

The Patriot

Issue 3

Washington Township High School, Sewell, NJ

December 2007

Twp. turns out for toy drive

Stephanie Foran '08

Year after year during the holiday season, Washington Township High School students show their generosity motivated only by the good feeling of knowing they helped change someone's life. As the snow and temperature were falling on Dec. 6, student's hopes remained high as they camped out in the Core collecting toys for needy children.

"I think it's exciting because there's snow on the ground and all the Christmas spirit said, Ashley Sheriden '09

Township Toys, also known as "24 in the Core" is a school-sponsored toy drive where the Junior and Senior Class Council spends twenty four hours in the Core collecting various toys and cash donations for needy families in Township.

This year the drive brought in over \$2500 and "thousands of toys" according to Class Council advisor,

Mrs. Carol Costello.

The donations, which are mostly toys, first go to disadvantaged families in Washington Township and then to surrounding areas such as Camden and Salem counties. The money will be used to purchase gifts mostly for older children and teens. Mrs. Carol Costello said that the money normally goes towards gift certificates to the Deptford Mall, Wal-Mart, and food for the upcoming months.

One of the biggest student donations this year was thirty-eight toys given by Britney Fera '08.

"It's good to know that kids around here are getting toys and it's great that everyone will wake up on Christmas with a present," stated Collette



Wesley Gallaher '08

Santa (Alec Swiecinski) takes a break from a long night of collecting gifts.

Mullen '09.

The advisors had high hopes for this year's event.

Teachers on Board to obtain new contract

Alyssa Figueroa '08

On Tues. Nov. 27 teachers, secretaries, and other WTEA supporters surely participated in an after school activity. That night over 400 members of the Washington Township Education Association (WTEA), most wearing red, lined up in front of the 11-12 wing with protest signs before they marched into the 11/12 Auditorium to face the Board of Education (BOE) and campaign for a new contract.

Before questions and comments were open to the public about the contract, Superintendent Dr. Cheryl Simone addressed the public with her introduction of the situation. She spoke of the BOE

and WTEA's private meeting to negotiate the contract on Nov. 5 that lasted until 2 a.m. Simone said she believed much progress had been made, and stated, "I look forward to a quick, yet fair resolution."

BOE President Gerber then announced that remarks made by the public were limited to five minutes and should not be of any "inappropriate reform."

When the meeting was turned over to the public, WTEA President, Mr. Scardino was the first and only person to take the floor. Standing before the board, he spoke for the hundreds of WTEA members who were cheering him on. He started by expressing his wish to have had the

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"I would love to surpass last year's number. With today's economy and so many people out of work, there are a lot of needy families out there," stated Costello.

She said the officers for 2007-2008 were very enthusiastic for the toy drive as well. They made posters and even created an advertisement on the morning announcements complete with a dancing Santa.

Costello, Mr. Steve Swetsky and Mr. Paul Braciante started the event nearly twelve years ago as a part of their contract as senior class advisors. The trio had to think of some way to raise community service in the school, thus Township Toys was born. The current trio of advisors consists of Costello, Mr. Robert Gorski and Mr. Mike Hudock.

The very first year of the fundraiser didn't even have to do with toys. That year, the organizers shaved Mr. Marty Bouchard's head on television to raise money for needy families in Township. The

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Teachers on Board for contract

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contract settled *before* it had expired on June 30, 2007. "But we were met with concepts and rhetoric," Scardino stated, "and [the BOE] wouldn't meet until 'the WTEA made significant proposals.'"

Scardino continued by expressing his belief that it is unfair "the children aren't below average but the teacher's salary is," and this below average salary coexists with the district's "first and second highest administrative salaries." He also made known that the board had paid a lawyer \$25,000 to act as its negotiating advocate, instead of just coming to a solution on the contract.

Scardino also addressed the BOE's past claims that the teachers use students as "pawns" to receive the contract they desire.

"I resent that statement because the teachers continue to give the highest quality of education in the area," he said.

Scardino then commented on the BOE's controversial calendar decision. On Nov. 12 there was no school in the Washington Township school district because teachers exercised their rights to observe Veteran's Day. Since students must attend school for 180 days, the BOE



John Scullli '08

"Settle now" along with other signs such as "Respect now" and "Contract now" were carried by many WTEA members at the Nov. public board meeting.

had to add a school day to the calendar, and decided on March 20, Holy Thursday.

In the Catholic religion, Holy Thursday is the day Jesus had the Last Supper, which occurred three days before he was resurrected on

Easter Sunday. Although many Catholics believe it is considered a holiday, the BOE expressed in their district-wide e-mail that under the expired teacher's contract, which they are currently working under, Holy Thursday is not considered a

holiday, and teachers are required to work that day.

"This only can be described as childish," stated Scardino, "the BOE approved calendar even states that 'in the event school is cancelled due to snow or other emergency, school days will be added to the end of the school year.'"

As he wrapped up, Scardino expressed the WTEA's desire to meet before Dec. 11, the next scheduled mediation session, to get the contract settled. "We'll meet tonight," he stated.

Scardino received a standing ovation by the public for his speech to the board. After no one else came to the stand to speak, the BOE made no rebuttal, as well as no decision on meeting sooner than the 11th, and quickly voted to adjourn the meeting.

The process is still underway, and as Simone stated at the meeting, "There is no doubt that contract negotiations can be unsettling for staff, parents, administrators, board of education members, the community and certainly the students."

To learn about how this matter is affecting students, read p. 3 "Students react to job actions" in Issue 2 of *The Patriot*.

Township Toys helps less fortunate

From **TOYS** p. 1
response generated a lot of money for the worthy cause. The next year the class advisors actually *slept* on top of the Marching Band's van and donators filled it with toys. It was their biggest drive to date; nearly six thousand dollars was raised.

"The crazier the ideas, the more donations you get!" exclaimed Costello.

The senior class council wanted to do help with the drive as well. The advisors moved Township Toys from the band bus to the Core so the students could help too. For the past nine years, the senior class council had Township Toys there, with the students spending twenty-four hours to collect gifts.

"We're very well-prepared this year and '08 brings a lot of enthusiasm," said Kevin Ernhofer '08

As for the human aspect of the drive, Costello states that nothing can compare.

"The families and foundations are so grateful when they pick up the donations. My voice even quivers a little!" She said.

For both those collecting and those donating toys, Township Toys is a great way of giving back to the community. Both the generosity and the fun extend long into the night.

Last year channel 6 showed up at four in the morning," said Ryan Walker '08, "A lot of our friends are coming in the wee hours of the morning."

A blue school day



Taylor Cohen '08/ *The Patriot*

On Nov. 12, many senior girls wore their junior Powderpuff jerseys and pants during school to commemorate the canceling of this year's Powderpuff. Some girls also decorated the hallways and their lockers.

Isabelle's eyes raise awareness

Gina Parker '09

On Nov. 10, Paris Restaurant held the second annual 'Isabelle's Eyes' benefit in honor of Isabelle Nutt. Put together by the Nutt family and close friends, this event is held to raise awareness and money for the Foundation of Retinal Research. The night was a huge success collecting a little over \$10,000 in donations, nearly doubling last year's total.

Isabelle is a three year old girl living in Washington Twp. that has been diagnosed with Leber's Cogenital Amaurosis (LCA). LCA is a rare genetic eye disorder that results in blindness and occurs in children either at birth or during their first few months of childhood.

A typical day for Isabelle is similar to that of many other kids. Isabelle attends Overbrook School for the Blind in Philadelphia. Some things she has learned there include: making arts and crafts, learning how to ride a tricycle, drinking through straws, and using a computer. One difference in her lifestyle is that she uses a long cane when she walks to prevent her from bumping into objects and falling.

"She is an incredibly smart little girl. She is so bright for her age and she doesn't let her lack of sight hinder her ability to learn," says a family friend and contributor to the benefit, Cathy Parker.

"Isabelle is very picky. She is fussy about what food she eats, she doesn't like to wear denim, and she doesn't like zippers." Isabelle's mom, Sue Nutt said.

Isabelle has been wearing glasses since she was three and a half months old. Rather than wearing them for visual purposes Isabelle wears them to protect her eyes. She tries to rub her eyes a lot and if in the future a surgery or cure is discovered, wearing her glasses will preserve her eyes.

Isabelle's parents make the extra effort to keep their daughter calm and safe. When trying something new they describe to Isabelle what she is going to do and try to keep new experiences fun for their curious daughter.

Isabelle's favorite thing is noise. She loves to sing and knows more songs than most could imagine someone her age knowing. She likes to play with her instruments, her talking teddy bear, and enjoys going



Courtesy of the Nutt family

Isabelle Nutt loves to sing and often goes to Music and Me.

to Music & Me. Isabelle enjoys playing outside and swimming.

"Out of curiosity a lot of people stare at Isabelle. Some become sad while reacting at seeing such a young child blind, but I would just like people to be educated on Isabelle's condition rather than stare from afar. I'm always open to answering questions," said Nutt.

The "Isabelle's Eyes" benefit featured a Chinese Auction, a silent auction, and included monetary donations. Isabelle herself made an appearance at her event to say hi and to thank the adults for coming.

"It's a great event, and it's heart warming to see so many people eager to help out this precious girl and the foundation," said Parker.

If you are interested in what you can do help the Foundation for Retinal Research, Interact is sponsoring a cell phone drive. If you have any old or non-working cell phones, you can drop them off in room I-103.

