

# Commitment To Be Mandatory For All Activities

## Tough New Reform To Fundamentally Change Role Of Commitment Contract

Nick Phillips  
Co-Editor In Chief

The controversial Darien High School athletic commitment contract prohibits athletes from drinking or using illegal substances while maintaining team membership. This contract may soon skyrocket in importance if a new policy currently under discussion is implemented.

This policy, developed by the administration and proposed to the Board of Education, would require a year-long commitment contract for participation in any extracurricular activity. Commitment's traditional area of jurisdiction would be expanded beyond athletics to include clubs and community service groups.

Administrators working in conjunction with Community Council representatives and the Board of Ed are currently fine-tuning the proposal to create a program for implementation during the 2008-2009 school year. "We are changing the philosophical tone of the school," says an adminis-

tration outline of the proposal, "and in order for people to buy into it, we need to do it at the beginning of the year with the appropriate preparation."

Currently, the proposal is well on its way to completion and final approval. Says Principal Dan Haron, "The finishing touches will take place in the coming months and we hope to be able to have a working document by next semester. At that point we hope to start educating the public about it and hope to start enforcing it in the 2008-2009 academic year."

The proposed commitment contract would be personal in nature, emphasizing an agreement to refrain from illegal substances between the individual student and the school. This means that the contract is not activity-specific and will carry the same weight regardless of the number of activities a student is involved. A casual member of the Fishing Club and a three-sport varsity athlete will be affected in identical measure.

A new "three strike policy" is

being discussed as a punishment for the breaking of this new contract. Strike one is a 14-day suspension from all extracurricular activities. Strike two is different for athletics and other

**"We are changing the philosophical tone of the school."**

extracurriculars. If an athlete's violation occurs in the same season as the first violation, the athlete will be suspended for the rest of the season. If it occurred in a different season, strike two constitutes a 28-day suspension. All other extracurricular activities carry a 28 day suspension. Strike three is a permanent suspension from all extracurricular activities for the remain-

der of the school year.

Additionally, the concept of "between seasons" is abolished. Violations that occur "between seasons" will merely be accumulated for the next season. A student remains under the contract for the entire school year.

The administration supports this new policy, pointing to a number of potential benefits. Mr. Haron hopes for "a more fair policy vis-à-vis athletics and other extra curricular activities," as well as "a reduction in teen alcohol consumption and [a] building [of] awareness about the problem of underage drinking." Indeed, the proposal will satisfy many who complain of an unfair difference in standards for athletes and other students.

Potential drawbacks of the policy have been recognized by the administration. For instance, the policy outline says that banning a student from all extracurricular activities if he or she refuses to sign the contract is "too Draconian." The administration also

worries about a lack of meaning for the contract if it is no longer attached to an adult or coach who gives additional authority to its signature.

Unsurprisingly, many students oppose the new contract. Senior Community Council Representative Evelyn Corder is skeptical about the program's success, saying, "The administration says they want good clean students representing our school in clubs and activities, but I think what will happen is that representation in these activities will suffer." Corder believes that students will stop participating in clubs altogether rather than sign such a strict contract. "Teens are going to find a way to drink no matter what, and if that means that they stop participating in clubs and activities, they will."

Corder also points to possible unintended negative consequences that the contract will have on charitable clubs, like Invisible Children, China Care and Building With Books.

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### DHS Journalists Journey to NCC For County-Wide Symposium

Reece Pelley  
Contributing Writer

Darien High School journalists have joined elite company. The Advanced Journalism classes were selected to participate in the first annual Journalism Symposium held on the campus of Norwalk Community College. Eighty students from five Fairfield County public school systems participated in the event on October 12.

"I found that talking to editors from the four other schools really opened up new ideas and gave us fresh material for Neirad," Lindsay Gordon, Neirad co-editor-in-chief said.

In addition to DHS, the schools included Staples High School, New Canaan High School, Westhill High School and Norwalk High School. The event featured experienced journalists from area newspapers who taught the courses. Each student had a choice of five different workshops: photojournalism, interviewing, design and layout, feature writing and newspaper critiques. "The event was well organized and helped me give me perspective how journalism works," DHS

junior Joseph Hughes said.

The teacher of the interviewing skills workshop was Noel Frampton who is the courts and crime reporter for the Norwalk Hour newspaper. "It is just a really cool opportunity for aspiring journalists and people who are already interested in journalism to meet and share ideas," Frampton said.

The success of the event can be attributed to the event's organizer and founder Lori Soderlind. Soderlind is a professor of humanities at Norwalk Community College. Soderlind says after the positive outcome, she is confident next year's symposium will be even bigger. Soderlind plans to include a competition between the high schools for best news story, best interviews and other writing categories.

Soderlind also wants to expand the symposium to include at least 200 more students from other area schools. One of her main goals though is for "every school to have school spirit" and to be excited about their newspaper. Soderlind's ultimate goal would be for this small event to one day become "almost like a battle of the bands."

## Haron Revolution

### What Do Students Say About Principal's Controversial Reforms?

Hadley Green  
Managing Editor

It's a hot topic whether new Principal Haron has accomplished good or bad changes at Darien High School. In the four months as principal at Darien High School, many drastic measures have been implemented.

One of the most controversial new policies has been the breathalyzer requirement before dances. Principal Haron remarks that, "The breathalyzer is good under the circumstances; there have been no major problems." Haron also comments that, "I do my best while taking concerns into consideration... especially knowing that you can't please everyone all the time." Junior Catherine Stineman states, "The breathalyzer is too idealistic from a teacher's point of view. It's causing students to resort to abuse of other substances. It is not a teacher's or school's place to put such an act forward." Sophomore Andrew Short agrees, saying, "I think the breathalyzer policy restricts a student's freedom."

Another big change Haron is enforcing is the new commitment policy which will be implemented next year. This policy will enforce a strict no drinking requirement for any student involved in any school activities or clubs. Haron has been meeting with club advisers to find an acceptable compromise. He has also met with student groups to figure out what to prioritize and what concerns to take into account. Junior, Charlotte Myers notes, "Haron's actions are harsh regarding drinking, but are related to problems that the faculty find pertinent."

Another new change to begin next year is a policy concerning increasing the number of credits each student needs to graduate from 21 to 22. All students will be required to take six credits a year (except seniors who are taking three or more 400-level courses). This requirement was

proposed by previous principal Dr. Auclair and approved by the Board of Education.

An increasing problem Haron is quickly changing is the major theft issue. Calculators, clothes, money, iPods, cell phones, among other things have all been stolen from backpacks which students' are forced to leave, unwatched in the cafeteria, locker rooms, and not allowed to take into the library. Haron is promptly addressing this issue by, "allowing students to take backpacks into the caf and better-monitored in the aux caf."

Sophomore, Reece Pelley remarks, "Haron is making things less uptight around school and loosening policies (regarding the theft issue)." Haron has been meeting with parent



representatives who communicated to the rest of our school parents some "tips" on steps they can take to avoid having items stolen. The administration is also requesting more money to install cameras throughout the building.

Haron is not trying to change too much at once in his first year at DHS, focusing more on "observing and listening to the students, being able to balance and juggle all aspects of the school community even though they are sometimes at conflict." Haron's main goal for the students at Darien High School is to "continue to move school towards a commitment to success no matter what category talked about. Not just academic but to motivate people to always do their best to achieve success."

On November 15th, 16th and 17th, Theatre 308 performed a modernized version of Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Neirad provides a critical review of the production on page 4.

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# OPINION

## What Happened To "Merry Christmas"?

Lindsay Gordon  
Co-Editor In Chief

In a few days, both students and staff will depart from Darien High School for "Holiday Recess" as it is officially called on the Darien School District Calendar. We are not leaving school for 12 days for Christmas Break, but for "Holiday Recess." Our country strives to be so politically correct that people's true beliefs are actually suppressed rather than expressed, especially during this time of year when such a variety of beliefs are represented in America. Being forced to say, "Happy Holidays" instead of "Merry Christmas" or any other holiday greeting in an effort to be inclusive of all religions in America, hinders expression of our true faith.

According to Mr. Haron, Darien High School does not currently have a policy addressing the allowance or disallowance of decorations proclaiming different faiths. For example, if a teacher were to put a Christmas tree in his or her classroom because he or she believed in Christmas, this would be allowed. Darien

High School should pride itself in this lack of policy pertaining to holiday decorations. The rest of America must realize that forcing someone to take down a sign that says "Merry Christmas" and replace it with one that reads "Happy Holidays" or "Season's Greetings" to be politically correct is absolutely absurd.

People should not be forced to compromise their views by saying "Happy Holidays" instead of "Merry Christmas." After all, this is America- we should feel totally comfortable expressing our views. People should proclaim their faith and disregard this fear of offending another's religion throughout the holiday season. If we are shaped by society to say "Season's Greetings" instead of proclaiming the celebratory greeting of our faith, what is the point in believing in our religion? Why should I continue to find faith in Jesus' birth if I cannot even wish someone "Merry Christmas!"?

Our country strives to be accepting of all faiths. Displaying many different be-

liefs is, in fact, essential to the diversity that America claims to have and which institutions strive to create. Most colleges, for example, seek to create a diverse student body where many different beliefs and ideas are exposed. Saying "Happy Holidays" actually obstructs America's expression of its diversity.

It is acceptable to say "Happy Holidays" when addressing a mass of people who practice many different faiths because this statement is directed specifically towards an audience where a multitude of faiths are represented. It is inappropriate to replace "Happy Holidays" with your own faith's greeting if your intention is to express your unique beliefs.

It is possible to be tolerant of other religions without being so cringingly politically correct. Instead of taking down Christmas decorations for fear that followers of other religions will be offended, why not just add more decorations of your own faith?

Holiday greetings of minority religions should be expressed freely, but it is com-

pletely acceptable if the holiday greeting of the religion practiced by the majority of Americans is more predominantly expressed. America boasts of its democratic government which rests on a system of majority rule. It follows that the holiday greetings of the most popular religions should not be suppressed simply because there are some citizens who believe otherwise. If a Christian American moved to any other country in the world, the native people would not restrain their beliefs to accommodate this Christian. This Christian would be in the minority, so in what way does it make sense for the people of this entire country to hinder the expression of their beliefs simply because other beliefs are present?

It doesn't make sense, and thankfully the administrators of Darien High School have come to this realization. Diversity can only flourish in America if people are confident in proclaiming the holiday greeting of their faith without the hindrance of saying "Happy Holidays."

## NEIRAD

Neirad is a monthly Darien High School student publication. The publication is a forum for student thought, expression, and journalistic awesomeness; its content is decided solely by the student editors. A subscription can be ordered for \$25. All comments should be mailed to the editors at Neirad, 80 High School Lane, Darien, CT 06820.

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## Remember The Good Old Days...



...When you had a wide selection of full-service men's clothing stores for your shopping needs.

Unfortunately, most of them are long gone. But there is one that's been serving Fairfield County customers since 1976 with friendly service, great selection, and reasonable prices.

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# Free Thinkin' in Darien High School

## Neirad Takes a Look at DHS's Newest Club

Patrick Smith  
Staff Writer

Every English class has them: the sometimes outspoken, sometimes introspective, opinionated, often misunderstood know-it-alls. They will argue over anything, and much to the disdain of their classmates; they'll often win. So what happens when you gather a bunch of these students together, put them in a classroom, and let them talk about anything they want? You get the Free Thinkers Club, arguably one of the most successful new DHS clubs this year.

Started by Nick Phillips as "a forum for students that have intellectual interests outside of a set curriculum," the Free Thinkers Club is like a sophisticated Dead Poet's Society with Mr. Janosco acting as their Mr. Keating. Although he is the club advisor, Mr. Janosco does little policing and contributes to the discussions as much as the student members. To this point, the meetings have been mainly discussion based, with one member bringing in a piece to ponder (such as a quote, excerpt, poem, or painting) for analysis and discussion by its members. The club looks to continue this format, but also hopes to add a writing project.

"We have been considering the idea of collectively writing a book,

with each member contributing a chapter," Phillips said.

It would be unfair to say that every member of the club is an outspoken know-it-all, because for every member that will shamelessly give his or her opinion, there is a quieter, more introverted student. And while these students may be quiet during school, they have just as much to bring as anyone else. Phillips thinks this is because, "When you're in Free Thinker's Club you're with students that have similar interests and are also intellectually engaged. But when you're in school you'll be with students who often could care less about the class, don't

really care about what you have to say and don't want to participate in the dis-

amazing amount of respect for each other's opinions. It was much different than a usual classroom discussion.

