actually made of clay instead.” With a conforming mound, Upper St. Clair’s pitchers hope to improve play without having to adjust to the abnormal height.

However, captain Christian Wheeler is uncertain how the new mound and field will affect the Panthers’ pitching this season. Wheeler claims, “I haven’t played enough there to notice a difference.”

Overall, “the field looks much nicer” says McMurtry. “It has a more real feel whether you are in



A view of the new field from home plate. (Photo courtesy of JP Gooderham).

the infield or in the outfield. The infield is not nearly as hard as it was at Baker.”

Though many of the team’s brightest stars are excited about the move, some are concerned about the strategy changes the team must take. Senior Brian Gaudio argues, “The ball really carries now. If my calculations are correct, the wind comes from home directly toward center field at around 8-10 miles per hour with a slight swirling effect. I would say that the ball carries maybe a quarter second longer

than usual.” Despite this phenomenon, Gaudio claims that he does not expect the Panthers to hit many homeruns this season with the field’s deep fences.

In light of the field’s layout, Gaudio suggests that the team should play “through the bags” because “it is going to be hard to cover the gaps.” This strategy will require the left fielder and right fielder to line up diagonally from the bag opposite them. In doing so, the outfielders will be more well positioned to field deep hits without allowing opponents to reach first or second debate.

Despite these changes, the Panthers are excited to begin play at the new field. Gaudio comments, “You know, I will be happy to be part of the team that makes its mark as the first inaugural season on that field.”

With more favorable seating for spectators, the Panthers’ fan base may increase substantially this year. Paul Griffith, a senior and cross country athlete, states, “I am excited. Upper St. Clair baseball is going to come out strong with C-Dubya [pitcher Christian Wheeler] taking the new mound.”

Likewise, Wheeler believes that “although the seating is not as good as Baker’s, I still believe that we will attract a lot of fans. It is the nicest field in the WPIAL.”

Despite bumps in the road, Panthers hockey is on the way to playoff glory

By: Dallion L. Townsend
Opinions Editor

With a new coach in Larry Marks and a few injuries along the way, the Panthers defied the odds and won their section, giving them a bye week during the playoffs.

Excuses were non-existent as the expectations were set high. Senior forward Steve Trombetta stated, “We set our goal on being one of the best teams and to perform well in the playoffs. So, yeah, I think we met our expectations.”

Injuries plagued the team for much of the season, including Trombetta who reportedly aggravated a rib injury he suffered last season. Captain Eric Surma was sidelined for a few games due to a shoulder injury.

Third year varsity player, senior James DiGangi noted the teams’ injury woes this season, “I think that our team might’ve been even better if we didn’t have so many injuries this season.”

Players, such as Michael Feldman and Rob Schneid, were also slowed by shoulder injuries, while Parker Philips played after coming off ankle surgery.

Junior forward James “Peach” Kline led the team with 54 points

(22goals and 32assists), only one point behind the league lead (www.eteamz.com). He looks to continue his hot streak throughout the playoffs.

Their first game of the playoffs was against Canon MacMillan on March 11.

They won by a score of 3-2 in overtime with goals from Mitchell Lewis, Michael Segerdahl, and James DiGangi getting the game winner.

Junior goaltender Matt Wregget was stellar this season ,ranking as one of the top goalies in the section, backstopping a team that allowed 1.95 goals per game and posted two shutouts.

The team earned 32 points while going 14-4-4 this season ,with the only losses coming against Cannon-Macmillan, Pine Richland, North Allegheny , and section rival Mt. Lebanon.

Despite what happens the rest of this post-season, the Panthers’ have had a successful year. The only regret this season from DiGangi, “To be honest, it would have been great to go undefeated this year.”

But it is probably safe to say that the veteran defenseman is pleased with a section title and a fourteen win season, and a game against Seneca Valley at Mellon Arena on March 19.