Interested in helping the community? Join Interact! Contact Ms. Naval in room I-103 or visit their Eboard.

Teachers thanked with lunch

Mary Faralli '08

November is a busy time for members of the Rotary Interact Club.

The club has labeled November Teacher Appreciation Month and has sought to convey their gratitude to the people who dedicate their days to improving students' education at Washington Township High School.

Interact general members labored over personal, handmade thank-you cards to each individual teacher and counselor. Each member made at least two cards to ensure that every teacher in the school receives at least one and the notes were filled with personal ways in which that teacher affected the student.

"It's just a little way for the students to show how much we really do appreciate them," said Interact president Marissa Fernandez '08.

In addition to the numerous

appreciation cards awaiting the teachers in the mailboxes, Interact made an effort to show their admiration at a hosted luncheon for teachers which took place immediately after school on Nov. 26th. Inter-

act adorned Cafeteria B with handmade decorations. The club members made fifty personal flower pots to adorn the three long tables, complete with imitation flowers and attached thank-you notes. The teachers were invited to take a flower centerpiece as a gift.

The food was displayed on the cafeteria tables and the teachers were offered hors d'oeuvres, snacks, and desserts. Steve Laraia '09 and Justin Bernardo '09, from the school orchestra, provided musical

entertainment while the teachers mingled and enjoyed themselves.

"I feel it went well, the turnout wasn't quite as large as we'd hoped, but everyone that attended loved it," said Fernandez, "We're still receiving thank-you letters from the teachers."

"It's just a little way to for the students to show how much we really so appreciate them."

-Marissa Fernandez '08

The Interact club has been hosting this event for a couple of years, and members say that there was much more enthusiasm this year.

"The teachers really appreciated it. We got tons of emails and cards from people that didn't even come," said Victoria Gardner '08, who chaired the event, "We're expecting more teachers to come out next year."

The *Odd Couple* goes on

Margaret Bonanni '09

Every year students anticipate the fall play. This year the Way Off Broadway Players, under the direction of Mr. James DiGennaro, produced *The Odd Couple* by Neil Simon.

Set in New York City, the play is centered on two friends, Florence, Julia Hanh '10, and Olive, Nikki Black '08. Olive is divorced and very independent. She is the complete foil of Florence, who has a more maternal and clingy attitude. After Florence separates from her husband, Olive proposes that she moves in.

With clashing attitudes, mature humor, and comical predicaments, the two help each other move on, and cope with their losses.

"I chose one of Simon's plays because they're usually funny," said DiGennaro, "I picked the female version because we had lot of talented girls try out. It gave them a nice chance to shine."

Because of problems concerning the play's rights, the production took an unexpected turn. Instead of running the show from Nov. 15-17, it ran on Dec. 6-7. Despite the concerns, the play had its expected turnout, and was well received by the audience.

Laughter could be heard throughout the 11/12 auditorium. Hilarious punch-lines and vivid characters added original comedy to

the play and many students found the play enjoyable.

"[The play] was great, and I loved Jackie Smith's performance," said Megan Hipszer '08, "I found the play to be really relatable, and liked the humor."

To pull off the play's humor, the cast stayed after almost every day for about seven weeks of rehearsals. These rehearsals, although stringent, were needed to perfect the timing and tempo that is essential to a comedy, said DiGennaro. They also came in for most days over the mid November break to run scenes.

"We rehearsed everyday for about 2 months. They were fun but a lot of work," said Jackie Smith (Sylvie) '08.

Some actors took preparation for their parts above and beyond.



Margaret Bonanni '09/ The Patriot

The cast had weeks of rehearsals to perfect the play's comedic tempo.

Many actors, such as Young and Black, studied accents to add depth and color to their performance.

"I started preparing for my part by practicing a New York accent, which I didn't actually use in the show, but it definitely helped me get into character...I also watched clips from the original movie *The Odd*

Couple in order to draw from Oscar's character," said Black.

It's that type of dedication that made this play worth watching. The cast was as dedicated to their roles as they were to each other, and bonded throughout the production process.

"The cast in general felt like a big family. Like any family, people are going to disagree and argue, but usually we had a great time rehearsing and made many memories together. Sometimes we almost had too good a time and it was hard to get through scenes because of all the uncontrollable laughter," said Black.

DECA inducts new members

Brittany Tartaglia '09

On Nov. 13, 2007, the organization known as DECA inducted 257 new members at the annual DECA Induction ceremony.

DECA is student-organized and gives students the opportunity to have a fun, but is also a helpful activity to participate in. Along with vocal and leadership skills, students acquire better skills in marketing, management, finance, merchandising, and entrepreneurship.

In order to be inducted, the students had to be in a business class, and be interested in joining the organization. After signing up, they had to pay a \$20 fee, and wear the

DECA shirts the day of the ceremony.

At the ceremony, select students were chosen as board members. Jessica McBride '08 was chosen as DECA President. Kristen Abdallah '08, Sean Kelly '09, Doreen Manukus '08, and Seamus Meintel '08 were chosen as Vice Presidents, who are also known as Diamonds.

Along with honoring current students, a past student was also honored. Alicia DeFillipo, WTHS graduate of 2003, was inducted into the WTHS DECA Hall of Fame.

The purpose of DECA is to allow students to participate in conferences, which are business

related competitions. Mrs. Olivo, the advisor of DECA, prepares students for their Regional, State, and National conferences. This year, the National conference is taking place in Atlanta, Georgia.

Members also do community service. Some of these include arts and crafts with senior citizens, Adopted Families, which took place Nov. 28, cleaning the Veterans Park, March Madness, and the wing bowl.

Competitions and community service are just a few of the many things that DECA does. Members also gain the valuable experience of the business world. To join next year's DECA group, see Mrs. Rosell, or Mrs. Olivo.

Interested in
photography?

Come snap some
shots for *The
Patriot!* Meetings
on Tuesdays in
room D-8.

Features

Last minute shopping easy to do

Sarah Kurtz '10

You're on the phone with your best friend when she tells you how excited she is to give you her gift. The gift that you both agreed you weren't getting for each other. Now you have a problem. What do you do when you lack the time to shop for a great gift with no time? Purchasing a last minute item doesn't need to be nerve racking or nail biting. The key is to stay cool, calm, and collected.

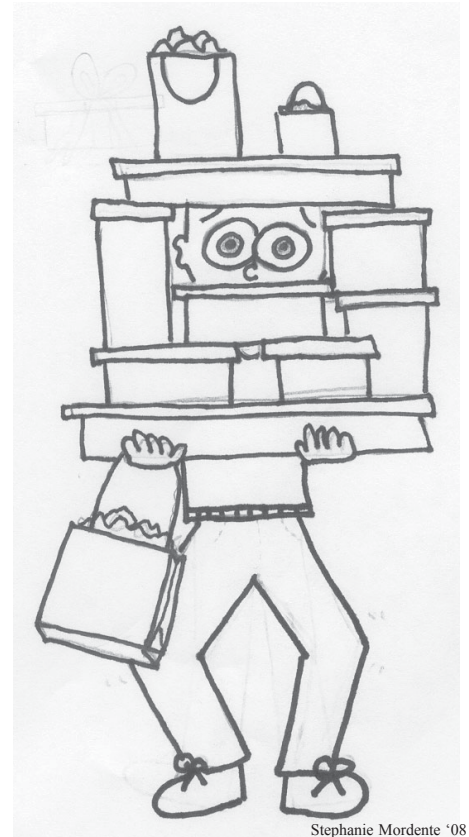
If it is the day of the planning to exchanging gifts, you're best bet is to go with a gift card. Even non-last minute shoppers purchase these. They're a great buy and you know that the person receiving it can pick out something that they are sure to like. One great place to purchase these is *Barnes & Nobel*. You can't go wrong with giving someone the opportunity to get away and cozy up with a good book and giant chocolate chip cookie. If a bookstore is not their style, try a mall gift certificate. These are great for the shopper. With an abundance of stores to choose from they can get something they really like and it is your treat. If you're at a complete loss of where they would like to shop, try a *Visa* gift card. This gift card is acceptable at almost any retailer. You can buy food, gas, even clothing with this handy card. For the last minute shopper, it is the eighth-

wonder of the world.

Maybe a gift card isn't personal enough for the message you want to say. Maybe it's a loved one you want to impress. Ordering anything online is extremely pricey at this time of year, especially if you're looking to over-night it. A quick stop at a nearby florist always does the trick. A dozen roses can be pretty pricey, so a bouquet of tulips would do great. Add a box of chocolates and you're golden. A great idea would be to subscribe for the magazine for that person for a year or two. Everyone has magazines lying around their house that they flip through or read. It's not pricey and every time they get the magazine they'll think of you.

If you're looking to buy your mom or relative a quick gift, a trip to the spa is always a good way to go. When you go to the spa to purchase the gift card, you can pre-order some of their activities so that it looks like you put time and effort into something that didn't take long at all. This way they can have a day of pampering on you.

The easiest way to shop for someone is to plan ahead and take your time. Yet we sometimes run into those last minute situations that drive us nuts. Just remember to stay calm, and the shopping will go smoothly. Who knows, you're last minute gift could end up being their favorite.