From 4:45 to 5:45, the members of the club come together in the Learning Connections room or an adjacent classroom. At the particular meeting that I attended, Nick Phillips started the meeting reading aloud the "How I See It" passage from the side of Mr. Janosco's Starbucks cup while struggling to keep a straight face.

The ritual was suggested by Mr. Janosco. "I told [Nick] that every meeting should start with a dramatic reading of the small message of wisdom on the side of the

Starbucks cup" Every Wednesday before the club meets, either Nick or fellow senior member Anushree Banerjee will pick up a steaming cup of Starbucks coffee for their dedicated advisor.

After seeing the flyers featuring the art of Peter Paul Rubens and hearing my trusty Neirad editor Nick rave about the Free Thinkers Club, my curiosity got the better of me and I decided to attend. For all I knew, the club could be anything from a satanic suicide cult to a casual round-table discussion; I really had no idea. The hour flew by. A variety of topics, ranging from philosophy to religion to history were covered, and I even found myself wanting to contribute to the conversations. I even wanted to return for next week's meeting. The Free Thinker's Club definitely fills a void that has been present at Darien High School for far too many years.

The Free Thinker's Club is always looking for fresh minds to enrich the conversation. The club meets each Wednesday afternoon at 4:45p in the English Learning Connections room.

As for the future of Free Thinker's Club, after key senior members graduate, Mr. Janosco puts it this way. "If the club dies, does that not mean that free thought at DHS dies?"



Nick Phillips with club members

ussion," Phillips said. When I attended a meeting, I noticed that all the members had an

# Tunick's Tunics

## Do the Clothes Really Make the Man?

Kevin Ramsey  
Design Editor

On a quiet Thursday afternoon, the tranquility within Edward Tunick, a men's clothing store, deeply contrasts the scene outside: a sea of Darien women exiting Palmer's Market like ants leaving an anthill. The man for who the business is named stands behind a counter towards the back of the store, working quietly on a jacket for a customer he had earlier that day. Except for Sinatra's "Come Fly with Me," playing in the background, the store is deathly silent, until one of the customers approaches the storeowner, casually engaging in a conversation. After the customer leaves, the store is quiet for a moment, and Sinatra is still crooning in the background.

At a first glance, this is far from a typical interaction between a salesman and a customer. In fact, Tunick doesn't even mention any of his items until a few minutes later, and when he does, it's not in the usual "you have to buy something" fashion. In most stores, the employees have one goal in mind: to get the customer to leave with a product.

"My role as a salesman isn't to sell you something," Tunick says, "it's to merely suggest options that you may or may not take. It's a hands on approach, but I don't force you to buy anything from me."

Although Tunick doesn't immediately talk about his merchandise, it is very clear that he is passionate about what he does. From a customer's perspective, the store is very well organized. There are neatly folded Izod khaki pants on the wall to the right, cashmere sweaters hanging in the middle, tuxedos have their own special corner in the back of the store, and at almost every turn there is a dress shirt, whether it be in a cabinet, on a table, or on a clothing rack.

Tunick likes to keep his store clean, and untidiness is unacceptable. "I can't stand walking into stores that have t-shirts with Polos, boxers mixed

in with shorts, or t-shirts left astray on display tables. For me, you should walk in here, find what you want, and walk out happy."

Tunick started in the clothing business more than 30 years ago. Fresh from college, he was unsure of where to go in his life, and he needed a job to make money. "I was just out of college in Florida. I came up here to Westport and worked for the de-

runs the store with him, has nothing but praise for Ed, "He loves his customers, and he has a great time with them." Sue say.

The other woman in Ed's life is full-time employee and family friend of the Tunicks, Ginny Miller. Ginny came in to run the store when the Tunicks weren't able. "Ed's easy-going, he isn't very obsessive about what you do in here. He never lets his personal taste get in the way of what he feels the customer wants, and he is able to recognize when it's time to change."

Together, Ginny and Carol have added the feminine touch to the mostly men's store. "When the salesman for Eliza B. came in to sell him flip-flops," he said "Are you nuts? I sell men's clothes!" says Carol. "But he realized that it was time for a change and bought the shoes. Now they are one of our hottest items."

Outside of the store, Ed and Carol dabble in real estate, but what Ed loves to do is play tennis. "I play tennis two to three mornings a week, and in the summer I play on a few teams . . . I've been playing tennis all my life."

"Ed loves tennis," remarks Carol, "and he's a completely different man out there. In the store, he's calm and laid back, but on the court, he is extremely competitive. I had to quit tennis because I couldn't maintain [his] level of play." When asked if any of that competitiveness carries over to his work, Ginny says "Absolutely not. Any frustration he gets here, he channels into playing tennis."

Tunick doesn't carry that competitive nature into his business. He doesn't worry about any other stores that sell similar products in Darien. "My store is unique. It is so unique, that when people come here, they are surprised that this place has been around. They like it so much that I usually end up becoming good friends



Tunick poses for a picture in his tidy store

signer Stanley Blasfater, who was called 'the Godfather of sport coats,' and I decided that I really enjoyed the clothing business."

From there, Tunick opened his first store in Avon, Connecticut, in 1973. He met little success there, and moved to Darien three years later. Although he celebrated his thirtieth anniversary last year, he says that his business is only now "starting to go full speed."

Although Tunick is the face of the store, he doesn't maintain his business alone. Behind the scenes he has some help. First, his wife Carol, who co-

# Staph Attack

## The Real Facts About MRSA

Kim Michels  
Staff Writer

A simple "bless you" tides over the gusty sneeze or the sniffles of a cold, but with MRSA it is not quite as easy as grabbing a Kleenex. During the season of silver tinsel and soggy snow, students come to school sniffing and wheezing with a hankie in hand, but with saturated media coverage of various infections many have now come to fear something far more frightening than a sneeze. MRSA, a bacterial staph infection that is contracted through contact, has become a featured news story, which fueled cause for alarm in Connecticut. The fear became something closer to reality as the DHS website featured MRSA facts warning against the bacteria.

MRSA is short for Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus. Within the name it states that it is "menthiccillin-resistant." There was great fear that MRSA was untreatable. Menthicillin is a commonly used antibiotic for staph infection, but with adaptation the MRSA bacteria became antibiotic resistant. The Mayo Clinic spoke of the history of MRSA: "Decades ago, a strain of staph emerged in hospitals that were resistant to the broad-spectrum antibiotics commonly used to treat it. . . [MRSA] was one of the first germs to outwit all but the most powerful drugs."

Some questioned whether MRSA bacteria had become a "superbug." MRSA can be so-called "superbug" due to its resistance to some antibiotics, but there are still drugs that can treat it. People "rarely" die from MRSA. MRSA is not new and doctors have been dealing with it long before this season's onset.

Symptoms of MRSA include pain around an open wound, white-headed pimples around the hair line, or the bubbled, stretched out skin of a boil. Abscesses, or "pus filled pockets," are a common symptom of MRSA. Blemishes should be looked at with a more scrutinizing eye. The skin "problems" may actually be symptoms and are better to be treated by a doctor than a dermatologist. Swollen boils and raw skin pocketed with pinched pimples is a message of the inner workings of the body.

MRSA has always been present within society since its appearance in 1969 and has literally been right under our noses. Seventy to 90 percent of healthy people have the staph bacteria inside their nostrils. Those who have the bacteria on their skin have simply been "colonized" by the bacteria. The bacterium simply lingers on the skin, virtually harmless to healthy people. The only need for concern is when the bacteria enter the body.

DHS nurses confirm there have been no cases of MRSA in the school that they know of this year, but other Connecticut high schools have not fared as well. Weston High School had recent case of staph infection. WHS students did not run around in mass hysteria; school was never cancelled and tests were still scheduled to some students' dismay. Some parents still took the precaution of keeping their child home for a day, but most schools do not cancel school in regard to a MRSA infection on school grounds unless it is strictly necessary.

MRSA was once rarely known outside the confines of a hospital and senior centers. But since the 1990s, community-associated MRSA or CA-MRSA is affecting a wider spectrum. CA-MRSA does not rely on its victims being hospitalized. Those who are already sick seem to be an easy victim for the prowling bacteria, but those who are healthy must be wary as well. MRSA is not complex in its spreading. It is the simple brush of shoulders in the hallway or the obligatory handshake that spreads the bacteria. The Connecticut Department of Public Health sent a message that gave advice to schools on how to prevent the spread of the disease. Teachers were told to be wary of students with MRSA symptoms.

Rosemary E. Klenk M.D., a doctor at New England Pediatrics, estimates that she has treated one to two patients with MRSA each month. Dr Klenk's advice was similar to the school's guidance as she warned that "hand washing is the single most important thing you can do."

Darien High School is sharing the news clippings about MRSA to prevent, not scare students. The goal is to Continued on page 15

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# The Five Buck Fashion Experience Get Your Thrift on at the DCA Thrift Shop

Mike Klein  
Business Manager

It's hard to miss the DCA Thrift Shop downtown. It's an old house that sits right in the middle of two new buildings, across the street from the soon-to-be-built Brooks Brothers and Darien-Rowayton Bank. The DCA Thrift Shop stands alone: a second-hand diamond in the rough in an affluent area.

One might think that a thrift shop in Darien has nothing to offer, but that is completely wrong. This treasure trove is filled with great items at great prices. "Everything is so cheap because we get really quality donations, and a lot of them," thrift shop volunteer Sue Maguire said. "We mark everything so low because we get so many donations that we need to move them out as quickly as they come in." When you first walk in the door, the mustiness of the place can turn you off, but after you take those first steps, a whole new world of thrift experience opens. This shopper found a white and blue pinstriped seersucker jacket for \$2 and a brand-new dope black buttoned down Brooks Brothers shirt with the tags still on for just \$2. Admittedly, some of the stuff should probably have gone out with the trash. The Neirad fashion team found a blue and white poncho that looked more like a bad 70s shag rug than an item one would still wear in 2007.

In November, the DCA Thrift Shop celebrated 60 years in the same building. It all started back in 1947, when Mr. Robert Grieb sold the Darien Community Association the current thrift store location for a mere one dollar. His generosity allowed the DCA to open up shop in its own building and help raise money for its charities. The profits benefit the DCA scholarship fund. Every year, countless people donate clothing and



random stuff to help this scholarship fund. "We get all of the clothes from residents in town who donate their used garments," Maguire said, "all of the money goes toward DCA scholarship fund which provides scholarship money for kids."

If you search hard enough, you can find whatever your heart desires: suit pants, a blazer, a shirt, a cap, a couch, a vase. A discerning buyer can find anything and everything at this affordable shopping Mecca. And how about the price! Customers can find unparalleled prices to those of any other store around town. "The last time I went thrifting I spent \$8," said junior Andrew Bay, "I got a blazer for \$2, and three shirts that were all \$2 each. I've easily made some of the best purchases of my life in that store." There have been several occasions when I need attire for a certain function and the first place I look is the thrift store because of the great clothes and cheap prices."

One of the fun things DCA Thrift

Shop does is \$5 bags. This event is randomly held throughout the month. A shopper can shove as much stuff as possible into a single brown paper bag, and fork over just five bucks. The budget conscious fashionista can get six shirts and a pair of shorts or whatever they want to cram in a bag; there is nowhere that has comparable prices in this area.

The DCA Thrift Shop service is a cheapskate's dream. Consisting of all volunteers, the women that work in the shop are more than willing to help you find anything you need, and are also quick to cut down the already low prices of the items you purchase. Even though a price marker may say \$6, there is a good chance that once you bring it up to the register, you will only be charged \$3 to \$4 regardless of the item.

The DCA Thrift Shop is a true diamond in the rough in downtown Darien: Great prices, people and atmosphere. Let's hope that it can stick around for another 60 years.

# Do You Need a Buddy?

## Unique Friendships Built at The Buddy System

Meg McIntire  
Staff Writer

On a typical Thursday afternoon, most students either go home to begin to unwind for the upcoming weekend or stay after school for sports practice. A small handful of teens, however, are staying late to participate in a very important club: The Buddy System. This organization has nothing to do with athletics or the National Honor Society. It's a time for socialization, friendship and fun with a group of kids many DHS students don't usually get a chance to interact - students in the special education department.

What's special about the Buddy System is that it's open to everyone. There aren't any requirements to join like there are for the Composer Club or for the Ski Club. You just come as you are and you'll be appreciated and welcomed and asked to come have some Goldfish crackers and cookies. Clubs just don't get much better than that.