Boys Varsity Tennis

Varsity Softball

Boys Volleyball

3/16 Canon McMillan
3/18 Baldwin
3/20 West Allegheny
3/25 West Mifflin
3/27 McKeesport

3/25 McKeesport
3/26 Ringgold
4/01 Keystone Oaks
4/04 Baldwin
4/07 Canon McMillan

3/24 Bethel Park
3/26 Canon McMillan
3/27 Fox Chapel
3/31 Central Catholic
4/02 Peters

Free agent signings hope to boost Pirates’ offense

By: Nick Buzzelli
Assistant Sports Editor

The Pittsburgh Pirates have had disappointing seasons year after year since 1992. Every February, when the Bucs head to Bradenton, Florida, for spring training, the fans, players, and coaches say “This is the year.” While it is unaware if 2009 is the year the Pirates break the losing spell, some free agent signings in the off-season will hopefully help the team.

Eric Hinske, an eight year MLB veteran was signed to a one-year contract with the Pirates a few weeks before spring training. Hinske played as a utility player with the defending American League champion Tampa Bay Rays. Before playing in Tampa Bay, the 31 year old Hinske played two seasons for the Boston Red Sox, mainly as a right fielder (www.mlb.com).

Hinske’s bat will bring a “pop”

to the heart of the Bucs’ lineup. Along with his power, Hinske brings veteran leadership and play-off experience to a team full of young talent. In 2007, with the Red Sox, Hinske won a World Championship, while the following season playing for the Rays, he lost in the World Series to the Phillies.

Craig Monroe is yet another player who will look to help the Pirates’ offense. Despite the fact that Pittsburgh only signed the left-fielder to a minor league contract, Monroe will look to make it to the big league within a few months of the season and make an impact in the outfield.

Monroe also brings a leadership quality, as well as an offensive boost, to the team. Monroe’s best season offensively was in 2006, when he hit 28 homers with 89 RBI’s (www.baseball-reference.com). Monroe recently played for the Minnesota Twins in 2008.

Although not a free agent signing, the Pirates’ first round draft pick, Pedro Alvarez, came into spring training with high hopes of making the team. Alvarez recently played for college baseball powerhouse, Vanderbilt University. While at Vanderbilt, the native of the Dominican Republic hit .397 with 17 home runs. He was also named the SEC conference tournament MVP (www.vucommadores.com). The 23 year old Alvarez signed a 4 year, \$ 6.4 million contract with the ‘Bucs that will keep him in Pittsburgh until 2012.

With the additions of Hinske, Monroe, Alvarez, and countless others, the ‘Bucs lineup will look to put up better numbers on the score sheet this year than Pirates’ teams of the past. The Pirates free- agent signings and draft picks are hoping this season is the one they become a winning franchise, like the team was nearly 16 years ago.

Bylsma ready to lead Penguins

By: Greg Schlosser
Sports Editor

After a 2-6 loss to the Toronto Maple Leafs in early February, Pens GM Ray Shero felt it would be best for the team to fire coach Michel Therrien and make Wilkes Barre/Scranton coach Dan Bylsma the interim head coach. Therrien was reported to be fired because of his system for

the Pens and the way he would single players out in the locker room (Post Gazette).

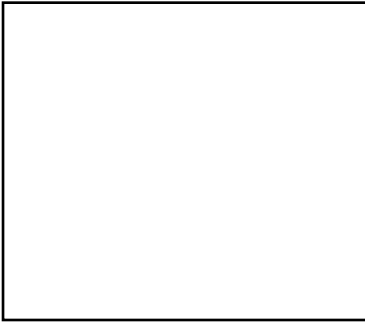
However, Bylsma plans to bring a new attitude to the locker room and a new, more aggressive system to the Pens. Bylsma

said in a press conference, “To me the game is won by playing in the offensive end. If you can’t get out of the defensive end and you allow teams to play in the defensive end, no matter how good you are defensively, no matter how good your players are, if you play more time in the defensive end in the game – it doesn’t matter what the skill is on their team, it doesn’t matter what the skill is on your team – you’re going to lose a majority of those games” (www.pittsburghpenguins.com).