Stephanie Mordente '08

Winter holidays give reason to celebrate

Katie Mount '09

What defines a holiday? Some may describe a holiday as a time of rest and relaxation. Others may say it is a time of religious observance. At the end of every year, most American families celebrate one of three winter holidays; Christmas, Hanukkah or Kwanzaa. Each holiday is celebrated differently, and each family spends that time uniquely.

To Christians, Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Christ. It is always celebrated on Dec. 25. Many traditions that accompany Christmas, such as holiday feasts and caroling, dated back over 4000 years to the Mesopotamians.

There are many different symbols that have come to be associated with Christmas, such as Santa Claus (also known as Saint Nicolas) and candy canes.

Families decorate trees and place presents under them for Christmas Day. Children leave out a glass of milk, cookies, and a note for Saint Nicholas, in hopes

they will receive presents.

"My family and I go to church on Christmas Eve. After that we spend time with my mom's side of the family." Victoria Monte '09 said. "Then on Christmas day, we spend time with my dad's side of the family."

For the Jewish community it is the season of Hanukkah. Hanukkah is the holiday that commemorates the victory of the Maccabees over the Hellenistic Syrians. When the Hellenistic Syrians were defeated, the

Temple of Jerusalem was reclaimed. The Maccabees held a celebration in order to rededicate the temple.

Other than lighting the menorah, Jewish families

celebrate Hanukkah with other traditions. Some treats enjoyed through those eight days are gelt (chocolate coins) and potato pancakes. Families often enjoy playing dreidel, a four sided, spinning top.

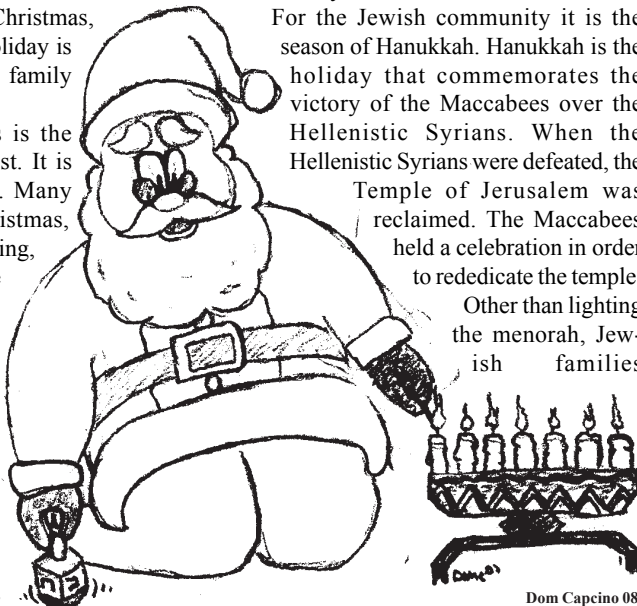
"Hanukkah is a time to be with my family and friends." Jennifer Ruegg '09 stated. "We play dreidel and light the menorah."

The latest addition to the holiday season is Kwanzaa, created by Ron Karenga in 1966. Unlike Christmas and Hanukkah, Kwanzaa is not a religious holiday. Kwanzaa celebrates African American family, community and culture. It is celebrated from Dec. 26 to Jan. 1.

Festivities associated with Kwanzaa are candle lighting, feasting, pouring of libations (a ritual pouring of a drink as an offering to a god) and gift-giving. Families dress up in African garments and play music. Many families discuss a chapter in African history. This is to pay respect to their ancestors and family.

Family...it seems all three holidays have this in common. No matter how differently someone celebrates a holiday, they spend it with those they care about. So enjoy your holidays and remember what's important to you.

Happy Christmahanukkwanzaa!



Dom Capicino '08

Project 540°: Students turn for a change

Sam Baranowski '08

Civic Engagement. Though not all high school students would jump upon hearing the phrase, one club at WTHS is truly passionate about improving our school and community.

"Project 540° gets its name from a 540° turn. It's a full 360 and a half to represent looking around at our world and then taking an extra step to change it," said Katie Jewell, a member of the 2007-2008 Leadership Team. Katie is joined on the Leadership Team by seniors Justine Hunsicker, Doreen Mankus, and yours truly. The team coordinates facilitator training and organizes the presentation of four different modules throughout the year.

Project 540° has already helped improve our school in many ways; the evidence of their involvement is everywhere you look. They helped pass the Bond Referendum for new facilities including the all-weather track and two turf fields, and also changed policy to allow students to wear flip flops in school. Every member of this group agrees that it



Mary Kate Young '08

Project 540 teaches students how to change the world around them.

is a rewarding experience, benefiting each member in their own way.

Senior Gina Benigno says, "I learned a lot about how our school functions from Project 540°. We help get the students get involved in policies and finances that make our school what it is."

This year, Project 540° will visit all the history classes in WTHS to discuss aspects of student life that

can be improved, and how to go about making those changes. So be on the lookout for the first part of a revolution coming to your classroom soon. If you really want to get involved, it's not too late to become a facilitator! Club advisor, Mr. Steve Gregor and any member of the team will be more than happy to get you started down the road to making a difference.

One Day at a Time by Jessica McFadden '10

Shutting off wasteful habits

One Day at a Time is a new column that will focus on things that all of us can do to help save our planet.

Although our Earth is roughly 70% water, we waste gallons and gallons of it each day. Taking long showers, watering lawns, and running water while brushing your teeth are just a few ways that we all waste water. People do not understand how simple it is to fix this problem.

Everyone can take part in conserving water, even children! If we each take shorter showers, we, as a whole, would save so many gallons of water a day. It's not a hard thing to do, turning off the water while brushing your teeth. It's actually quite simple.

By turning off the tap water while brushing your teeth or shaving, you are saving up to six gallons a week between the two activities! People all over the globe waste hundreds of gallons of water a day

by letting the water run in their shower and waiting for the water to get scalding hot. Most people, subconsciously, leave the water running when they shave, wash their face, washing dishes, or when using a garbage disposal.

Some people also run water to make it hot just to thaw out meats! Instead of using water to thaw out your meats, you can just sit the meat in your refrigerator over night or you can also use the defrost setting on your microwave.

Another way to conserve water in your bathrooms is to test your toilets and sinks for leaks. To test a toilet for a leak, you should put a colored dye into the tank of the toilet. If the colored dye floods into the toilet bowl without you flushing it, then you have a leak in that specific toilet. By finding out that you have a leak in one of your toilets, you are saving up to four hundred gallons of water a month!

When you're outside, there are quite a few things you can do to conserve water. Don't water your lawns on cold, windy, and extremely hot days. Watering your lawn during the aforementioned periods of time wastes more water because the water either blows away in the wind, freezes, or evaporates!

It is best to water the lawns in the early morning, to avoid evaporation. When you are mowing the lawn, don't cut it as short as you generally would. If you leave the grass about a notch higher on your mower, that decreases the risk of evaporation of rainwater or sprinkler water. Also, do not let children play with the garden hose! With the children not playing with the hose, you are saving ten gallons a *minute*.

Keep in mind the effects of running the tap. If everyone makes an effort to conserve water, we will continue to have enough water to meet our society's needs.

Going green new trend

Nicole Heath '10

In the seventies it was disco, eighties big hair, the nineties boy bands. And now in the first decade of the twenty first century, the new fad in America is going green.

From fuel efficient cars to green roofing, the new trend of using environment friendly things is catching on. More and more people are going out of their way to by products that will lessen damage to the ecosystem. Hybrid cars are hot on the market, and so are other simple things such as fluorescent bulbs and solar panels. All these products are being sold to help stop the spread of oil and fossil fuels into the air.

Though environmentalists have existed for decades, the popularity is growing mainly due to the recent documentary by former vice president Al Gore, *The Inconvenient Truth*. This documentary showed the effects of fossil fuel use on the earth and how they contribute to global warming. This documentary received rave reviews and Gore won a Nobel Peace Prize for the film. Thanks to this widely viewed movie, the environmentalist movement has been growing uncontrollably.

In addition to documentary, the cause has been spread largely by the media and celebrities. Many celebs like Leonardo DiCaprio and Owen Wilson have spread the cause simply by showing their support. Commercials and channels like Animal Planet and Discovery repeatedly show their support for the growing effort to stop Global Warming.

But will this new fad go out like light up shoes and giga pets? It's not likely. Airlines, car, and even buildings are being changed to better help the environment stay clean. Even the Christmas holiday is going green with Christmas lights that won't cause damage to the ecosystem. With new inventions on the market, and more easy ways to stop fossil fuels, this fad just might go the distance.

AIDS Awareness Month

Lauren Finneran '08

When someone says December, the first thing that pops into many people's minds is Christmas, Hanukkah, New Years, or winter break. What doesn't pop into many people's minds is AIDS Awareness month.

Although that may not be at the top of your list of things to think about, it is a very important subject that should not be overlooked in the hustle and bustle of the month.

December 1 is World AIDS Day. The World Health Organization established world AIDS Day in 1988 to educate people about the dangers of the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome or AIDS. The day is devoted to educating about how AIDS is spread, how it can be prevented, and how to get tested.

AIDS is the result of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), which infects the body and



photo by yahoo

There are 1 million people in the U.S. living with HIV, and researchers believe 25% of them do not know they are infected.

over time ruins the immune system and causes AIDS. HIV is spread only three ways; through sexual intercourse, blood (sharing needles, an open cut), or mother to child (if the mother is infected, she will pass it on to her child).