Faculty Advisor Ms. Ginsburg says the sense of helping others helps sets the Buddy System apart from many other DHS organizations. "It's just a good way for students to get to know each other because most students wouldn't normally get to interact with some of the special needs kids". This view is echoed by freshman member Samantha Wood, who says that "There were kids at the Buddy System who went to middle school with me for three years that I'd never met before."

Although the club was started at the high school, most of the members are in eighth grade and take a bus ride to the high school after their school day ends. "Since many of the kids are eighth graders, it's a great way for them to get familiar with the high school and feel comfortable and at ease with the building for next year".

On a rainy Thursday afternoon, students start trickling in to room B-213 after the last bell rings. A few kids open cabinets and bring out boxes of Goldfish crackers and markers and begin to snack. Junior Sreya Radhakrishna, says she really looks forward to this time of the week. "I enjoy coming because it's so much fun and it's nice to see the other kids be happy to be out and socializing". Sreya joined last year because her eighth grade brother is autistic. Sreya would also like to pursue autism research in the future. "I like being here to help out and have fun... it's great because it allows the kids to play and have a normal social life."

At 3 o'clock students from Middlesex Middle School fly through the door, snacks in hand and smiles on their faces. "I have a CD!" Eighth-grader Luci Brunswick exclaims, "My dance mix!" The kids move some desks aside and pop the CD in the computer. Danity Kane's, "Show Stoppin'" begins and Luci takes the floor saying, "If anyone wants to join, you can" and then begins to twirl and snap her fingers. A few of the kids clap and Luci ends with a spin on the ground.

Junior Claire Gardener has been involved since freshman year. "This club is great because it teaches kids to be accepting of people who are different than themselves. It's really important in high school to be accepting and embrace differences in people." Claire has always been interested in working with special needs students and the Buddy System seemed like a good place to start. "At the end of each meeting it's cool to see the kids leave with smiles on their faces and saying 'I can't wait until next week!' because you really feel like you've done some-

Continued on page 15

# A Midsummer Night's Dream Lands With Applause Theatre 308's Shakespearian Modernization Exceeds Student Expectations

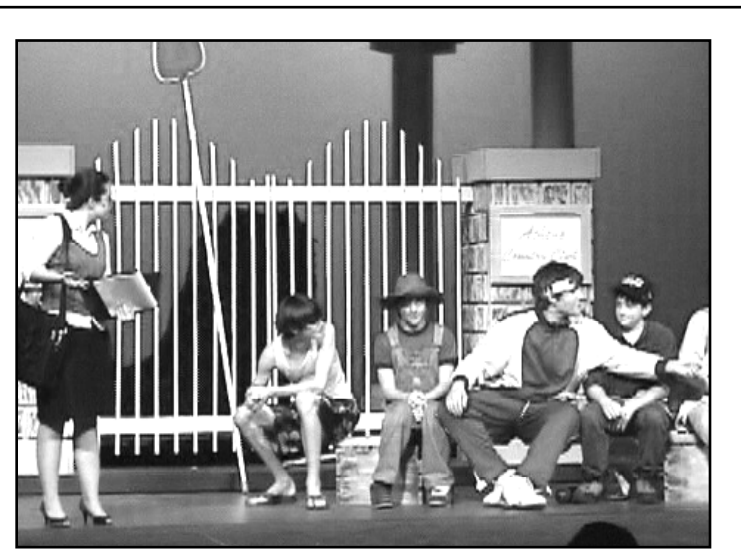
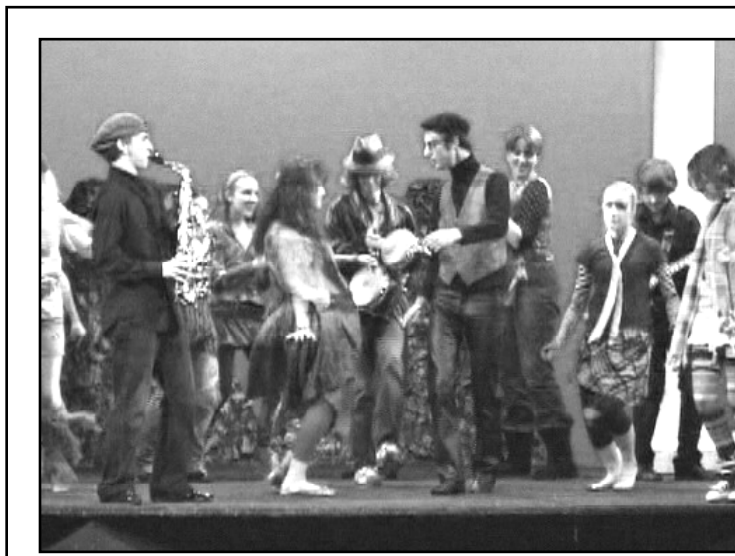
Christy Lattimer  
Managing Editor

The classic student response to a Shakespeare play is usually a bored stare accompanied by a rather large yawn. However, Theatre 308's production of A Midsummer Night's Dream kept the audience not only awake, but roaring with laughter. The two characters that contributed the most to the audience's smiles were Puck and Bottom. These two actors - without a doubt -- made the play a hysterical theatrical experience.

Lachlan Harris, a junior, played the role of Puck: a devious fairy who loves to cause trouble throughout the mysterious forest. Harris' charismatic personality beautifully suited Puck's character. Not only was Harris able to capture Puck's sneaky smile but he also mastered the Segway, which served as Puck's personal "flying" machine. Harris was able to soar across the stage and maneuver this two-wheeled electric device in ways that never failed to entertain.

John Kraft portrayed the role of Bottom. Kraft's performance was adored by the audience; the DHS senior was able to embrace Bottom's pompous and cocky attitude with a loud booming voice and exaggerated gestures. Kraft's method of acting was very similar to Will Ferrell's depiction of the freewheeling Ron Burgundy in "Anchorman". Both Bottom and Ron Burgundy convey an arrogant, self-centered personality to comedic effect.

Theatre 308 challenged the audience by making a decision to retain the traditional Shakespearean language; they did not update the script with modern-day dialogue. But Theatre 308 did not stick totally with tradition.



The Theatre 308 team made a decision to incorporate a few modern elements into a Shakespearian drama, as seen here.

The group decided to make two major changes to this November production to keep it more exciting and interesting for a student audience. The first innovation was the addition of two a cappella songs performed by a group of fairies. The lead singer was Elizabeth Leimkuhler: the freshmen possessed a powerful, unique voice that unexpectedly belted out of her petite frame. The audience was shocked and mesmerized. Leimkuhler left everyone wanting more and looking forward to the spring musical where this promising young singer is sure to be an excellent addition.

The second original twist Theatre 308 added was the modernization of the set. Even though the language remained the same, the characters and their costumes reflected the play's modern edge; one scene even looked as if it had come straight out of a chi

club. The set consisted of a sign that said "Athenian Country Club" and Theseus, played by Junior Russell Parnon, and Hippolyta, played by Junior Michelle Birskey, came out riding in a golf cart. Hippolyta, an unhappy wife wearing a designer Lily Pulitzer dress, treats her oblivious husband with indifference.

Another modern and interesting touch was the character Helena played by Junior Jani Makin. The character's style brought a different perception to Helena's personality. At the beginning, Helena hopelessly chases after Demetrius, played by Senior Paul Ciasullo. But alas, Demetrius is madly in love with Helena's best friend, Hermia. Helena soon realizes the reason Demetrius is in love with Hermia is because he thinks Hermia is far more beautiful and graceful. Hermia, played by senior Liz Kiggins,

has a wardrobe that consists of curly locks and a long, flowing skirt, an image that portrays a preppy, well put-together young woman. Helena's wardrobe, on the other hand, is the complete opposite. Helena's feelings of loneliness and despair were expressed with an all black ensemble complete with black platform boots.

One thing that Theatre 308 could have done better in this reviewer's opinion was to stay consistent with its concept of modernization. Towards the end, it seemed as though the modern aspects of the set design and characters had ceased to exist. Admittedly, this challenge would have been difficult to pull off since the bulk of the second half took place in the forest. Yet, they still could have inserted small details such as current signage that would have helped lend a contemporary feel to the full production.

The entire cast of Theatre 308 did an amazing job in this unique performance of A Midsummer Night's Dream. The production exceeded far beyond the many students' customary expectations for a Shakespeare play. With the aesthetic modernization, each actor brought different personalities to his or her character. This clever concept made the play more dynamic and easier for the audience to relate. The show was a nice contrast from the more serious dramatic production of The Laramie Project last fall. This audience got the chance to laugh and let go with this original take on a much beloved classic.

A Midsummer Night's Dream was a humorous experience that kept the audience amused with its comical characters and amusing interpretation.

# A Glimpse into the World of Brian Giesen

## A Man Reduced and Reviewed

Mike Klein  
Business Manager

On March 11, 1991, a ray of sunshine was brought into the world in the form of Brian Devlin Giesen. Born in Stamford to general practice doctor, Dr. William Giesen, and nursery school teacher, Patricia Giesen, Brian is the youngest of three children. Brian's two older siblings, Bill (age 30) and Mary (age 26), are at least 10 years older than young Brian. Growing up in the house could be a competitive sport. "As long as I am the only one eating at my house at night, there is a pretty good chance I will get food," Brian jokingly said. "Also, my mom usually only gives me \$4 for lunch, and that is enough for the hot lunch and maybe a drink at some point in the day. It's basically an endless cycle of me getting screwed over at lunch," Giesen says in mock lament. The family version of survival of the fittest definitely contributes to Brian's sometimes steely character.

Brian Giesen is a rather voluptuous boy, with wonderful curves. He isn't built for speed, and when I say built for speed I mean he never runs. He is the kind of kid that finds an excuse to sit out of the one-mile run during gym class. As Brian says, "I am really lazy, I don't think I have ever ran the mile for physical fitness testing." Despite not being the most athletic human, Brian is a cutie pie. He has kind blue eyes that are the first things that jump out when you meet him.



Behold, Brian Giesen; look on his works, ye mighty, and despair!

They reach out to you and touch your soul. These beautiful eyes make the quality of Brian better overall.

Besides having gentle eyes, Brian also has a gentle soul. He rarely makes disparaging remarks about someone unless they are warranted. He is however, a person you can trust to make funny comments about any situation, which is crucial to most conversations. One could say that it is hard to hate Brian because of his kind yet funny personality. His interactions are in general very positive ones. You can end up having a serious conversation about whether Robert Plant was better with Led Zeppelin or when he went

solo, or you could end up talking about the effect that his dinner of leftover Chinese food had on his stomach. In general, Brian's advanced social skills make his persona a desirable one to be around.

Brian's style is a questionable one. He wears all too recognizable outfits every day of the week: Brian's ensemble consists of a polo that is in some way shape or form striped, as well as a pair of khakis. Often times Brian's clothes aren't necessarily the cleanest, and have an interesting mustiness to them. His wardrobe definitely detracts from his life quality.

Brian does however, have many

heroic characteristics, like that of a fireman. On October 29<sup>th</sup>, Brian's mother was making taco shells and left hot oil on the burner. The stove promptly caught fire. Brian's keen intuition led him to the raging flame, which he swiftly extinguished. As Brian said, "I basically saved the day. I sensed the fire going on in the kitchen, and I sprinted to the kitchen and put out the flames. I was a hero, even my mom said I was." Brian's heroic attributes add major points to his caliber as a person.

Brian's rating was greatly affected by his overall lack of work ethic. He is, for lack of a better term, lazy as hell. He does however, have great social aura that makes it easy to look past his laziness, as do his dashingly good looks. Once you look into his eyes, you forget everything that is going on.

Even though this article heavily criticizes Brian as a lazy, poorly dressed, individual, he is a lovable ball of joy. That is the only reason he gets the rating he does.



*Rating: 3.5/5. His personality is a very fun one. Yet, several negatives detract from his rating. Brian's sense of style is lacking, and the fact that he doesn't aspire to gym class greatness definitely hurts his overall rating.*

## The Hobbits are Dancing Masuretti's Comet

Meghan McIntire  
Staff Writer

Intergalactic-Nintendo-opera. Although I never thought I would combine those three words together, there is no other way to describe Chris Masuretti's new CD, "Comet."

Although the words are barely audible; the techno beat a little off; and the lyrics a mishmash of incoherent phrases, I have to acknowledge the struggle Chris Masuretti must have had while making this CD. It must have been difficult to find an appropriate place to use the word "concubine."