The problem with Therrien was that he played the trap with players like Malkin and Crosby, and the trap is theoretically meant for defensive teams. Let’s face it; playing a defensive style of play with offensive players is like trying to clear a monster truck through a 6’8 clearance bar. As much as you try, it will never happen. Therrien tried, and unfortunately he “got the boot.”

What Bylsma plans to do is use skill players to his advantage, and not just have them sit back in the neutral zone. As seen in the game against Philadelphia on February 21, the Pens pressured the Philly puck carriers into uncomfortable positions, which caused turnovers in the neutral zone, which in turned created several odd man rush opportunities. And with Crosby, Malkin, and Sykora on a 3 on 1, they will probably score 6 out of 10 times.

While no one knows what will happen with the Penguins and their new coach, Bylsma seems to be headed in the right direction with the team. If he can lead this team to the playoffs, it will definitely be expected that Bylsma will keep the coaching job.



The Penguins are 10-1-3 under Dan Bylsma. (Photo Courtesy of Greg Schlosser).

Graphic novel fans rejoice after watching *Watchmen*

By: JP Gooderham
Editor-in-Chief

Watchmen, very possibly the most anticipated film of the spring movie season, hit the silver screen on March 6, 2009. Boasting a famous storyline, which captured the public’s interest in Alan Moore’s graphic novel by the same name, the question loomed as to whether or not popular culture would embrace *Watchmen* in its cinematic form.

In both the film and Moore’s novel, a group of vigilantes (all of whom lack super powers other than the nearly-omniscient Doctor Manhattan) seeks to bring stability to a turbulent American society during the 1980s. In the world of *Watchmen*, the Soviet Union is at its height and tensions between the U.S. and the USSR are escalating rapidly over nuclear fears.

Primarily, the film follows Rorschach (Jackie Earle Haley) who, though physically ordinary, possesses an unparalleled hatred of criminals and others whom he perceives to be the scum of society. Through intuition and violence, he intends to unravel the mystery surrounding the death of another former hero, the Comedian (Jeffrey

Dean Morgan). Over the course of the film, he enlists the help of heroes such as the Nite Owl (Patrick Wilson) and the Silk Spectre (Malin Akerman).

Although the film’s plot was well-known by the novel’s fans, many members of the audience were unaware of the story. Senior Mike Sprys commented that he “had no idea what *Watchmen* was until I saw the trailers.” Nevertheless, Sprys states, “I am looking forward to seeing it from what I have heard about the movie.”

Gwen Pribish, a senior who saw the movie at its midnight showing, described the film as “truly incredible.” In particular, she was impressed with “the action sequences, the casting, and the interpretation of the sequence of events.” Given the length of the original novel, she was also dazzled by the fact that “everything fit in well. They really did a good job making the movie come together.”

Watchmen fan and Upper St. Clair junior Ryan Valperga believes that the director was forced to overcome many obstacles in order to successfully adapt the novel to film. For instance, “keeping it true to the book will be difficult. Not disappointing the fans with the adaptation will be a challenge.”

Nevertheless, Valperga was optimistic about the film’s quality, stating, “I have kept up with the reviews, and I think that the ending is going to be really great.”

Although the novel’s fans seemed, overall, impressed with director Zack Snyder’s work, film critics who were not familiar with the story were often disappointed. The New Yorker’s Anthony Lane, for instance, comments, “*Watchmen*, like *V for Vendetta*, harbors ambitions of political satire, and, to be fair, it should meet the needs of any leering nineteen-year-old who believes that America is ruled by the military-industrial complex, and whose deepest fear—deeper even than that of meeting a woman who requests intelligent conversation—is that the Warren Commission may have been right all along” (www.newyorker.com).