When a person contracts HIV they have a window of about 10 to 12 years before their immune system is damaged to the point of being diagnosed with AIDS. The entire time a person has HIV or AIDS, they must be on expensive

medications to keep the immune system working

It has been reported that there are over 38.6 million people worldwide living with HIV. In the United States, there are more than 1 million people living with HIV and there are about 40,000 new cases of HIV each year. Getting this information out there is what AIDS Awareness month is all about.

Knowledge is only the first step. There are many ways to show support for victims of HIV and AIDS. You can buy red ribbons, magnets, wristbands, and pins. Visit this site www.awarenessdepot.com/aids1.html if you'd like to know more about ordering anything to show your support for the AIDS cause.

The only way to stop this epidemic is to be aware of it and avoid being ignorant to this growing problem. Don't turn a blind eye and be okay with having limited knowledge. Find out more so you can better the future.

Asian Awareness Club is stepping out

Matthew Griechen '10

Asian Awareness is an interesting club that has the goal of teaching not only its members, but also the entire student body about Asian cultures. It also has goals that include: giving back to the community and making the club an enjoy-able experience for all.

This year, under the new leadership of Mr. Hart, the club plans to become more involved in school functions and activities. With the introduction of new and exciting events, along with participating in the traditional events for the club, Asian Awareness is going to have an exciting year.

Some events that the club members have participated in are the Festival of Friends and Relay for Life. Along with participating in major school events, the Asian Awareness club also has hosted an Asian Movie Dday.

With the purpose of learning about Asian cultures, the club also includes restaurant visits so that the members can experience the cuisine of different Asian Cultures.

Last year, the club went to a local restaurant, Sakura, to enjoy Japanese and Chinese cuisine. This year, Asian Awareness plans to add many appealing projects. The club

plans to expand their movie event and make the Asian Movie Day a monthly fixture. Also, a new fundraiser which involves selling fortune cookies with myriad flavors is an upcoming event to look for.

The club hopes to be able to accomplish a major project that involves the various cultural clubs at Washington Township High School. This event would attempt to incorporate the other cultural clubs and to create an event in which each club can have an area where they could show aspects of their cultures. This event would be a fairly new experience for many students.

Asian Awareness has only one requirement for members, which is attendance. Meetings are held every Wednesday in room E-12. Asian Awareness is open to all students at the high school.

"Asian Awareness is a fun and exciting club that everyone should

join," said vice president, Danielle Burgo '08.

Asian Awareness is one of the many clubs at Washington Township High School and it is in the midst of preparing a variety of events that are available to the entire student body. If you are interested in the Asian culture, this club is exemplary in learning about the culture and having fun.



The Asian Awareness Club will soon be selling fortune cookies.

Join the
Patriot
Meetings on
Tuesdays
Room D-8

Commentary

Outside the Box by Alyssa Figueroa '08

Negotiation battle unsettling

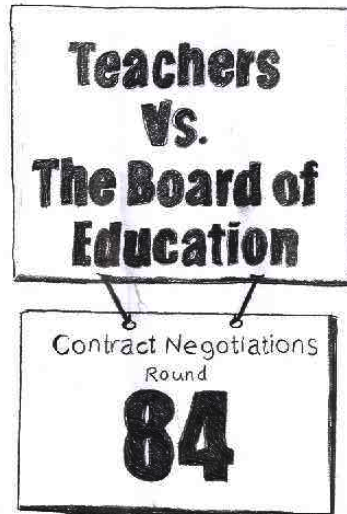
Did you know that the real problem underlying the teacher's contract issue took place months before the old contract even expired?

Last year, on Tues. Apr. 17 it seemed sensible that taxpayers in the community would vote "No" for having higher taxes. However, what most community members and students alike do not realize is that this directly affects them the following year. Last year, the budget was voted down, the existing contract with the WTEA expired, The Board of Education (BOE) now claims it does not have the efficient amount of funding to increase teacher salaries. The teachers are not getting paid nearly as much as other teachers in the county, and then students are whining about the loss of Powderpuff.

Still, this issue cannot be blamed solely on the budget being voted down. It also falls heavily on failure to address the issue early enough to hammer out the issue *before* the contract expired. It is kind of like leap year, the expired contract comes around every couple of years. It would make sense for the BOE to be readily prepared and eager to settle the contract before it started affecting the students. The BOE turned down the Washington Township Education Association (WTEA), who wanted to settle the contract before June 30, because they refused the WTEA's proposal, and declared they would only meet until the WTEA's proposals were significant. In doing so, the BOE *apparently* created their own definition of "negotiation," which is supposed to be a process in which *both sides* have to compromise to reach an agreement.

One must also realize that the whole matter is not just an issue of dollars and cents, it's also about respect. Some BOE members left their seats during public meetings when the topic was heating up. The WTEA also was largely disrespected when the BOE made Holy Thursday the day added to the calendar to make up for having no school on Veteran's Day, a legal holiday teacher's chose to observe.

It was a clear tit-for-tat move because the BOE knew most believed the day would be added at the end of the year. Plus, deciding if Holy Thursday is or is not a holiday is definitely a subject too vague for nine members of a BOE to judge. Even with the "Holy Thursday" issue aside, taking away a vacation day is displeasing



Alex Parkin '08

to students because we truly could use a longer break before taking on the rest of the year.

Instead of playing games, the BOE should focus on paying teachers. Teaching is the most important profession in the world, and the fact that Washington Township teachers, who are unquestionably extraordinary, are receiving below ordinary salaries is unsettling. Increased budget or not, somehow, somehow, the BOE's number one concern should be raising teachers' salaries.

Without the salaries they deserve, it is only

sensible that the teachers do not volunteer for events and do other actions that are not in their contracts. As a senior myself, I know that it is not ideal to have events you have anticipated for so long to be postponed or endangered of being cancelled. It is natural for students to be upset with the teachers. However, they should challenge themselves to look at the situation through a teacher's point of view.

If the school year ran smoothly, there would not be as many students attending board meetings, community members writing letters to the board, and student publications about this topic as there are now. When teachers stop doing all of the unpaid assistances that they usually do for the school and community, they essentially wake up everyone with a piercing call.

Hopefully, the contract will soon get settled, but in years to come all should look back on past mistakes. The BOE should work hard to come up with a new contract before the old one expires, and taxpayers should become aware of the tremendous effect their vote for the budget has on their community. Washington Township taxpayers, most who, in fact, do not come out to vote at all, need to put more thought into their vote because the benefits gained for a few extra bucks is worth it.

Although it seems like a price is being put on education, what students walk away with after twelve years is priceless.

The Patriot

Issue 3 - December 2007

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The Patriot is published by the students of
Washington Township High School.

529 Hurffville-Cross Keys Road, Sewell, NJ 08080

The opinions expressed in the Commentary section and all articles labeled as opinion, as well as all reviews and columns, are the views of the writer indicated in the byline. They are not meant to represent the views of The Patriot staff, the students of Washington Twp. H.S. or its administration. Unsigned editorials are meant to reflect the views of the publication.

Please send all correspondence to: wthspatriot@gmail.com

Opinion

Don't let charities fall victim to talks

Katie Mount '09

I'm glad to hear that Monzo Madness is going to go on as scheduled, but I am concerned about the status of other charity events.

Although WTHS will be hosting its annual Monzo Madness, the event was in danger of being cancelled. This prospect had stunned and angered me, but what shocked me more was the reason behind the potential cancellation.

The charity event was threatened because the teachers were not volunteering to supervise because of a conflict with their contracts.

The teachers are currently working on last year's contract. The Board of Education is not meeting the teacher's demands. Teachers feel they are not receiving the pay raises they deserve.

This contract dilemma has already caused other issues, such as the postponement of the powder puff football game.

Though I was disappointed by powder puff, it did not upset me as much as Monzo because Monzo Madness is not for pure amusement like powder puff is.

Monzo Madness is a fundraiser run by the Rotary sponsored Interact Club. The event raises money for research regarding amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), often called Lou Gehrig's disease.

A friend of mine was personally affected by ALS. After two years of battling the disease, her father died. I participated in the event last year to help raise money in hopes that I could help prevent others from suffering as her family had.

Last year, Interact raised over \$15,000. The money went to a great cause and helped researchers come one step closer to finding a cure.

In my opinion, the possibility of taking away events that benefit those in need is upsetting and unfair. I am glad Monzo will run as scheduled; however, I am concerned that other charity fundraisers could be affected.

I understand the position that teachers are in. One of my teachers said that it's tearing her up inside because she enjoys volunteering for school events. However the teachers voted against volunteering in order to call attention to the problem with negotiations.

The effects of this problem are now going beyond the walls of the school. I am strongly urging the Board of Education to address the problem before it gets out of hand.

A solution needs to be reached as soon as possible before it affects even more people and threatens other valuable WTHS traditions.

...the possibility of taking away events that benefit those in need is upsetting and unfair.

Letters

Supporting our troops, staying on course

Patriot editors,

I am writing in response to the article "Defend Our Democracy" in our school newspaper. I was very pleased to see that there are other young republicans in our school. I thought the article, which was supportive of our Iraqi occupation, was very well written.

I would also like to take the opportunity to point out other key points in why a full withdrawal of troops would be harmful.

Some say that our worst nightmare is to lose American boys overseas, not quite. Iraq sits on one of the worlds largest oil beds. Where there is oil, there is money. Radical groups now occupy Iraq because there is no strong government to suppress them as in the past.