This Argentinean artist released four Spanish-language albums prior "Comet." Although there weren't reviews on any websites, besides one by Masuretti's producer, it was easy to understand the main point of the music. His website describes the music as an, "infectious sound that just propels you to the dance floor." Which dance floor that may be, I'm not sure, but infectious is definitely a good way to describe the songs. Every song is similar with the same industrial-sounding beat and the same woman harmonizing in the background that they begin to blend into one giant song that is bound to get stuck in your head. Perhaps this is a sign of good lyrics or a catchy beat, but when you wake up in the morning with words "...a hobbit dancing across the sky," in your head, you know you've had enough.

Although I would have enjoyed watching some of the homemade music videos by Masuretti, unfortunately the website ([www.masuretti.com](http://www.masuretti.com)) shut down my computer and continued to play the song "A T M Girls" for an entire hour. Fortunately, another website gave me a good idea about the type of audience Masuretti is marketing. The Star-Wars fan who's trying to be a little more hip. Comets and shooting stars abound all around the site as Masuretti's grinding voice emits from a little caricature of him at the left-hand side of the page. A beam of laser light shines from Masuretti's outstretched hand and twirls around in

time to the music. It's one of the most entertaining things on the web.

The music also has the aura of a singer who thinks he knows more than you do. Perhaps it's because Masuretti repeats the phrase, "You don't know about anything" over and over again. After a while the music begins to wear you out and you begin to think, "Oh my gosh, what if he's right? What if it's not that the music is bad, it's just that I don't understand it?" When you begin thinking thoughts like this, turn it off, take a break from it, and maybe return to it later. I can't guarantee you'll think differently of the music, but it helps to break up the monotony of the Mario Brothers-sounding music.

In many of his songs, Masuretti incorporates a line or two about the politics of today. One song, entitled Big Snake, which was written by Masuretti, had apparently caused some controversy: "Everybody immediately asks if the song is about the current administration. I wrote the song after I read an Internet article about a FBI agent who was an informant to a terrorist organization. They already caught him and he is out of the picture, at least I hope so. Big Snake is just a song. And a damn good one." Obviously, Masuretti feels confident about his music and, perhaps, the song really is about the government, but I could not be sure. It's a little difficult to hear the words behind all the techno, keyboard sounds.

The music that Masuretti has created requires a refined taste. It's difficult to listen to the first few times, but it begins to grow on you. It's entertaining to try and catch the phrases thrown in here and there and seeing the reactions on your friend's face when you introduce the CD to them is sure to make you laugh. The music has good potential and perhaps with a little less of the "hypnotic, tribal rhythms" and more of Masuretti's own voice the CD would be a little more appealing. Of course, it could just be that Chris Masuretti's, "Comet" hasn't yet hit its orbital period.

## Paved Rhodes Dusty Rhodes and the River Band

Pat Luongo  
Sports Editor

Anaheim, California, the home of Disneyland and close neighbor to the beautiful beaches of Orange County is not necessarily the place where one would call country music home. Yet Cali band, Dusty Rhodes and the River Band, brings a mix of folk and country to the local music scene with their debut album, "First You Live." The vibe that this band gives is not the Bob Dylan protest type, and is only slightly similar to the American folk revival 1960s sound. Most of their songs are pretty uplifting and somewhat enjoyable to listen to, that is if you like a mix of folk and country.

Dusty Rhodes and the River Band open their CD with a catchy,

a die-hard country fan. It's a pretty gutsy move starting with a piece that might turn potential listeners away.

The remainder is a mix of country and folk just kind of strewn together, and for a person who doesn't particularly enjoy country or songs that sound a little bit like country, it just kind of becomes background noise. "Leaving Tennessee" was basically incomprehensible because the lyrics were drowned out by the backing instruments, and I would have liked "Goodnight, Moonshine" if I enjoyed country music. It's a very soft lullabyish with a soft acoustic guitar and banjo playing in the background, and the lyrics "Goodnight, Moonshine. I taste the bitter wind in your eye," almost sound like a father singing his



The Dusty Rhodes Band Begin Another Day

up-tempo intro track and the song from which the CD takes its title. It's a very catchy way to start the CD, because it sounds more like a modern rock than a folk. The lyrics "There used to be a heartbeat where my dead body laid right now" are closer to emo bands like Fall Out Boy than to Bob Dylan. It was also by far my favorite song of the album. I have to give the band credit for including a song that sounds so different from all of the rest of the songs on the CD. This CD is probably suited for country/folk music enthusiasts, and, though I really like it, it probably won't be the favorite of

daughter to sleep.

Something that the band did a lot was mix in a lot of miscellaneous instruments that probably didn't belong in any of their songs. They even used a mandolin though the one that stuck out to me the most is "Ghost Trails." It reminded me of the opening scene from "The Godfather," where Don Vito Corleone is holding court while the theme is played on a mandolin. That scene is unforgettable in many movie fanatics' minds; especially Don Corleone's scratchy voice from one too many cigarettes and the soft,

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## Getting Large with Jenny Large

A Chinese man once said, "To the ruler, the people are heaven; to the people, food is heaven." If that is so, Sushi 25 is most definitely a little patch of heaven on earth.

Sushi 25 is a small Pan-Asian restaurant that opened in New Canaan in 1992. Its owners, Alan and Jing Lee, are no strangers to the restaurant business. In addition to Sushi 25, the Lees have founded many other local Chinese restaurants, including Ching's Table also in New Canaan, Ching's Kitchen in Darien, Hunan Café in Wilton, Wild Ginger in Ridgefield, and Penang Grill in Greenwich.

And it is no wonder that their restaurants have been so successful. Sushi 25's casual yet cozy setting makes it the perfect place for a Friday night dinner. Its booth and table seating gives the restaurant an inviting appeal, with a little nook in the back that provides diners with a more private place to eat. Mirrors on the wall reflect the sunlight that floods into the room during the day, and at night the room is lit by chandeliers, paper lanterns and the sushi bar's neon lights.

Despite having two websites that provide diners with detailed information about the restaurant and its menu, the most difficult thing to understand about Sushi 25 is the set up of the restaurant. Sushi 25 is often called by more than one name, which sends customers mixed signals about what to call the place. Although the restaurant's website calls it "Sushi 25", the sign reads "Sushi 25" at one end and "Hunan" at the other.

The menu is split in a similar manner: its heading on the left side reads "Sushi 25", while the heading on the right reads "Hunan". The bills that are given to diners at the end of the night have "Hunan Taste" printed at the bottom, and when you call the restaurant, the hostess says, "Hello, Hunan Taste." When you look up Sushi 25's address on [whitepages.com](http://whitepages.com), it comes up as 25 Elms Place. Hunan Taste is listed with the same address.

After talking to the hostess to resolve these discrepancies, I finally discovered that what I thought was just one restaurant is actually two restaurants within one – Sushi 25 and Hunan Taste. The restaurant has one room, one staff, and one kitchen, but two different menus with the same kind of cuisine. Hunan's menu consists largely of a broad range of Pan-Asian entrees, while Sushi 25's menu is comprised of a variety of sushi. Since most Darienites know the restaurant as Sushi 25, I am just going to call it that for clarity's sake.

Upon arriving to Sushi 25, my three friends and I were greeted by a hostess who was abrupt and appeared to me to be uninterested in my party. Despite my impression of the brusque hostess, the rest of the wait staff was really nice. The restaurant has really fast service, so you don't have to worry about waiting for an hour before your food is ready – our waiter practically ran from table to table. The one downside was that we found the waiter's speech difficult to understand.

The Sushi 25/Hunan menu boasts a wide selection of appetizers, soups, salads, and entrees. It has everything from your classic pan-fried dumplings to more exotic dishes, like Wok Glazed Ginger Scallion Duck. But the

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# Art Spotlight: ADAM CAMPBELL

## The Battle for Acceptance

Lindsay Gordon  
Co-Editor in Chief



The one thing that distinguishes senior, Adam Campbell, from other student artists at DHS is that his unique artwork is as prominent as his amiable personality.

Campbell's friends recognize that the majority of Campbell's sketches, drawings, and paintings share a unique cartoon-like theme, as many of Campbell's sketches and paintings are focused on human beings. But Campbell claims that he is beginning to branch off into different styles and aspects of art. Last year, Campbell created a painting depicting himself asking a girl to prom along with a group of his best friends in an illustrative style reminiscent of Norman Rockwell.

"Adam's cartoon artwork definitely reflects his personality. He is an artistic and funny person. Adam is always ready for a joke (even if it's a corny one), and he makes anyone laugh with his goofy personality," senior Victoria Hanau said.

Although Campbell seems in-

verted, his artwork is anything but timid. Much of his pieces posted around town incorporate bold exaggeration. Adam creates various expressions on the faces of cartoon characters in order to convey a particular mood. "When I say 'cartoons, people get the wrong idea," Campbell states, inquiring that actual animated motion pictures like the films created by Pixar are extraordinary and more than just cartoons.

Campbell's work is set apart from the typical realistic style artwork done frequently in the art department because it maintains these exaggerated caricatures on canvas, whether through acrylic paints, oil paints, colored pencils, or oil pastels.

Campbell's recently completed painting called "Singing Man", one of his proudest accomplishments, is a vibrantly colored acrylic painting of a male cartoon singer. The singer's triangular head and microphone are both pointed upward towards a

bright orange-yellow illumination of a spotlight. The singer's large open mouth, which is only slightly small-



er than his head, is the focal point. Campbell blends the singer's black tuxedo suit into the background to

emphasize the character's facial expression.

"Everything I've done has been a challenge for me and if I were to look at what I've done in the past I would think it's terrible. It annoys me when people say my artwork is 'good' when I think it's not," Campbell said. He recognizes the benefits that derive from self-improvement, and believes that constructive criticism helps him grow as an artist.

Currently, Campbell is ambitiously attempting to put together an animated film. He is storyboarding each scene of the entire film on a canvas with watercolor paints. Regarding this comical film, Campbell stated, "It is a coming-of-age animated story involving a boy and his bubblegum. I plan on getting serious with this film second semester." Campbell is hoping to hold a film night in the auditorium to screen this future masterpiece.

Priscilla Lombardi, Webpage Editor



How far would you go to get into college? As application deadlines seem to approach quicker than ever, college acceptance is the buzz around DHS and the rest of America. But it's not only seniors that are experiencing this neurotic anxiety about getting into university- it's a phenomenon that plagues the entire school throughout our entire high school career.

Getting accepted to a top college has become an often irrational obsession for students and parents alike. Acceptance is the key word in this process, which has been highlighted recently in the popular book *Acceptance* by Susan Coll. This book is meant to be a satire on the entire college admission process. But, in reading about these fictional character's high school experiences, it is obvious that the absurd nature of these college-bound students and parents is closer to reality than satire. For example, *Acceptance* highlights Lily, a girl who moves to Washington D.C. the summer after sophomore year to attend a poor urban school because she thinks it will give her an edge over her former classmates who attend a competitive suburban school. Even though this school is "one of the most troubled high schools not just in the area, but in the nation," Lily will go to all ends just to gain an advantage over her classmates. Sound familiar?

"We went to see a college counselor," Lily explained, sounding remarkably unembarrassed by what came next, "and he said that if I wanted to stand a chance of getting into Harvard, I needed to get out of the Verona school district... So at Klee [her new high school], I'm class valedictorian. And I'm also head cheerleader." Although this example may seem extreme, this sense of ruthless competition instilled in high school students isn't that uncommon.

Parents are just as bad, if not worse than students when it comes to worrying about their children getting accepted into college. Some parents choose to send their kids to IvyWise, which charges \$33,000 for two years of college consulting. If two years of counseling doesn't suffice for your child, you can spend \$40,000 for all four years of high school- the complete package! But IvyWise wants to provide lots of options for families in planning their child's future, so they also offer services to nursery school applicants, where the focus "is on creating a list of specific schools, strategizing the application process for each, and formulating a plan and timetable for the admissions process." Mark Patinkin says, "Teens are packaged to reach goals." IvyWise is one of the "most successful college consultants out there," according to Patinkin.

Parents are so obsessed that they will do anything to give their child an extra edge above other applicants, sometimes even misrepresenting the facts. *Acceptance* highlights this phenomenon perfectly in the following believable anecdote: "Taylor had actually done quite well on the SATs, and Nina was convinced she could do even better if she simply had more time. She had planned to have her diagnosed with a minor learning problem over the summer so she could take the test again under special circumstances." You might laugh at first at how ridiculous this strategy seems. But ask yourself again, how far would you go to get into college?

It seems as though our activities, interests, and accomplishments- everything that makes us unique- are shaped to fit this perfect mold of what college admissions officers will look for. We have become perfectly packaged little products. *Walking Resumes*, if you will. But what is the point of being "pitched" as this perfect child? How can we even begin to enjoy our

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# Separated at Birth

Lately, some of Hollywood's biggest stars have been spotted in Darien. In fact, cruising down the school hallways, you may think one of those big-budget movies has been set on the DHS campus. Celebrity look-alikes abound in our school. This month, Neirad is taking a look at the students and the stars that may have been separated at birth!