Critics who left theaters disappointed may have a point. The heavy emphasis on graphic violence and sex may, at times, have detracted from the story’s message and the intricate struggle between the forces of good and evil.

Nevertheless, fans of the superhero genre and followers of Alan Moore certainly will be pleased with Snyder’s work.

London Fashion Week provides a transport back to the future

By: Alaina Zemanick
Features Editor

Forget New York Fashion Week; London Fashion Week is where the true fashion action is. From February 21 to February 24, British designers had their chance to display their talents on the runway (www.londonfashionweek.co.uk). Everyone from cult designer Luella Bartley to students at the prestigious Central Saint Martins School designed significant fashion shows in this 5-day period.

The trends displayed in London were mainly 80s-oriented, such as the designs for Topshop Unique. Topshop, a

principal department store in England, created an astronomical collection, literally. The references to sci-fi and a future space age were undoubtedly recognizable. The collection with its trendy boots and touches of neon even made one spectator cry, “Wow! Wow! Wow!” (www.vogue.co.uk).

Even rock-chic designer Luella Bartley caught the 80s trend bug, creating a punk-esque theme to her new apparel. Labeled as “Cute utilitarianism” by Bartley herself, the designer kept true to her name with beautifully tailored clothing with rocker touches, especially when some of the models sported

Manic Panic dyed hair along with chic clothing (www.style.com).

The Masters students at Central Saint Martins brought back the clothing of decades past with their extreme use of the shoulder pad and cartoon references in their designs. Professor Louise Wilson, the course director for Masters of Fashion, said that these soon-to-be graduates are “designing clothes that call for attitude. They’re not clothes you just throw on” (www.telegraph.co.uk).

All collections mentioned will be available for the fall clothing seasons.

Newest *Friday the 13th* takes a new spin on a classic

By: Marni Schreiber
News Editor

On February 13, 2009, the newest Jason thriller hit theaters. While the movie was advertised as a “remake” of the original *Friday the 13th*, the movie was, in reality, very different. The producer, Michael Bay, was able to make quite an enjoyable movie experience.

The movie starts out somewhat like *Friday the 13th II*, by showing the last scene from the original movie. However, after that, the movie takes on its own identity. Instead of having the kids be camp councilors, the movie starts out with a group of kids in the woods outside of the camp grounds.

These kids, unfortunately, meet their fate with Jason early in the film, in very gruesome manners. The main stars, includ-

ing Jared Padalecki and Danielle Panabaker, are another group of kids who go into the woods a couple of weeks later.

Padalecki’s character, Clay Miller, is on a mission to find his missing kid sister, one of the kids who went missing at the beginning of the novel. Miller, with the help of the others in the woods, goes on a search of the grounds. However, things, as usual, go terribly wrong.

One highlight of this movie, unlike the first *Friday the 13th* film, was having Jason, instead of his mother, go after the kids. This Jason proved to be a much better antagonist. “One of the updates [...] was the much quicker, more agile Jason Vorhees. He covered ground on his victims very quickly [rather than] walking at a snail’s pace but somehow gaining ground on the guy running through the

woods like an Olympic sprinter” (www.blog.seattlepi.nwsources.com).

However, even with all these advancements, the movie was not all together horrifying. There was a fair deal of gore and many moments of suspense, but, even though “It may have Bay’s big-budget sheen, and it’s every bit as efficient and heartless as the original Fridays. But for all its attempted jolts, it’s not all that scary” (www.zap2it.com).

Critics may have mixed reviews about the newest *Friday the 13th* movie, but, in the end, the film is still worth seeing if one is any sort of a fan of the franchise. The movie, “Complete with all of the unhealthy trap-pings we’ve come to expect from a ‘Friday the 13th’ film, comes this reasonably pleasing, polished new remake” (www.twitchfilm.net).