If these terrorists, whom may be worst than Hussein, take hold to this oil, then there is unlimited funding for biochemical and nuclear research. There may not have been weapons of mass destruction when we arrived, but if we leave there are sure to be plenty.

About 3,000 people died in the 9/11 attacks. These people were innocent and knew of no risk. The number of soldiers who have given their lives is 3849. These people voluntarily joined the armed forces to defend the innocent when they knew the risk for themselves. They died heroes.

If these oil funds get into the hands of the wrong people, thousands more innocent people may die. That's America's worst fear. These victims would not be strangers, but our families at risk.

I'm not a Bush supporter. I don't think we should have fought the way we have. I am only a concerned citizen and a future member of the military.

- Devlin Rogers '08

Skateboarding coverage praised, corrected

Patriot editors,

I read [Amber Ogden's] last article on skateboarding ["Skateboarding rolls into modern era" Nov. 2007] and I thought it was put together very well. All of your information was on key and factual. I also liked how you didn't make it seem like all skateboarders are no-good, rebel, punk kids as most people think. You made it sound like skaters now are more modern and diverse.

I also liked how you said that skateboarding isn't really a walk in the park, its quite hard. I especially liked how you mentioned all of the injuries, broken bones, dislocations, and all of the dangers of skateboarding. I But the one thing that I did not like was your image and caption for the image. It doesn't look like Ryan Sheckler is doing an ollie because as you stated in your article; "an ollie is when the skateboard sticks to the skater's feet." In the image the board is clearly not "attached" to his feet.

Other than that little flaw I thought that your article was great. If you haven't already guessed I am a skater myself.

- Jesse Bolt '09

The Patriot welcomes letters from its readers.
The Patriot reserves the right to edit letters for grammar, content, and space.
 Letters should be limited to 200 words.

Please submit all letters to wthspatriot@gmail.com

Odds & Ends

Humor

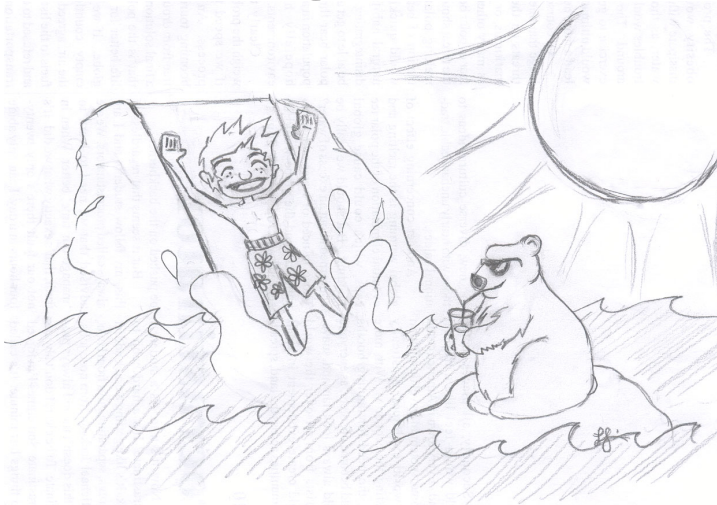
Global Warming: An Aid to Society

Rich Elles '08

As the effects of global warming have grown more prominent in recent years, the debate over climate control has heated up. Activists have battled with large corporations to change policies regulating carbon dioxide emissions, fought with the general public over cleaner exhaust fumes, and made a strong case against deforestation. With a core temperature constantly rising, the Earth could be in serious trouble sooner than we ever projected.

But truthfully, it would be much more beneficial to the human race if we accelerated the process to reap the short-term benefits.

Think about the end of the summer and how the feeling of dread climbs into the minds of every student as school looms each September. If we all drove gas-guzzling trucks and burnt more fossil fuels, the summer would never end, as global temperatures would gradually increase. Schools never assemble students during the hottest months of the year. This would leave kids and teenagers to enjoy a never-ending summer.



Lillyan Ling '08

Secondly, all places in the world would feel like a tropical island. Every town in America could become a potential travel destination for world explorers, drastically boosting the economy. With more sun, the need for tanning booths would become obsolete, as everyone would always look tan and suave. Tourists from all over the world would create excitement in small communities across the land, spread-

ing new, diverse cultural ideas to those with nearly unchangeable traditional values.

Another concerning effect of global warming is the melting and eventual elimination of the polar ice caps, which could cause global flooding. But should we really be concerned about an excess of water? Those in need of water and sustenance around the globe would be served, because crops would flourish

without the need for complex irrigation systems. The concept of droughts in reference to crop production would disappear quicker than the polar ice caps themselves.

The problem of nationwide obesity would also gradually dissipate with a massive amount of water, as those who have weight troubles would have to swim to get around. The absolute necessity to exercise to get from place to place would ultimately allow all people to lead a more healthy life.

Of course, it is common knowledge that one of the largest natural threats on the planet is the *Ursus maritimus*, or polar bear. I, as well as many others, have an irrational fear of polar bears and feel as though the threat should be contained. With melting polar ice caps, the population of bears in the arctic circle would quickly drop off, as their natural habitat would be slowly disintegrating. Society would finally be able to get a handle on the serious polar bear threats and contain the population in artificially created, and hopefully heavily monitored, environments.

Clearly the advantages outweigh the problems that could arise if we speed the global warming process. An endless summer, a booming tourist economy, a world free from droughts and obesity, and a final solution to the vicious danger that is the polar bear would make life better for everyone around the globe. If we all took the time to empty countless aerosol cans into the air, agreed to add burning fossil fuels to the list of national pastimes, and refused to carpool and use public transportation, a life of paradise would be on the heated horizon.

Life As... by Nicole Heath '10

...A Procrastinator

It's five o'clock in the morning, and I'm up writing my paper. Sure, my history teacher gave the class over a month to write it. Most of us did use the time. Most of my classmates sat down in an orderly fashion and carefully constructed their paper.

Most of them did.

I didn't.

Instead, I chose to write my paper less than four hours before it was due. And as I came into homeroom that day and proceeded to tell my friend Esther Kang about my endeavor, she asked the same question that you're probably wondering: why did I wait to the last minute to do it? Before I could even answer, she responded, "procrastinator."

Now it's true. As a student, I procrastinate. It's a hard habit to break. It's like getting a crack addict off drugs, separating guys from Halo, or Michael Jackson from nose jobs. Yet, this doesn't mean I always procrastinate. To be clear, I don't always procrastinate. Sometimes I'm forced to do things last minute. It's called prioritization. And as a busy student, I have no choice but to do so.

Every student has encountered those weeks in which everything is due. A chemistry project, algebra homework, history paper, not to mention the vocabulary quiz first period. When we are stuck with these types of weeks, we have to prioritize. We have to sit down and weigh out which needs to be done first. And sometimes things have to

be pushed to the backburner.

But it seems that regardless of this, my fellow students and I are always called procrastinators. We are advised that we need to learn to 'manage our time' better. When in truth, that's exactly what we did. It's not our fault there's only twenty-four hours in a day. I can only abide by the clock, not change it. It's not fair that many students, such as I, are always reprimanded for procrastination or laziness, when in fact, we only 'managed' the allotted time.

The point is, just because we procrastinate on little things, doesn't mean we do it all the time. So before you call someone on procrastination ask yourself; Procrastination or Prioritization? That is the question.

DO YOU HAVE ANY
QUIRKY IDEAS?

WRITE FOR THE ODDS &
ENDS SECTION!

EMAIL US AT
WTHSPATRIOT@GMAIL.COM

Happy Holidays!

Z D K W A N Z A A O R C J S T C F B R C
 T A X J A R E S M Z L E N S R H X I E O
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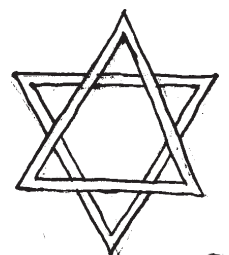
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- COOKIES
- DREIDEL
- FAMILY
- GINGERBREAD
- HANUKKAH
- KWANZAA
- MENORAH
- MISTLETOE
- NEWYEARS
- ORNAMENTS
- PRESENTS
- REINDEER
- SANTA
- SNOWMAN
- TREE
- WINTER



Chelsey Gordon '08

Happy Holidays
 from
The Patriot!

Holiday Horoscopes!



Capricorn

(12/23-1/20)



It's nice to be generous, but too much holiday shopping could leave your pockets empty.

Aquarius

(1/21-2/19)



You're feeling spontaneous this month, grab your crush and head under the mistletoe.

Pisces

(2/20-3/20)



Make sure to be close to your crush when you ring in the new year, you never know what could happen.

Aries

(3/21-4/20)



Don't let anyone, friend or foe, bring you down this holiday season, you deserve better.

Taurus

(4/21-5/21)



Stay close to the ones you love this holiday season, they will be your best winter companions.

Gemini

(5/22-6/21)



Stay home and sit by the fire this holiday season; you need the relaxation.

Cancer

(6/22-7/22)



Leave extra cookies out for Santa, and you will find many presents under the tree.

Leo

(7/23-8/21)



Don't put off your work during the holidays, time will pass by before you know it.

Virgo

(8/22-9/23)



Hang your stocking by the fire early this year, you might be lucky enough to find a special surprise.

Libra

(9/23-10/23)



As the new year approaches, find a resolution and stick with it and you will be rewarded.