Benjamin Mckenzie



Ryan Mulligan  
Junior



Carrie Underwood



Lauren Murphy  
Senior



Maggie Gyllenhaal



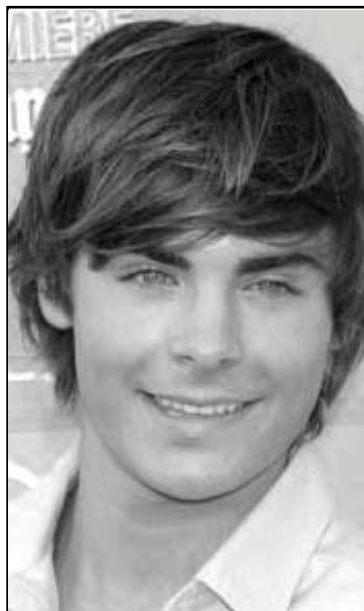
Amanda Dobler  
Freshman



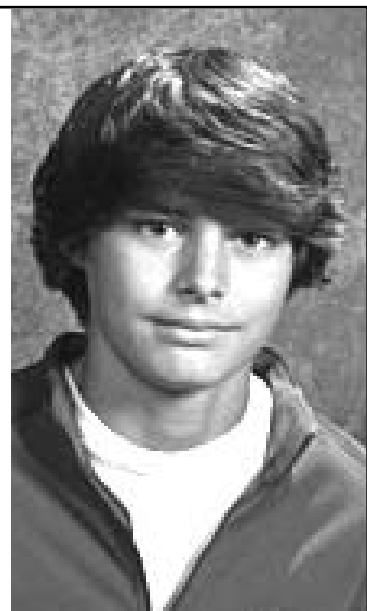
Vince Vaughn



Mike Gencarelli  
Junior



Zac Efron



Reece Pelley  
Sophomore



Demi Moore



Faith Akgun  
Senior



Brittany Snow



Haley Bihlmaier  
Senior



Andy Milonakis



Matt Banke  
Senior

## SAT vs. ACT

Kimberly Russell

Contributing Writer

The college application season is in full force at Darien High School. Each year, the selection criterion gets more and more competitive. Many things go into the rigorous process, but, perhaps, the most grueling is the dreaded test scores. However, unlike 10 years ago, the applicants have the option of taking one of two tests: the SAT or the ACT. Many colleges these days are accepting both tests. But with this option comes the question of how many and which tests to take.

According to the Princeton Review, the ACTs and SATs have at least three sections including writing, reading and math. The ACTs also have a science section, which discourages many students. However, the science section does not include the most difficult aspect of the discipline such as manipulating numbers or conversions. Instead this section focuses on reading and understanding graphs and tables.

The SATs is a 10-section exam with three critical reading, three math, three writing and one experimental test. The experimental does not count toward the final grade.

The ACTs contain four sections: English, math, reading and science. The grading process is also different. For example, the SATs have a penalty for wrong answers; ACTs do not penalize in the same manner. In the SATs, a quarter of a point is taken off the students' incorrect answer. Because of this grading policy, SAT administrators recommend not freely guessing because leaving a question blank will not result in subtraction of points. In the ACTs, guessing is highly recommended, because a student has a one in four (25%) chance of getting the answer correct without subtraction of points.

The new SAT is graded on a scale out of 2400. Each section is scored out of a total of 800 points, then the totals are added together ultimately resulting in the total score. Many colleges will accept just the reading and math scores, in which case the total score is a 1600. Each section of the ACT is graded on a scale out of 36. Thirty-six is the highest possible score. Each section is then averaged, resulting in the composite score (maximum score also being 36).

The SAT scores are automatically sent to each school the student applies. However, many colleges give students the opportunity to provide a "Super Score", meaning the highest total from each section is added together to create their highest possible score.

The ACT scores allow more latitude by giving the test taker the option of releasing the test scores depending on how comfortable a student is with the end result. However, the ACT composite score cannot be manipulated into any sort of "Super Score".

Many students chose to take only one test. "I only took SATs, and I was happy with my score. I don't think it would be worth it to take a whole other test, and most schools take both, so I'm sticking with just one. The ACT is based on what you learn and the SAT is based on what you can figure out. I figured I'd be better at the SATs," DHS senior Courtney Finkel said.

DHS senior Max Florian opted solely for the ACT. "Well, I only chose the ACTs because I liked the format a lot better and how the sections were divided. The questioning seemed more logic-based than knowledge-based. I felt the ACTs were a party of epic academic proportions."

Though many students only take one, many DHS students sat both exams. "I actually preferred taking the SATs because it seemed like more of a game and I hated the science section on the ACTs. Ironically, I did better on my ACTs, so who knows. I'd recommend students take both," Sarah McKay, a

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# Candy Land at Chocopologie

## A Chocolate Lover's Delight in South Norwalk



Chocopologie sells one-of-a-kind chocolate and gives you the chance to see how it's made.

Hannah Litchfield  
Contributing Writer

Have you ever dreamt of visiting Willy Wonka's Chocolate Factory? Chocopologie tries to bring that blissful experience to South Norwalk by incorporating a candy store into a traditional café. This chocolate boutique also provides a behind the scenes peek into the process of making handmade chocolates.

Fritz Knipschildt, a native of Denmark, opened the café in 2005 bringing with him a fondness for infusing spices, fruits and other unusual ingredients into chocolate which has led him to become a pioneer in modern chocolate making. Take the "Hanna" for instance, a milk chocolate heart shaped shell, filled with creamy caramel and topped off with Hawaiian sea salt: an exotic combi-

nation of sweet and salty.

The café was designed with a modern twist that emanates a cozy, homey feeling. Decorated with chocolate leather chairs and dark mahogany tables, the lighting is dark and aromas from the open kitchen fill the air. Christel Moerck, one of the managers at Chocopologie, says, "We wanted to have a warm atmosphere; we wanted the place to give off a warm feeling, the way chocolate gives you."

So why South Norwalk? "Fritz moved to Norwalk, and loved it so much that he decided to open the café here. New York is too expensive and SoNo just has such a great atmosphere, it's so happening," says Moerck.

Even if you're not in the mood for chocolate, you can sit down for a bite to eat, with an extremely diverse

menu, including salads, soups, crepes, and sandwiches.

But if you're craving chocolate, and want to bring a piece of Chocopologie home with you, you're in luck. Chocoholics can also purchase chocolate bars, dessert sauces and syrups, and of course, the classic truffle box. Prices vary from \$1.59 for one truffle, \$18 for a small box of 9, \$25 for a medium box of 20 and \$45 for a large box of 32.

And customers agree that the chocolate is the most exquisite chocolate they've ever tasted. "It's by far the best! The dark chocolate truffles are my favorite, but everything I've tried there is delicious," says Chocopolgie fan Rose Contadino. The look, quality, names, and of course the taste, all make the experience one of a kind.

# Democrats Keep Control

## Evonne Klein reveals her plan for future Darien

Reece Pelley  
Contributing Writer

Darien voters decided that they want to "keep it going." Darien First Selectman Evonne Klein was reelected by a landslide to regain the town's top spot.

Mrs Klein won an unprecedented margin of 65 percent over her Republican opponent David Kenny in November. This victory is especially significant since the majority of the town's voters are Republications. Darien has 6,053 registered Republications, 2,042 registered Democrats and 3,646 unaffiliated voters.

Former Darien Board of Education and Board of Finance member Jim Ramsey said Klein's victory shows the town is not locked in partisan politics.

"In local elections, most voters look to who they think will do the best job for the town, regardless of party. When they had to make a choice on who they think that person would be, the voters showed that Evonne Klein was who they wanted in office."

In a recent interview with Neirad, Mrs. Klein explained what she means by her catchphrase slogan, "keep it

going."

"I want to keep the progress throughout town going," she said.

Mrs Klein said this phrase isn't just an empty campaign slogan. One example is that Mrs Klein and the Board of Selectmen recently passed a contract to purchase the old library property on the corner of the Post Road and Hecker Avenue. Mrs Klein said she has big plans for the use of this prime town center real estate. She hopes ideally to use the space for "maybe affordable housing."

She then went on to explain how the Darien Affordable Housing Commission is pushing for new space to put reasonably priced housing in the downtown area. The fact that there is such a thing as the Darien Affordable Housing Commission may surprise some citizens. The average price of a four-bedroom house is 1.9 million dollars according to October figures.

Klein is also moving forward with a plan to address recurrent flooding problems. This action comes after major flood damage destroyed homes and businesses in the Noroton Heights area in October. Klein has led efforts to commission a firm to study the recurrent problem. Ramsey said Klein's track record of success on a major road works project is a good sign Klein will successfully tackle the flooding issue.

"Based on Klein's performance and the leadership abilities she showed in the past term, she earned the right to be re-elected. The CL&P (Connecticut Light and Power) project, where the town had to dig up the city streets, was handled excellently by her, in regards to the negotiations that were made with the construction company."

The citizens of Darien have affirmed Mrs Klein's message to keep it going. Mrs. Klein plans to do that and much more in her next two years in office.



Evonne Klein celebrated her third election as First Selectman of Darien. Photo courtesy of The Darien Times.

# Concerts Gone Wild

## What the Concert Has Become in the Modern Age

Nick Phillips  
Co-Editor-In-Chief

Rock concerts have changed considerably since our parents' time. From a feel-good chill sesh full of positive vibes and pharmaceuticals, the modern public music performance has evolved to become an adrenaline-filled survival-contest amongst die-hard concertgoers. For my most recent concert attendance, I decided to view the event through the eyes of a journalist. Accompanied by my intrepid friend Max Florian, I journeyed into New York City to see gypsy-punk act Gogol Bordello.

The event was held at the recently opened venue, Terminal 5. The place consists of three stories, one at ground level where the stage is located, one lower balcony where the bar and coat check are located, and one upper balcony. Because the two balconies wrap around the entirety of the venue, standing on the ground floor gives the scene a prison-like atmosphere. Compounding this was the ease of the throwing angle from the balcony to the ground floor, assuring the descent of a steady stream of plastic cups and beverages onto lower-level concertgoers for the entirety of the night.

After bypassing the horrendous coat-check line and stashing our extra materials underneath a bench, Max and I made our way to the ground floor, which was standing room only. As is true of all standing-room venues, the ground floor is often where the most dedicated fans can be

found. These legions are willing to brave – and often thrive on – the chaotic anarchy and energy that grips the area closest to the band. The balconies house those who don't wish to have their glasses crushed or shirts torn – often either older fans or mere casual followers of the performing act.

Shortly after the opening act finished – an excellent Dub Trio – Gogol Bordello raced out to center stage. Led by the gypsy-pirate and Ukraine native Eugene Hutz, Gogol Bordello calls its sound "immigrant punk." The whole of the band is composed of immigrants, most from Slavic countries in Eastern Europe. They incorporate Slavic and Gypsy folk music and melodies with modern punk-rock, perhaps inaugurating the last time (sadly) when accordion and fiddle arrangements will be popularly accepted by an indie crowd.

As soon as Gogol Bordello appeared, the crowd immediately rushed forward in a brutal survival-of-the-fittest stampede. As the band launched into the raucous "Ultimate," the crowd made yet another transformation into an undulating mass of intertwined bodies and pumping limbs, punctuated with crowd surfers from above and the wounded and forgotten below. Mosh pits formed, and escape from the mob of colliding bodies was impossible (nor desirable for those in search of the true concert experience). The intensity was such that boyfriends formed protective perimeters around girlfriends by widely encircling them

with their arms, doing whatever they could to save the fairer sex from utter destruction.

The violent irreverence of the crowd was fueled by the electrifying stage presence of Gogol Bordello, personified in their piratical, mustachioed frontman Eugene Hutz. Flanked by gypsified go-go dancers, Hutz's boundless energy led him to frolic from one end of the stage to the other, mercilessly pounding a well-worn acoustic guitar and thundering lyrics through a thick, drunken Slavic accent. Hutz often switches languages in mid-song, jumping from English to Ukrainian to Spanish with nary a warning. Hutz is the heart and soul of the band, a fact made clear when he unearthed a massive jug of wine from a billowy garment-fold and proceeded to douse himself with its contents (after a few swigs, of course).