Multiple Broadway stages go dark

By: Madeline Kushner
Assistant Entertainment Editor

Because of the economic situation in today’s society, over half of Broadway’s starlight shows turned dark. In the months of January and February alone, nearly 16 shows have closed on the Great White Way (www.torontosun.com).

Molly Tavoletti, a sophomore at USCHS and a musical connoisseur, expresses her feelings for the closing of the many Broadway shows: “I’m sad.....I’m very sad!”

In addition to the large number of

Will Ferrel performs on Broadway in *You’re Welcome America*.

actors (about 20 per show) being kicked out onto the street, nearly 150 musicians have also been told to pack up (www.musicianwages.com).

Because of the lack of success in the industry, shows due to open in the near future have also been postponed or cancelled. While some shows like *Guys and Dolls* and *West Side Story* have kept their original release date, shows, such as *Vanities*, have been postponed to a later date. *Godspell*, a show previously done by students at Upper St. Clair (dir. by Miss Milovac and Mr. Hunsburger) that was also appearing on Broadway, has even been cancelled and will not appear on Broadway because of the dreadful economic situation

(www.musicianwages.com).

“The closing of Broadway shows is detrimental to society. Broadway presents a vast and varying culture that makes it accessible to many people. So, many people have been affected by their exposure to this culture and entertainment,” says Molly Jones, a junior at USCHS and

musical fanatic.

The show closings can be seen as common sense, considering the first things to go during times of economic crisis are the niceties, but just last year, The Great White Way managed to bring in a sum of about \$941

million. The sum does not even include the income from hotels and restaurants used by theatre-goers (www.torontosun.com).

But, because of the economic downturn in the United States, not only will the money the shows bring in decrease, the ticket prices for the shows have increased. The average ticket for a Broadway show can now be found at a starting minimum of \$80 (www.afp.com).

Patti LuPone, the star and Tony Award winner for the musical *Gypsy* stated, “What would you spend \$130 on? A tank of gas? Food? Or a Broadway show that you don’t know whether you’re going to enjoy or not?” (www.cbsnews.com).

Confessions of a Shopaholic only admits the horrifying economic crisis

By: Alaina Zemanick
Features Editor

Imagine that you just needed those Yves Saint Laurent Tributes on sale at Barneys. Sure, they cost over \$300, but the classic shoe has not gone out of style in ages (www.barneys.com). You get to the register only to find out that all 12 of your credit cards in your tiny Marc Jacobs wallet have been declined. In a matter of seconds, you remember your debt collector has been stalking you for those taxes you “forgot” to pay. This situation is just like the new movie, *Confessions of a Shopaholic*, a 1 hour and 45 minute flick that can be summarized in just 77 words. Not only do these 77 words abridge the movie entirely, they retell of how many fashionistas have found themselves in an overwhelming amount of debt in this foreboding economic time.

Though *Confessions* has the chance to be a decently cute movie, the timing of its release is just dismal. In their right mind, the American movie audience would only go to this picture to escape the terrifying bills in the mailbox and the DOW coverage on the television. Instead, *Confessions* attacks

the people with what they already have avoided at home, just nearly three times the size dimensionally.

“[Confessions] probably is the most ill-timed and appallingly insulting movie in recent memory,” insults Claudia Puig, an entertainment reviewer for *USA Today*, “How could any studio be so out of touch as to release a movie glorifying the compulsive shopping habits of an air-headed spendthrift during this dismal state in the global economy?” (www.usatoday.com).

In addition to its miserable topic of financial irresponsibility, *Confessions* tries desperately to be categorized with comedic fashion movies and television shows. In examples such as *The Devil Wears Prada* and *Sex and the City*, hilarious lines from the script have become infamous in pop culture. *Confessions* just rewords jokes from earlier mediocre films and makes them ten times worse with a poorly researched fashion fact or two.

Besides the horrendous, irritating movie in general, is it worth it to get greasy popcorn stains all over your YSL Tributes to see a movie that condemns them? Yes, the blemishes are definitely not worth it.