Scorpio

(10/24-11/22)



Spend extra time with your family this season and you will find the true meaning of the holidays.

Sagittarius

(11/23-12/22)



Anticipate surprises this holiday season, the gift that you unwrap may not be what you are expecting.

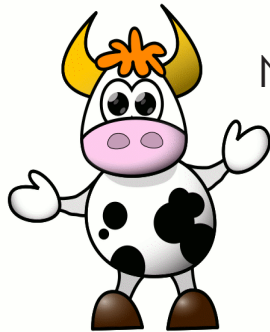


Natalie Zagone '11

What's Happening



Hey, everybody! It's the
SENIOR DIRECTED CABARET



Directed by
Nikki Black and Christie Garcia

January 17th and 18th
7pm in the 11/12 Auditorium
Cost: \$5



FREE iPod Video!

Answer SAT questions on IMC eBoard MENU

T-Shirts for winners every week

Listen for your name on Monday's Morning Announcements

Holy Family Church

is looking for people to help with

"Breakfast With Santa"

December 22
9am - 1pm

(May count towards volunteer hours for NHS)

STUDENT BOOK CLUB

will discuss

So Yesterday
by Scott Westfeld

December 18
2:20 in the IMC

ORCHESTRA WINTER CONCERT

December 18

7pm
CBAC

CHORAL BAND WINTER CONCERT

December 19

7pm
CBAC

Local music scene...



| DATE | WHERE | BANDS | COST |
|-------|-------------------------------|--|------|
| 12/22 | Stir It Up, Mullica Hill | Boy With Robot, Joe Granato & the Peace Corps, more tba. | Free |
| 12/25 | The Troadero, Philadelphia | Harry & the Bipeds, The Ooahh Ooahs | \$10 |
| 1/11 | Savage Rock School, Blackwood | As We Are, The Atlantic, Empty Spaces, Spire. | \$5 |

Lifestyles

Poor sleep habits take toll

Leanne Abrams '11

Teens, especially those in high school, cope with a lot of stress. Stress can be caused by problems in school such as breaking up with boyfriends or girlfriends, getting a date to prom, trying to fit in to the "popular crowd", and earning good grades. Teens often are faced with pressure from coaches, parents, teachers, employers, and friends.

A sleep study conducted by The National Sleep Foundation, found that stress can lead to depression, sickness, failing in school, self destructive behavior, and in extreme cases, suicide. Stress is characterized by feelings of tension, hopelessness, frustrations, worrying, sadness, and with drawl. Thirty percent of high school students feel stressed or depressed. According to Mary Carskadon, Ph.D, "Talking with friends and instant messaging keep adolescents from feeling tired in the evening."

Because teens are suffering from stress due to a variety of factors, this causes them to stay up late hours. This, of course, makes them fall behind in sleep they need to function. They then



Taylor Cohen '08/The Patriot

Students are not getting enough of sleep, and missing out on classwork.

may wake up feeling over tired, depressed, and even stressed out from not getting enough sleep.

Freshman, Jessica Jewusiak said "I'm really tired and don't want to go to school," when asked about how she feels after staying up too late. Freshman Emma Johnson said "I feel like I can't do anything, can't focus on my school work, and all I want to do is sleep!"

Sleep deprivation is defined as a lack of sleep that teenagers really need. This is a serious side effect from stress. Sleep deprivation affects tens of millions of teen each year in the United States alone. Some effects that stress and lack of sleep can bring for teenagers are clinical depression, weakened immune system, head aches, and weight loss or gain.

It is very clear that stress contributes to many problems among teenagers. If you are one of the millions of teens suffering from stress or depression due to sleep deprivation, here are some ways to cope. Try to do something relaxing such as writing in a journal or talking to a close friend or family member. You may also want to listen to relaxing or music. Another possible way to help you with stress is to set aside time everyday to do something you really enjoy.

In the end, the most important way to deal with stress is to make sure you keep the ones you care about close for comfort and love. Just remember that you aren't alone....so get some sleep and you'll be able to focus on ways to deal with your many responsibilities!

Mind, Body, Soul by Maggie Bonanni '09

Extend yourself with Yoga

When most people think of yoga their initial reaction is far from excited. Most smirk and say "yoga is pointless, it's just stretching." I can even admit that my reaction was similar when my gym teacher informed me back in September that my class would be practicing yoga for the second marking period. But after my first few days of actually doing yoga, I realized that it was much more than what I expected.

I found out on the first day that yoga was not only stretching, but a full workout. Each position is focused on a specific area of the body. When holding the position you not only stretch your body, but you also tone it. This requires the use of muscles that are not used frequently as well as balance. Because the positions are done in rotations and flow from one pose to the next, you also receive a moderate cardio workout.

I also discovered that yoga is not only physical but mental. Because the original purpose of yoga was to better the spirit, a large portion of it involves meditation, breathing, and centering yourself. This causes the body to slow down from its usual state of alertness, and improves concentration. It cleanses the mind, and alleviates stress and tension that can build up over the day, which can help if you lead a busy lifestyle. Yoga also makes people feel good about themselves and raises self esteem.

After doing yoga for a few weeks, I started researching it online. I found plenty of websites about it, and each website had positions that ranged in difficulty that ranged from beginner to expert. I also found out that Yoga not only helps you physically and mentally, but also improves your immune system. Yoga has been proven to help asthma, carpal tunnel syndrome, arthritis, lower blood pressure, and can even help manage anxiety.

I ended up liking yoga so much that my gym class was not enough; I started doing it at home. I suggest yoga to anyone who's open to try it. It's the perfect workout for someone who is looking to better themselves as a whole. It's the perfect way to benefit mind, body and soul, and fits perfectly into any lifestyle.

WITH THE RIGHT SONG AND DANCE

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B&N creates fun environment for readers

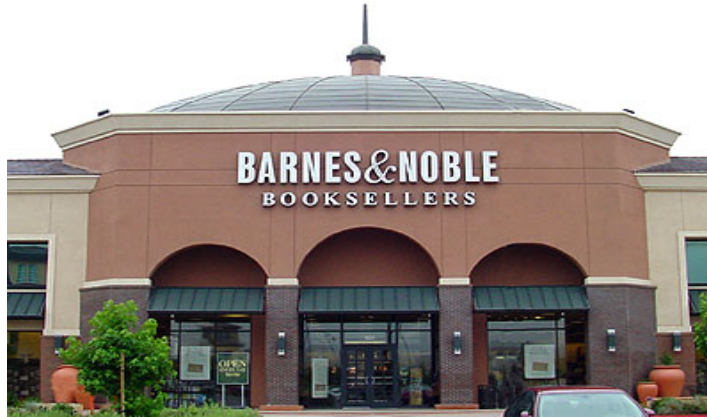
Maggie Bonanni '09

Whether they buy books, read in their comfortable lounge chairs, or have a caffeinated beverage in their café, an avid reader can always find something that interests them at Barnes and Noble.

Since 1917, Barnes and Noble Booksellers have been providing people with reading material. Transforming from a mom and pop store in Wheaton, Illinois to the country's top bookseller brand for the fourth consecutive year (according to the EquiTrend® Brand Study by Harris Interactive®), they sell almost three million books per year.

With selections from science fiction and children's books, to self help guides and classic novels, they offer every type of selection. It seems that their offerings are always expanding. Their selections are not only taken from best sellers and award winning writers, but from small publishers and college presses.

Books are only one part of their business. They also sell dozens of special interests magazines, travel guides, audio books, posters, stationery, and even planners and



Google Image

Barnes and Noble stores are known for their large variety of activities including book clubs, book signings, release parties, and even children story hours.

calendars. Along with printed material, they also sell games, DVDs, music, and even toys. Fans can find paraphernalia from favorite series such as *Harry Potter* or *Star Wars*. Almost anyone can find something they enjoy when they walk into the store, or shop online at bn.com.

While looking through aisles of materials, readers can also indulge in Barnes and Noble's café, which serves Starbucks Coffee, Cheesecake Fac-

tory desserts, chocolate, and sandwiches. They also have a seating area for reading, studying, talking to friends, or relaxing.

Throughout the store, literary lounges complete with couches and chairs can be found so readers can have the ultimate experience of reading their favorite book while sipping their coffee or drink.

Another aspect of Barnes and Noble that an avid reader can take

advantage of is their book clubs. In these clubs readers can praise, discuss, or even complain about novels they have read, while meeting and connecting with other enthusiasts. Clubs are not just based on books, but on many other topics such as writer's workshops, genre discussions, and those that center on different authors. Discussers can even go online and visit thousands of discussion boards ranging from knitting to Shakespeare.

Between the vast selection, book clubs, discussion boards, and café, it's hard to believe that a store can offer much more. However, Barnes and Noble goes above and beyond. They also hold community events in their stores for readers of all ages. Release parties, performances, book signings, and children's story hours are just some of the events readers can attend.

Whether buying a book on Vietnamese cuisine, looking for Hedwig stuffed-animals, or stopping in for a Starbucks Mocha-latte, a reader can find anything they need at Barnes and Noble. With shelves stocked with thousands of books and novelty items, one can only image the possibilities.