Just as Hutz's intensity refused to relent, the crowd's carousing continued unabated despite a long set list and an extended musical free-for-all toward the end. The mystical, romantic quality of Gogol Bordello's music eventually enraptured most concertgoers, inspiring many to imitate the traditional folk movements and dances that permeate Gogol's performance. The floor began to resemble Hava Nagila with extra spirit, complete with circle-kicks. As the final accordion-note sounded, the damage was assessed. The entire crowd was bathed in sweat, every voice was hoarse and every utterance followed with a "Whazzat?" I knew the evening had been satisfactory when a loud, inescapable ear-ringing prevented me from falling asleep.

Despite their outward appear-

*You don't have to wait in-between issues to get your Neirad fix. DHS's school newspaper has gone cyber. Check out our new website: Neirad Enifno! This hot new online destination features original content written especially for Neirad Enifno. Our team of Neirad reporters delivers news coverage 24/7 from the global hotspot of Darien, Connecticut. These intrepid journalists will be the first to bring you breaking news about what's happening around campus. This month's edition features stories on Darienites passion for pink; shopping addiction, Facebook follies and the biggest decision facing upperclassmen: ACT or SAT. Don't miss Neirad's newest source of DHS news.*

<http://darienps.org/neirad/>

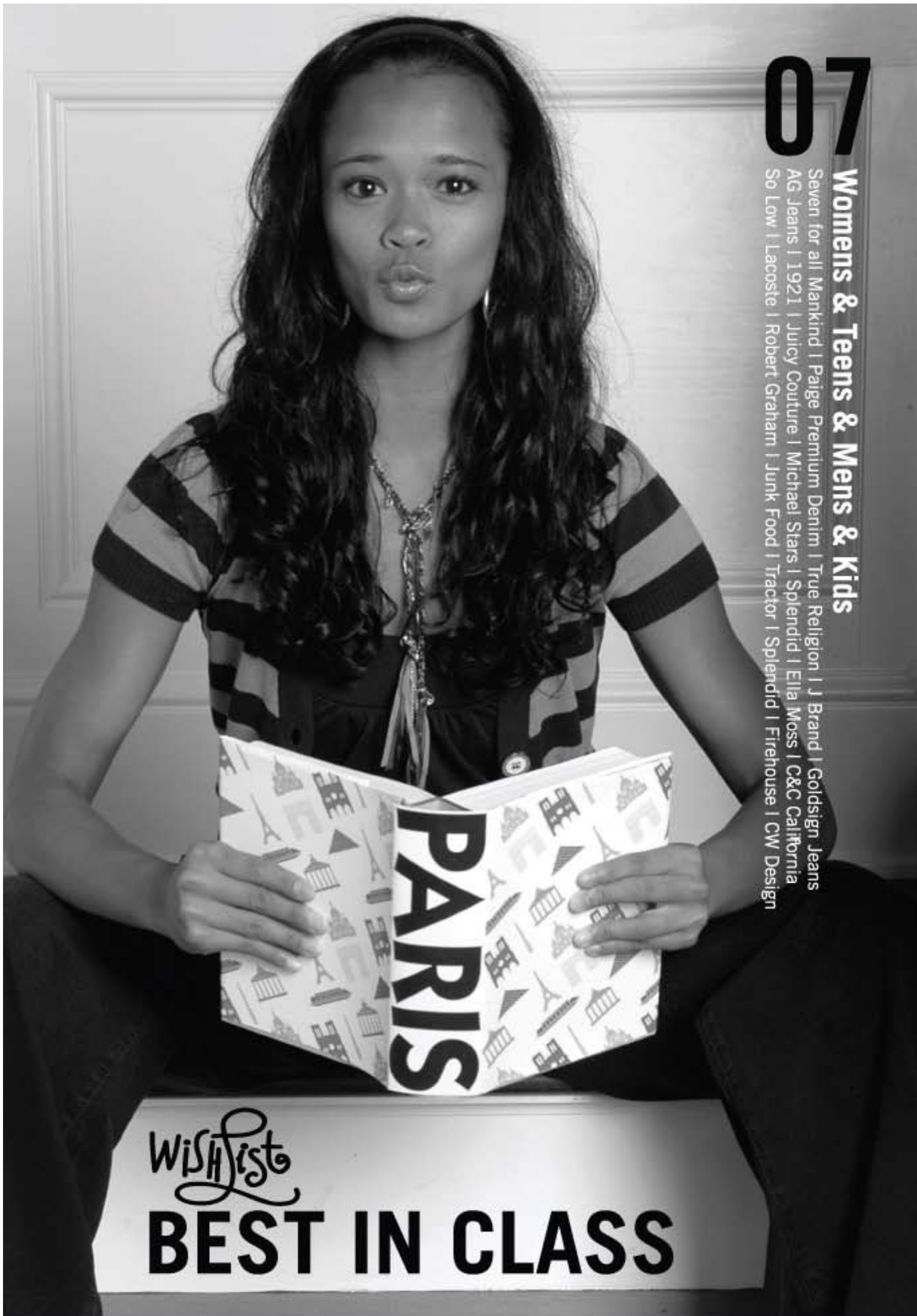
ance of unfocused anarchy, today's rock concerts possess a strong, emotional spirit that perhaps was hard to find in days past. Most restrictions on displaying musical allegiance have

usually arrives. Black eyes and bloody noses may indeed result, but this is the price one must pay to enjoy the modern musical catharsis. Unless you sit in the balcony.

# 07

## Womens & Teens & Mens & Kids

Seven for all Mankind | Paige Premium Denim | True Religion | J Brand | Goldsign Jeans  
AG Jeans | 1921 | Juicy Couture | Michael Stars | Splendid | Ella Moss | C&C California  
So Low | Lacoste | Robert Graham | Junk Food | Tractor | Splendid | Firehouse | CW Design



WishList

# BEST IN CLASS

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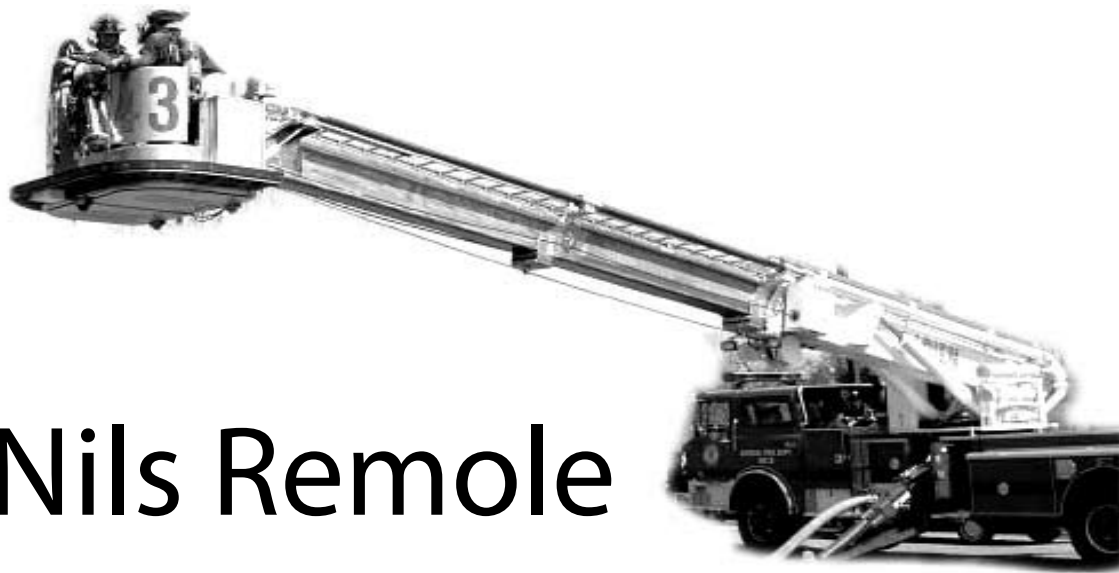
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Kimberly Russell  
Contributing Writer

The smoke billowed from the red barn, the flames rising above the roof. The sweat-soaked men in their stark black outfits quickly assembled together, pulling the thick hose with them and carefully aiming it at the deadly flames. One man charged inside, another man running at his heels. They began climbing the indoor ladder to make sure the scene was safe. The men were facing potential death, but that was nothing new for them. Their main concern was the safety of the strangers inside the building and putting out the fire. Risking their lives for the safety of people they didn't know – and without pay. This is a daily routine for the men of the Darien Volunteer Fire Department.

The organization is made up of members of all ages – from local high school students to men nearing triple digits. Nils Remole, a senior, has been a member for nearly two years. Remole first fell in love with the fire department at his seventh grade birthday party, which was held at the Darien Fire Station. Eight years later he shared this interest with James Bishko in chemistry class. Remole was inspired by Bishko's stories; he promptly sent in his application and was accepted as a member of the Darien Volunteer Fire Department. "Since Nils joined he has consistently made high percentages of alarms and is a valuable asset to the fire department," Bishko says.

"Being a firefighter takes a lot of initiative," Remole said. "You need to be able to work with everyone around you for a common goal: to save lives and prevent danger. You're never alone here, no matter what you're doing – everyone is treated equally. It becomes like a brotherhood. We do



# Nils Remole In the Line of Fire



Nils Remole and adoring fan, Nina Palmer.

everything together, even cleaning. I've been cleaning fire trucks and the head captain will come help me clean. No one assumes authority; we all earn our own respect and maintain our respect for others."

Not only are the members of the Darien Volunteer Fire Department varied in age, but there are many different types that comprise this organization. "So many people are involved, and you learn something from each of them. It really pulls together people who don't fit the typical Darien preppy stereotype. Watching them is a learning experience."

As for Remole's own involvement outside the department, he carries a heavy load. Remole takes multiple AP classes, an excellent student, but also a talented athlete and amazing friend. Remole is involved in both ultimate Frisbee and men's volleyball

– one of the most time consuming and rigorous sports teams at Darien High School.

"It's not always easy to balance everything, but the fire station understands. For example, during volleyball season, I take a two-month leave of absence. All that means is that I don't have to keep up with my full duties for two months, but honestly, I still stick to my duty and go on as many calls as I can." Remole said. Even with the many activities Remole is involved, he happily finds time to spend with his extensive group of friends.

The commitment people make to the station is up to them, as long as they fill the minimum requirement of responding to at least 15% of the calls and 25% of the meetings. A majority of the volunteers complete more than the required hours, but for those without much time, there's still plenty of room to get involved in this community service organization. Almost all the firefighters are men, but girls are always welcomed into the environment. There have been misunderstandings in the past involving gender relations, but the men are always respectful of the women – and vice versa. "The station is basically gender blind; everyone is treated the same way. The first woman to join our fire department was more than 20 years ago, and she went through the same rigor and program as the men did. She proved herself completely worthy of being a firefighter. Anyone who can handle the requirements – whether boy or girl – gets the respect they deserve. We welcome everyone." Remole says leaning back in his chair.

Seconds later his beeper goes off and he bolts out the door. "Sorry! I've gotta go – there's a fire." This is nothing new for a dedicated high school member of the Darien Volunteer Fire Department.

# "60 Minutes" Man Inspires Students

Courtney Whiting  
Staff Writer

Many high schoolers worry about making it to college and deciding on a career. As a teen, "60 Minutes" Correspondent Scott Pelley already knew what profession he would pursue: "I wanted to be a still photographer, that is what I really wanted to be," Pelley told an audience at Darien High School.

With Pelley's role models of Ansel Adams and Henri Cartier-Bresson, the young shutterbug had a keen interest in photography. But Pelley's dream of photography took a different path when he landed a job as copyboy on the "Lubbock Avalanche Journal" in Texas at the age of 15.

The native Texan has come a long way from those early days. Pelley recently relocated from Washington D.C. to Darien with his wife and two children.

Millions of viewers tune in to watch him on "60 Minutes". "The sky is the limit. I grew up in Lubbock, Texas. I have no business being on '60 Minutes,'" Pelley said. Whether it is his coverage of the Iraq War or a controversial interview like his recent sit-down with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, people listen to what Pelley has to say.

But professional success does not make him perfect. Pelley said sometimes even the nation's greatest journalists made major mistakes. "The Iraq War was a major failure of American journalism. Journalism failed to investigate it on the eve of committing this country to a war. I failed too," he said. Pelley has been to Iraq several times to cover this war. He was even there the night it started in 2003; Pelley had to go live and help make sense of the chaos for his viewers.

Big media still had an important role to play in news coverage, Pelley said. A network had the access and the resources to tell stories that might oth-

erwise go untold. He cited the genocide in Darfur, Sudan to illustrate his point. "Thousands are dying because no one is looking. It's the media's job to uncover these stories because somebody's gotta do it. Genocide happens when nobody is looking."

Pelley's goal on "60 Minutes" is to generate fresh original stories told through the lens of his subjects. "The way to tell an experience is through the eyes of an individual – think about telling not an issue: tell a story." This message resonated with his audience.

"Mr Pelley taught us how to take a big issue and hit the audience on a personal level which helps you understand and want to find out more about the story," Junior Mike Klein said.

"We are so fortunate to be able to bring such wonderful resources to enrich the education of our students," Darien Superintendent of Schools Donald Fital said. "I really liked how Mr Pelley approached the students at a high level, starting with the broad philosophical brushstroke of the value of a free press, and then narrowing to his professional stories. It was a good structure and he aimed it all at a mature level."

Pelley told the students language skills are paramount in our global community. He said everyone should speak a second language. Pelley asked the audience for a show of hands of students who were studying a foreign language. "It's embarrassing to not speak another language in this age," he said. Pelley said that in addition to bilingual skills, every person should have a passport and see the world. "Travel is the best education you can get as a human being and as a journalist."

Mr Pelley left the students with an important lesson that all the fancy technology now required to keep a modern-day newsroom competitive will never supersede the simple premise that news must always begin with the telling of a good story.



Scott Pelley kindly came to DHS to speak to the Introductory and Adv. Journalism classes on November 30th.



# Runner's Roost

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## Commitment

Continued from Page 1

A student's suspension from clubs as a result of the new contract will impair their ability to help others if they are involved in charitable clubs, meaning the new contract could hurt good causes that depend on DHS volunteerism.

Mr Haron is sympathetic to these negative aspects of the proposal and explains that he "can see both sides of the issue." If students proactively voice their suggestions or criticisms, they may be able to impact the content of the commitment contract. Students must utilize their place in the high school community, and ongoing administrative reforms provide an excellent opportunity.

## Ed Tunick

Continued from Page 3

with those people."

As if on cue, a customer enters. "Ed," the woman says, "Do you happen to have a \$100 bill on you or in the register?"

Tunick listens patiently while the woman explains that she needs the bill for a birthday card, and then apologizes politely and replies that he hasn't taken any cash in that day.

The woman departs, but not before Ed gives her a list of stores to try.

Tunick is not bothered at all by the fact that he hasn't made a sale. "I'm friendly with my customers, and as long as they leave my store happy, then I'm happy."

## Staph Attack

Continued from Page 3

teach and warn. Precautions can prevent MRSA from infecting students. MRSA can be treated through medication and prevented through education. The notes tacked on the nurse's office bulletin board are there to keep students safe from a simple sneeze, a cough, or, far worse, an MRSA infection.

## Get A Buddy

Continued from Page 4

thing good."

Activities range from jewelry making to pumpkin painting. At a November meeting, everyone decorated a turkey made of brown construction paper to celebrate Thanksgiving. Before the meeting started, Claire and a few other members were trying to come up with more ideas for the December meeting. They mentioned T-shirts and face painting, but they all agreed that anyone who had any creative ideas would be more than welcome to join.

The only issue that concerns this group is recruiting new members. Ms Ginsburg said, "Many people have expressed interest in the club, but it's frustrating that they can't join because they have sports after school." The reasons for joining the club go past the run of the mill, "this will look good on my college application." The kids who come every Thursday don't show up because it's required; there's no punishment for missing a meeting. They participate because they genuinely enjoy brightening someone else's day. It's very obvious how comfortable everyone is with each other. The Buddy System is about accepting one another and putting differences aside to focus on making new friends.

"I sincerely hope that the kids here stay friends for a long time," Ms. Ginsburg said. "They're all just really wonderful people." The Buddy System is unique because each member gains experience from being a friend to people they would not normally see during the week.

The Buddy System meets every Thursday after school in Room B-213. The only requirement is to come as you are because your company is what makes this a special place.

## Dusty Rhodes

Continued from Page 5

erie mandolin filtering in the background. This song tries to rekindle the sinister atmosphere of that scene, but the combination of a mandolin and lame made up ghost stories just didn't get me spooked. In the end, "Ghost Trails" came across as a cheesy song in my eyes.

Dusty Rhodes and the River Band shows some potential to put out some good albums later on in their career, and for a debut album, it's not that bad. For a band from Orange County, they did a good job channeling the Deep South, though probably not as good as the country artists who grow up immersed in that music genre. It's strewn together mostly by what they think sounds good. It's very obvious it's a debut album from a band that is not yet seen "the corporate world," because it doesn't have any fancy production values you would hear in a tightly-produced big budget album.

This album shows Dusty Rhodes and the River Band is really enjoying the type of music they put out, and that's something that I really admire in a musician. The Rolling Stones, AC/DC, and Bruce Springsteen and the E-Street Band are very successful (and some of my favorite) music acts, but they aren't necessarily the most talented. Yes, Keith Richards and Angus Young are two of my favorite guitarists, and basically everyone in the E-Street Band plays their instruments pretty well. But I wouldn't be going out on a limb to say Bruce Springsteen has one of the worst singing voices ever. Mick Jagger isn't far behind him, and all Bon Scott and Brian Johnson did was scream their lyrics at the top of their lungs. All three of them, though, put on a marathon show, and they bring so much energy to their songs, even as they approach the senior citizen zone. In today's musical scene, Kanye West is about 20 times better live in concert than he is on albums. These artists, who take up a ton of memory on my iPod, all bring so much passion and energy to their music, which is why they're some of my favorite musicians. You can definitely see that same passion from Dusty Rhodes' band.

Something these guys do that my favorite artists do not do is play country/folk music. No offense to the band, but I didn't really enjoy this album because of its genre. The only problem I have with it is that it's country: which is a sound I find to comparable to elevator music. It usually goes in one ear and out the other and becomes background noise, just like the voice of my mother. If you like country and folk music, this is definitely a good up-and-coming band that you should keep your eyes on because they will produce some great albums in the future. But for me, I prefer my Rhodes to be paved.

## Getting Large

Continued from Page 5

most impressive thing about the restaurant's menu is its prices in this student reviewer's opinion. For an Asian restaurant, Sushi 25 is very reasonably priced, and the appetizers are so big that I normally just split a couple of them with my friends. Most of the appetizers that I decided to review were from the Hunan side of the menu and included Thai spring rolls, satay chicken, cold sesame noodles, and tempura shrimp with lemon crème. The only thing that I tested from the Sushi 25 menu was the California roll.

The first thing that I tested was the Thai spring roll. For just \$1.50 each, restaurant-goers can get a delicious, decent-sized spring roll that contains lettuce, carrots, and bite-sized pieces of shrimp. The spring roll's fried shell had many layers that provided a crunchy texture, yet the shell didn't flake off and get all over my hands. The appetizer also came with

an orange dipping sauce that had a spicy, peppery flavor. For those who like to add a little heat to their meal, definitely opt to use it, but if that won't fly with your taste buds, just leave the sauce to the side. Despite my severe dislike of almost all vegetables, the Thai spring roll was by far my favorite dish. Granted, the shrimp and veggies were enclosed in a deep-fried wrap, but nevertheless, the overall taste was good.

Another dish that I enjoyed was Hunan's cold sesame noodles. Thin like spaghetti, the noodles were coated in a light, sesame-peanut sauce that gave them a surprisingly sweet taste. This appetizer was definitely Getting Large for its reasonable price of \$4.95. I would probably order it again. The sauce and noodles were perfectly balanced so that the noodles were neither drenched in sauce nor deprived of dressing. I definitely liked it, but I would advise those who lack a sweet tooth to order something different.

The one dish that proved to be a major disappointment to my expectations was the only meal ordered from the Sushi 25 menu – the California Roll. The roll's outer rice layer stuck together very well, so I didn't have to worry about it falling apart in my hands mid-bite, yet it had way too much avocado and not enough crabmeat for my taste. I found this gave the sushi a creamier taste, but at the expense of the crabmeat's crunchy texture. Although two of my friends didn't mind the sushi, I was not a fan. With six pieces of sushi for \$5.00, I definitely wouldn't order the California roll again.

In contrast, another appetizer that I thoroughly enjoyed was the satay chicken. For just \$5.95, I received four pieces of grilled chicken and a sesame-peanut dip on the side. Although I considered the chicken slightly dry, it still tasted delicious, and the salty peanut dip enhanced the flavor. This dish is great for people who aren't exactly the biggest fans of Pan-Asian cuisine – picky eaters can simply leave their chicken plain, or add the sesame-peanut sauce for a bit of Oriental flair.

Last on our epicurean adventure was the tempura shrimp with lemon crème. This dish had about six pieces of breaded shrimp coated in a sweet, tangy sauce that, despite the name, didn't really taste to me like lemon. Although my friend liked this meal, I didn't particularly enjoy it. I thought the sweet dressing was an odd combination with the fishy-tasting seafood, and the size of the shrimp made it difficult for me to eat in an attractive manner. The pieces were too big for me to eat in one bite and the waiter failed to provide us with knives to cut them into bite-sized pieces. This forced me to resort to unappealing eating habits, and the couple sitting next to our table appeared to be anything but thrilled with my restaurant etiquette.

Sushi 25 is definitely a restaurant that you should check out. Its fast service and great-tasting food is the ultimate combination. Although New Canaan is a little out of the way for dinner for some Darien students, it is definitely worth the drive. The gas money you'll spend on the road in addition to the price of your dinner will probably cost you less than an entrée at Ching's Kitchen or a bento box at Tengda.

## Acceptance

Continued from Page 6

high school experience if we are constantly worrying about fulfilling certain narrowly defined criteria deemed as necessary for getting into college?

DHS seniors have recently experienced their last Homecoming week in high school; we will never again be able to chant with colored paint dripping off our faces at Best of the Best, get away with dressing in ridiculous costumes in school, or wear jerseys with our own friend's name on the back at the Homecoming football

game. We have four more years after we graduate to rise to the top of our school. To put it shortly, we will never experience these perks of high school ever again.

DHS students, starting from freshman year, need to realize that high school isn't just a "holding pen" until we get into college. We will never be as young as we are today, so we must take high school for what it is and actually enjoy it. This isn't to say, of course, that being accepted into a good university is not a top priority. Getting into college should be about hard work and not about piecing ourselves together as packages of success for admissions officers to marvel. We need to get more involved with something we are passionate about so that we can impress college admissions officers and actually enjoy high school at the same time. We only have one chance. Let's make the most of our time at DHS. Have a great Christmas break. Remember to enjoy this time with your family and friends and not stress too much over the early action acceptance letters coming in the mail.

## SAT vs. ACT

Continued from page 7

Darien senior, said.

Nina Palmer, another senior, also opted for the two-test route. "People often say the ACTs are much easier, but I don't think that's necessarily true. I think it's good to take both; you get the feel for which format you like better. I recommend the ACTs if you're good at science, because science is in the test. I felt more comfortable taking the SATs because I was at the high school and more comfortable in that environment because I am used to working there, whereas I felt really uncomfortable taking the ACTs in New York. Also, I think I rushed in the ACTs, it feels faster because you don't get as many breaks, and you are doing one subject at a time rather than switching around like you do in the SATs."

Former DHS student, Mika Roux, had her own strategy for test success. "I wanted the opportunity to see which test I would do better. I had no idea which I would do well on. I liked the SATs better in the end, the math only goes till Algebra II and doesn't cover pre-calculus. Also, colleges only accept the best ACT composite score, but with the SATs, they combined my three best scores."

There is no one right answer. Each student has to make a tough decision, which gets even tougher in the intense competitive environment DHS students face in the quest to get into college.

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There is no one right answer. Each student has to make a tough decision, which gets even tougher in the intense competitive environment DHS students face in the quest to get into college.

## Basketball

Continued from page 16

into what it is today. Doug Bealle made it cool to play YMCA House Basketball. Doug Bealle brought together people from different backgrounds to share the common love of the game of basketball

Q: How many kids are signed up for the new league?

A: Right now we are filled up in both leagues. The Ninth and Tenth Grade League will have eight teams with 10 players per team. The 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> Grade League will have six teams with nine players per team.

Q: Why are there no practices for the 11/12<sup>th</sup> grade league?

A: Practices were taken away because there was not enough gym time to accommodate the current third through tenth grade teams and the new 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> Grade League. I was all for this league starting up this year, but not at the expense of the other established programs we offer.

This year's house basketball leagues promise to be entertaining, with games taking place at the high school and YMCA in the late afternoons on Saturdays and Sunday. The first games were played on December 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, and 16<sup>th</sup>.