Dragonfly foretells success for series

Brittany Tartaglia '09

Don't Die Dragonfly is the first book in *The Seer* series by Linda Joy Singleton. Sabine Rose is just a teenage girl who would want nothing more than to be normal. However, this is not the case. Sabine has a special gift, a psychic gift that enables her to be able to see the future and be in touch with the spirit world. These gifts are the same ones that got her kicked out of her last school and her home just a year ago. In order to escape ridicule and prevent further embarrassment to her family, Sabine moves in with her grandmother (Nona), who also shares the same gift.

Now, Sabine can start anew: her new best friend is the popular

cheerleader, her boyfriend is popular and attractive, and she is a member of the school's newspaper staff. Everything seems to be going back to normal; Sabine has not had her premonitions in a long time. Not only does her grandmother think she lost her gift, but Sabine is even giving into her own lies. Gift or no gift, Sabine still hears the helpful, yet bossy voice of her spirit guide Opal.

One night Opal shows Sabine a horrifying dream that seems to be getting worse every night. The dream is of a girl with a dragonfly tattoo, and the dragonfly is dripping blood. Being that Sabine helps with the horoscopes section of the newspaper, she tries to add a warning, "And to the girl with the dragonfly

tattoo, don't do it." However the editor wouldn't put it in the newspaper. Sabine also has another problem. Her malicious ex-boyfriend discovers her secretive past and blackmails her.

Sabine does not know what to do. As if that isn't enough, she has problems at home with her grandmother. Due to the fact that Nona thought Sabine had

lost her powers, she takes on a new apprentice, Dominic, who can talk to animals. Sabine has to juggle problems with Dominic, the girl with the tattoo, and her own social life. Whether or not she is able to

deal with her problems is for you to find out.

Overall, I thought that *Don't Die Dragonfly* was a very good book. It had a great plot and was a definite page-turner. However, quite

Sabine has a special gift, a psychic gift that enables her to be able to see the future and be in touch with the spirit world.

a few of the scenes in the book lacked detail; I thought they should have had more information to make the story more understandable. Also, the book is not very

long which makes it a quick read. Fortunately for fast readers, there are four other books in *The Seer* series that have been released. All in all I would give this book 3 ½ stars out of 5.

Tech Talk

Guitar Hero 3 rocks home consoles

Tom Gill '10

Since 2005, software publisher Red Octane has been rocking and shocking the gaming industry with its smash hit *Guitar Hero* series, the game in which you trade in your air guitar for a guitar controller. The innovative idea of gamers playing their favorite songs with a specially made guitar controller has really revolutionized the idea of what good gaming is. It's now 2007, and Red Octane has produced another solid installment in the *Guitar Hero* franchise with *Guitar Hero 3: Legends of Rock*.

There are many new changes to this game which makes it just as enjoyable as it was in the past. Some of the more recognizable changes are, of course, the new wireless guitars for the Xbox 360, PS3, and Wii versions. You can now change the faceplate of the guitar, as well as detach the neck in case you wanted to stow it in something like your book bag.

As well, the game's graphics have been slightly tweaked. Most of the characters and sets have gotten a makeover, and the rock meter has been rebuffed to a newer and more contemporary look. The score box has also been tweaked to resemble an amp, and the addition of the note streak indicator is a cool bonus that adds to the amazing game play you experience in *Guitar Hero 3*.

But after all the visual aspects of the game are appreciated, we're left with game play. Much of the game is similar to the previous games with a few exceptions. There's the new battle mode in which two players compete against each other on a song. In this mode, instead of collecting star power, you collect attacks that you can use against your opponent, such as breaking a string, making them switch to left handed mode, and causing them to have an amp overload.

Not only can you play against a friend in this new mode, but you also play battle mode in single-player against guitarists such as Slash of Guns N' Roses and Tom Morello of Rage Against the Machine. Another



Google Image

Rockstar Judy Nails plays at a venue reminiscent of the Burning Man Festival.

new game mode is the addition of online play for the 360, PS3, and Wii versions. This adds a new aspect of challenge where you can put your guitar hero skills to the test against people from all over the world.

However, the most important aspect of the *Guitar Hero* game is obviously the song list. In *Guitar*

Hero 3 you can play over 70 tracks including *Hit Me With Your Best Shot*, *Sabotage*, *Even Flow*, *When You Were Young*, *One*, *Welcome to the Jungle*, and many others. Granted, the song selection is huge, and you'll never get bored playing your favorites over and over again. This game is harder than the previous two, especially on the

later gigs. You'll play forever on the more difficult modes of Hard and Expert.

Some of the fans of today's more contemporary music may not be huge fans of this game's song list due to it mostly being older songs, but any fan of rock music could easily recognize most of the songs on this game. Not only can you play these songs over and over, but also, on the Xbox 360, you can download packs of songs from artists such as the Foo Fighters.

With its hours upon hours of game play and its extensive list of songs, *Guitar Hero 3* should keep you interested for a long time. And if you get bored of playing on your own, you can now go online or take the game to a friend's house and challenge them to a face-off. This game is a must-buy for anyone who is looking for a fun game which you can enjoy for a long time.

Call of Duty 4 reinvents modern warfare

Kurt Pflugfelder '08

Anyone who has played the first or second *Call of Duty (CoD)* knows just how spectacular the games are. The first installments in the series followed the courageous fighting men of Russia, Great Britain, and the United States during World War II.

What set these games apart from the rest of the innumerable WWII games on the market was the amount of detail and depth the developer Infinity Ward added to the games. No longer was the story just about the single character you controlled, but about your comrades in arms fighting by your side. Quite frankly, I was blown away. Nothing, however, could have prepared me for the next installment.

Upon first starting the game, I immediately noticed the game's outstanding graphics. First off, I still have an old computer by today's standards. Of course, this means that I have to run *CoD4* on the lowest graphics settings available. Even

without all the settings turned down, this game is amazing. Printed pictures simply cannot do this game justice. Every character has a wide variety of facial expressions and no two faces are exactly alike. Puffs of smoke rise from every misplaced bullet and tracers fly through the sky so beautifully that you might find yourself just watching the battle rage around you.

But of course, the graphics won't keep you from getting killed in battle. Whether you're playing as Sgt. Paul Jackson of the USMC 1st Force Recon or "Soap" McTavish from the 22nd British Special Air Service Regiment (SAS), the singleplayer missions are nonstop action. Though most missions take place on foot, some involve manning a mounted gun on a helicopter and another, my personal favorite, has the player controlling the weapons on an AC-130 gunship. While there is a lot of variety, I think I walked away from this game still wanting more, as the story was much too short for my liking. Then again, you

simply cannot walk away from *CoD4*.

As soon as you fire up multiplayer, though, there's no going back. Starting out, you're a basic Private rank with only five primary weapons available. By defeating other players and completing special challenges, you can advance in rank and unlock new weapons, weapon attachments, and abilities called "perks" that allow for things like sprinting longer distances or steadier aim while sniping. At first I found it hard to level up because there were so many people already at higher ranks. But after adapting my tactics, I quickly progressed. Now, after playing for nearly 13 hours, I'm a 1st Lieutenant II and I admit that I still have a lot to learn from the Colonels and Generals out there.

Honestly, if you are even remotely interested in a story-driven first person shooter, this is the game to pick up this holiday season. It's been said that war isn't pretty, but I'm sure whoever said that never played *Call of Duty 4*.

Entertainment

Backstreet Boys make comeback

Sarah Kurtz '10

Let's face it, we were all obsessed with boy bands growing up. The two major rival bands were Backstreet Boys and N*Sync. Unlike N*Sync, BSB is still releasing albums. It's hard to believe that fifteen years have gone by since they first released an album, but BSB is still going strong. Their music changed pop culture forever. Starting with their self-titled album in 1992, to their most recent album *Unbreakable*, the boys are a sensation. Even though only four out of the five boys on the new album, their sound is still better than ever.

The Backstreet Boys have come a long way since they first started out in 1997. Nick Carter, Howie Dorough, Brian Littrell, AJ McLean and Kevin Richardson have all grown up now, just like their fans. The boys started families, recorded solo projects, and even got caught up in the fast and dangerous life of young Hollywood, like most stars have today. But the group remained strong and kept with the one thing that held them together, music.



Google Image

Backstreet returns stronger than ever after losing a member.

After a four year break, the boys decided to give it another go. In 2006, the Backstreet Boys came out with the all too literal titled album, *Never Gone*.

The album immediately sky rocketed to the top of the charts. The boys made it clear that they meant business. The songs still obtained the same quirkiness that all boy bands have, but at the same time had a contemporary rock sound. Songs like "Climbing the Walls" and "I Still" have more passion than most

artists have on their whole albums today.

After the tour for *Never Gone* was complete, one member of the band decided that he was hanging up his boy band towel and heading for home. Kevin Richardson left the group with a full blessing of his teammates.

Despite losing a strong member of the band, Backstreet Boys decided to try one more time. Their latest album, *Unbreakable* is still fantastic despite the loss of Kevin.

The album contains songs that make you get up and dance as well as songs that put you in a blue mood, a combination the every album should have. Their first single titled, *Inconsolable*, describes breaking up and the hardship of loss. Other songs on the album are more upbeat such as, "Something That I Already Know" and "Helpless When She Smiles." These songs brings forth more of the rock talent in the album. Then you have your typical boy-band songs like "You Can Let Go" and "Trouble Is".

Every song on the album is handpicked to change your mood as every good song should be. They may have lost a member, but they sure have not lost their magic. Although the album has done extremely well up against Britney Spears' new album *Blackout*, we haven't heard of a tour yet.