## BCS Bowl

Continued from page 16

will battle the Louisiana State Tigers for all the marbles on January 8.

It happened last year, and it will happen again this year: Ohio State will lose to the South Eastern Conference Champions. In every BCS Title game for the past ten years that a team from the SEC has made an appearance (1998-Tennessee, 2003-LSU, 2006-Florida), they have won. The trend will not be thrown off this year, either. LSU's strength of schedule gave them valuable experience against consistently good teams, like most of Bayou Bengals' SEC counterparts, to prepare themselves from this game.

The world saw it last year when the SEC Champions, Florida, destroyed undefeated Ohio State 41-14, and we will all see it again this year when LSU beats up on Ohio State, 35-17. Ohio State is by far one of the most overrated teams in the country because of the powderpuff teams they play. Ohio State was not prepared for the experienced Florida Gators last year, and they will not be ready for the LSU Tigers this year. Granted, this Ohio State team is a very good one with the number one ranked defense in the nation and Chris "Beanie" Wells running the ball, but LSU's strength of schedule will pay off for them when they take it all the way in the Louisiana Superdome, which is also a lot closer to LSU campus in Baton Rouge than OSU's in Columbus. LSU will prove that they are the best team in the nation.

## Sinterklass

Continued from page 10

Krampus. Krampus looks fairly jolly with his two large horns, sharp teeth, and sharp nails. Krampus savagely beats small children with switches if they are naughty. As you can see, some of these companions of Sinterklaas really invoke some of the finer aspects of European culture.

Of course, all of the aforementioned information about the European Sinterklaas is but the tip of the iceberg. While it would be excellent to spend multiple pages exploring every aspect of Sinterklaas' multi-faceted nature, it simply would not be reasonable. Honestly, if you've read this far in this article, this author thoroughly congratulates you and somewhat fears for your sound mental condition (who actually reads the Continuations page?). If this Sinterklaas opus has any moral to it, let it be this adage: be nice over the next year; Sinterklaas will be sure to give you whatever gifts you would like. But if you do not heed this advice, do not be surprised if you find Zwarte Piet rolling down your chimney with a rod ready for merciless beatings. Happy Saint Nicholas Day!

# SPORTS

## BCS Bowl Week is Approaching Neirad's Sneak-Peak of What's to Come in January

John Bolton  
Sports Editor

This season has been the one of most momentous in college football history. Some may argue that there were too many upsets, and it became too difficult to follow. The Neirad sports desk would whole-heartedly disagree with this premise. We feel the 2007 football season is the best thing that has ever happened to the sport. It has put the Bowl Championship Series system to the ultimate test, proving that the BCS works under even the craziest of circumstances.

With the wild ride almost over, things seemed to be settling down at the end of the season. It looked as though we would finally have our two championship teams, Missouri and West Virginia, who were the best of the three teams from the major conferences with one loss. However, the last week followed the trend of the season with both top-ranked teams suffering defeats. Missouri lost to Oklahoma for the second time this year, and West Virginia was stunned by arch-rival Pittsburgh.

Ohio State, the third team with only one loss, was the only team that was clearly expected to stay in consideration for the championship game. The Louisiana State Tigers were rightfully chosen to face the Buckeyes on January 8 in the Superdome after they won arguably the toughest conference in college football, the SEC.

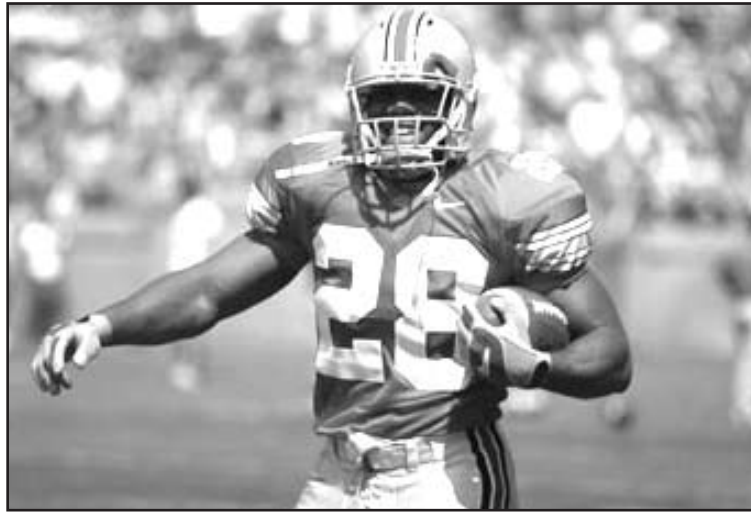
The Neirad sports desk is giving you a look at the hot action coming up

in college football.

**The Rose Bowl:** Thirteenth ranked University of Illinois will play seventh ranked University of Southern California on New Year's Day in Pasadena, California. This marks the third consecutive time the USC Trojans have made it to Rose Bowl. USC won last year against Michigan 32-18. My gut says USC prevails against the Fighting Illini. This match-up is basically a home game for USC, whose campus is only a short drive from Pasadena. USC's defense is ranked second in the nation (behind Ohio State), and despite Illinois spread offense, USC is too fast and athletic for the Illini to handle. With the home-crowd atmosphere and the intensity that USC brings to the Rose Bowl. USC beats Illinois by the score of 32-14.

**The Sugar Bowl:** January 1<sup>st</sup> will be the first of two major bowl games played in the Louisiana Superdome in New Orleans on.

Fifth ranked University of Georgia, led by quarterback Matthew Stafford, is expected to crush 10<sup>th</sup> ranked University of Hawaii. If the Georgia Bulldogs don't come in overconfident and underestimate Hawaii, they will come out of the Superdome with a Bowl win. Granted, Hawaii is a very special team; they have come a long way and have made a name for themselves with their high-powered offense. They have many talented players, including Heisman candidate Colt Brennan, and like Boise St. last



Ohio State running back Chris "Beanie" Wells needs to have a huge game if the Buckeyes are to defeat LSU for the National Championship.

year, could surprise some people.

But they do not know what is waiting for them when they step into the Superdome. Georgia, who believes they should be in the BCS Championship game, has something to prove to the rest of the country. This is the first "non-cupcake" team that Hawaii has played all season, and although they are a good team, Georgia will too formidable an opponent for Hawaii.

**The Fiesta Bowl:** This bowl game will probably be the best game to watch after the BCS Title game. Two teams that very well could have been playing for a national championship, fourth ranked Oklahoma and ninth ranked West Virginia, will go head

to head on January 2<sup>nd</sup> in Glendale, Arizona. Although West Virginia is a great team, they just aren't the team that can stop Oklahoma right now. After shattering all hopes of Missouri's hopes of going to the BCS Title game, Oklahoma is looking to end the season on as high a note as they can, and what better way to do it than to win a BCS bowl game in the same building that they lost a barn-burner to Boise St. just one year ago.

West Virginia may not be able to bounce back from the heart-breaking loss to Pittsburgh, which ended all hopes of going to the BCS Championship game. Although West Virginia's speed and deep back-

field will give Oklahoma a run for its money, Oklahoma will come away the winner by a score of 28-24. It's definitely a must see game.

**The Orange Bowl:** Number three-ranked Virginia Tech will face eighth ranked Kansas on January 3 in Miami. At the beginning of the year, no one thought Kansas would still be in the running for the a BCS game. Kansas was one win away from going undefeated.

The Hokies are looking to land their first ever 12-win season in a pretty trying year. Football is helping healing the Virginia Tech campus, which saw the deadliest school shooting in American history. This game obviously means more than football for the Hokies.

Virginia Tech has what it takes to win. Kansas is an amazing team that has really proven itself, much like Hawaii, but Kansas also hasn't played a bonafide team, except for their loss to Missouri. We give them credit for achieving what they have done, but Virginia Tech simply has more experience. Virginia Tech's offense pummeled the Boston College defense in the ACC title game and most of the regular season meeting between the two teams. The Hokies will walk off the field with their first twelfth win season in program history.

**The National Title Game:** This game is just about the best National Championship match up you can see. The top-ranked Ohio State Buckeyes

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## House Basketball for Upperclassmen An In-Depth Look at the YMCA High School House Basketball

Will Wygal and Mike Klein  
Staff Writer and Business Manager

Every winter the Darien YMCA gears up for another season of its stellar house basketball program, which was offered to Kindergartners through eighth graders until just recently. Two years ago, a ninth/tenth grade league was put into place, and a major addition to this year's winter sports programs is the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade house basketball league. Instituted by popular demand, this league offers juniors and seniors a place to play semi-competitive basketball in a fun and less intense environment.

Neirad took an in-depth look at the newest addition to the Y's rookie league. We spoke with the league's creator and YMCA Sports Director, Joe Marzano. He has been heavily involved in the leagues and was happy to share information about newest addition.

**Q:** Why was the league started?

**A:** The league was started three years ago because a large number of incoming freshmen -- who had competed in the House League for many years -- wanted to continue their basketball careers in a fun, less competitive way. The league was also started because former DHS '07 grad Doug Bealle, the assistant commissioner and scorekeeper, wanted to continue his consecutive game streak for scorekeeping.

**Q:** Was it difficult to get gym time?

**A:** It was and still is very difficult to get gym time because the third through eighth grade leagues already occupy every gym in town which includes Royle, Hindley, Tokeneke, Ox Ridge, Holmes, Darien H.S., Middlesex, Town Hall, and the YMCA. But since they knew we would have Doug Bealle score-keeping it made it easier to get time.

**Q:** Do you feel that the new league will be competitive enough?

**A:** Great question Will. The league is what the players make of it. If everybody shows up and messes around, then the league will turn into a joke and we will no longer run it. If the players can find the right mix of seriousness and fun, it will be a great time for all. There is a good mix of veteran players as well as some guys who are there just because they love playing the game, which is awesome. So my answer is yes, the league will be competitive. It just won't be the same without Doug Bealle.

**Q:** Do you think that it will be as successful as the ninth and tenth grade leagues?

**A:** Again, the league will be what the players make of it. But, I can tell you it is going to be really tough to replace a legend like Doug Bealle. He was the heart and soul of the DHBL. Doug Bealle helped mold the league

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## McKay Potter's Hardwood Ambitions

### Leading Senior Optimistic for a Successful Blue Wave Basketball Season

Jake McCauley  
Staff Writer

This year, the Blue Wave Basketball team is expecting senior McKay Potter to be a force to be reckoned with on the hardwood. Last year, McKay was the team's "sixth-man" and at the beginning of last season, McKay did not see much action on the floor during games. Yet, as the season went on, McKay's hard work in practice and growing determination payed off. His work ethic caught his coach's attention, and it earned him more playing time. With more playing time, his productivity increased, and he became a more important member of the team. This year, he will be one of the Blue Wave's go-to-guys on the court this year.

It has taken McKay a long time to sharpen his skills. McKay started playing basketball at the young age of five, before his high school career began. "The first time I set foot on the court, I believed this is the game for me," recalls McKay. "Ever since I picked up a basketball, I have loved the game. The sport is amazing; it's all about five guys working together as a team."

For four years, he participated in the Darien YMCA House Basketball League. He was a big part of his third grade team that won the league championships with an amazing record of 9-0.

Over time, McKay became an

extremely good player, and in the fifth grade, he was picked for the Darien YMCA Travel Team. After excelling in the travel program, McKay began to play more basketball for the Blue Wave. In addition to playing for the DHS basketball team, he played throughout the off-season for many AAU teams, such as Overtime Athletics.

Hoping to improve his play, McKay played a lot this summer participating in various summer leagues, such as the Bridgeport Summer League and the Brewster Summer League in New York. He was also a fixture at the Darien YMCA, working hard to perfect his jump shot.

This fall, McKay regularly attended strength and conditioning program for DHS basketball players. The program was run by Doug Scott, a former basketball coach here at DHS. Through the program, he feels he has become much stronger and faster. McKay hopes that all of his hard work he put in throughout the off-season will pay off this season for the Blue Wave.

In addition to his training, the DHS Basketball team will look for him to provide a ton of leadership. "McKay is a returning starter from last year's team, and he will clearly be a leader on and off the court," says DHS Head Basketball Coach Tom O'Donnell.

"Not only is McKay one of the most talented players in our program

right now, he is also a natural leader whose enthusiasm and work ethic are an inspiration to his teammates. In addition, McKay is a great teammate that encourages and supports the contributions of the other players."

While Coach O'Donnell believes McKay's talent and experience will make him a key player, the rest of the team also knows that he'll be an important player to the team. This season will be McKay's last season in a Blue Wave uniform, and he definitely wants to make it count.



McKay Potter in action against Central last year