Unbreakable by Backstreet Boys really shows that they are in this business for good. Maybe another album could be on the way, but it's too soon to tell. But one thing's for sure: Backstreet's back, alright!

Writers' Guild strike affects media world

Stephanie Foran '08

On Nov. 2, the Writer's Guild of America went on strike after the expiration of their contract with the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers (AMPTP). There are currently twelve thousand writers on the picket line. At least one of them has a local connection.

Mrs. Eileen Rosell, a marketing teacher at WTHS, is the mother of one of those writers. Her son is a writer for *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*. She recently went out to Hollywood to join the protest. Rosell stated she's worried for her son because of the cost of comfortably surviving in California.

"The people who are new to the industry are affected [because the pay is very low]," said Rosell. Her son even had to get a second job

at the Santa Monica Chronicle to make enough money to live comfortably.

As for the duration of the strike, it is most likely to be very long and ugly since neither side is willing to negotiate. "It's going to get a lot worse before it gets better," said Rosell. Talks for a new contract have not begun and most likely won't until 2008. Viewers have already seen the effect of the strike—reruns are on the air because writers refuse to write.

When Rosell went to California, she protested along with guild members in front of Fox Studios. Protesters wore red shirts to show their support for the writers.

However, there were more than just writers present. Actors such as Robin Williams, Ray Romano, and Julia Louis-Dreyfus rallied with



Google Image

The WGA consists of two branches. The west deals with Hollywood and the east is in New York City.

them. Many of the picketers had signs asking people to honk their car horns to support them; unfortunately those who did were pulled over by police for a noise violation.

Fans of *Saturday Night Live*, *24*, and *Late Night with Conan O'Brien*

have already seen the devastation of the strike. Even more shows will be postponed in the months if the strike continues.

Hopefully the AMPTP and the Writer's Guild come to an agreement soon so everyone's favorite shows can go back on the air.

Demonically different

Avenged Sevenfold's new album hits big

Chelsey Gordon '08

Avenged Sevenfold's newly released, self-titled album has definitely struck a chord with their fans. However, some argue they could do better. Their first album, *Sounding the Seventh Trumpet*, released in 2001 (and re-released in 2002) made it clear they were a force to be reckoned with.

The band hit it big with their second album, *Waking the Fallen*, in 2003. Two years later with the release of *City of Evil*, just about everyone knew who Avenged Sevenfold was.

The band members are M. Shadows (Matt Sanders) on vocals, Synyster Gates (Brian Haner, Jr.) on lead guitar, Zacky Vengeance (Zacky Baker) on rhythm guitar, Johnny Christ (Johnny Seward) on bass, and The Reverend Tholomew Plague (Jimmy Sullivan) on drums.

City of Evil, their third album, is a nonstop blowout of heavy guitar



Google Image

Avenged Sevenfold's new album sold about 94,000 copies first week.

riffs, compliments of Synyster Gates and Zacky Vengeance. Add in The Rev drumming like a demon, and Johnny Christ's bass lines, and it was a solid album with M. Shadows screaming his heart out.

However, *Avenged Sevenfold*

definitely took a small step backward. As usual, the guitars were perfectly harmonized, and The Rev just keeps on drumming like the demon we all know he is. But, even with an orchestra, something seems to be missing.

It just doesn't pack that same punch that made *City of Evil* so memorable. Not to mention it was short. With only ten tracks, you reach the end and wonder, "What happened to the rest?" They also use a synthesizer, which is really out there considering their genre.

Each song has its own style, from southern rock to something straight out of Tim Burton's head. Listening to it for the first time, you get the impression that a three-year-old just slapped some macaroni on a paper and hung it on the fridge.

Looking at the album positively, you get the sense that each of the guys contributed to it in their own way. In fact, "A Little Piece of Heaven" was written entirely by The Rev himself.

I think it's a little jumbled and the songs don't really blend as smoothly as they could, it is still a great album. The fans were slightly let down, but happy to see a new album.

Opinion

MTV misinterprets reality

Matt Neuteboom '08

Back when I was a kid, adults always used to tell me that TV would rot my brain. I always thought that they were just too stiff to enjoy television like kids do, but as I got older I've learned that they weren't against easing your brain with some mindless television: they just recognized that TV is just garbage.

Taking center stage is MTV with their show "The Real World." The show is already going into its 20th season, but for those unfamiliar with the show, the idea is that seven

...God forbid if you don't get the bed you like, the world has to stop until the dilemma is solved.

strangers live in the same house for several months while cameras film their unscripted drama (hence MTV's emphasis of its "reality.")

Don't ask me where MTV found the genetic rejects that auditioned for their show, but each character's personality is about as flat as day-old Coke. It seems like none of these people have ever left

their parents house or have even attempted to integrate with society. Their social experience is glaringly lacking, and cast members are often spoiled and whiny because of their upper-middle class lifestyles.

The moans begin almost as soon as the cast moves into the house. Being the spoiled adolescents they are, if they don't get the room they like, they have to complain about it.

The show gives you a free mansion complete with a Jacuzzi, a pool table, and many more expensive luxuries. Most people would kill for some room space and a decent cot to sleep on, but these kids are so upset with a simple conflict of sleeping arrangements. In the real world you pay thousands of dollars a year to rent an apartment, but God forbid if you don't get the bed you like, the world has to stop until the dilemma is solved.

Next the strangers are literally

given jobs. We're talking under-experienced adolescents are handed high profile jobs in the media with little or no effort on their part.

This had got to be the biggest fabrication I've ever seen a show portray. In the "real" real world you need a degree to get such jobs. Even then, the application and interviewing process can kill you, not to mention that there are other, probably more qualified individuals who will also be trying to get the same job.

With the experience and qualification range of the individuals, the strangers would probably be apt for jobs mail room clerks. In the real world, not everyone has a cool job. In most cases, you do your job because you have to, not because you want to.

Then, conflicts arise as the strangers start to realize that people have different opinions than they do! Gasp! Not everyone thinks like they do! People have to accept the fact that others are not the 2D cutouts that the media makes people.

Humans have layers, and just because they disagree with you does

not mean that they are brainwashed sheep. And in the real world the only thing you can do is tolerate it. You can't force someone to change their opinion. If it bothers you that much, then don't associate with that person.

But the thing that gets to me the most is the lines in the opening credits: "find out what happens when people stop being polite...and start getting real..."

You have to be quite a whiny individual to think that people are fake if they're polite. Whining and arguing is not expressing yourself; it just shows how self-centered you are. Polite people are not fake. We're polite because our parents taught us manners, unlike yours, you spoiled brat.

In *The Real World*, the people are given a free mansion worth millions, and are given a high-profile, interesting job with no schooling or experience. In the real world, people spend \$50,000 on college training, get a boring low-paying job, and have a three room apartment. The fact that even most people are content with the latter makes one realize how fake *The Real World* truly is.

People

Multi-sport captain takes last shots

A.J. Nisbet '08

Hard work and commitment are only few of many words that apply to senior Sheri Fort and her successful athletic journey during her high school career.

While being a three sport athlete, Fort has made the 2nd Team All Conference in both lacrosse and

field hockey, was named Academic All American in lacrosse, and won a student Athlete award for basketball. Fort has been a part of varsity teams since her sophomore year, even seeing time on the varsity stage as a freshman.

Not only has Fort been a part of varsity teams for years, she has also held two captain roles. This

year she was a captain of the field hockey team, and later on in the year she will be captain of the girl's lacrosse team.

"Sheri has always been a dedicated and hard-working person on our team. Her constant work ethic helps motivate the rest of the team, especially me," said Michelle Martin '08 one of Fort's teammates and fellow captains on the Minutemaids field hockey team.

"She's very important to our team and I'm sure will be greatly missed next year," Martin continued.

While taking part in three varsity sports, basketball, lacrosse, and field hockey, her favorite sport is lacrosse.

"The openness of the field allows me to use my speed, it is a team sport, and it has some of the same concepts as basketball like running plays and defensive principles," said Fort.

Fort has been a part of the winning tradition of the Minutemaids lacrosse team, as the team has been crowned Olympic Conference Champions the past three years.

While being successful on the lacrosse field, Fort was also part of the Group 4 Sectional Finals the past two years with the Minutemaids field hockey team.

Fort's most memorable sports moment during her high school career thus far was when the field hockey team tied Eastern (the number two ranked field hockey team in the country who was seemingly unbeatable) 2-2 during her sophomore year.

With few people being able to match Fort's successful resume, she credits multiple things that inspire her to work so hard.

"The desire for competition and the drive to do my very best every time I play, and to have regrets," said Fort when asked about her inspiration.



A.J. Nisbet '08/The Patriot

Sheri Fort served as one of the captains for this year's field hockey team.

Fort also seems to share similar characteristics to her favorite athlete, Mike Richards of the Philadelphia Flyers.

"He works hard every play, and will do whatever it takes for his team to win. He is a good player offensively and defensively, plays both ends of the ice, and puts his team before himself," said Fort.

While success seems inevitable on an athletic surface for Fort, she is also committed to her school work and studies. Fort has maintained good grades in mostly honors classes, and is part of the National Honor Society and despite her packed schedule she still finds time to participate in the Interact club.

Starting in the Fall of next year, Fort will be attending St. Francis University in Pennsylvania to major in physical therapy and continue her lacrosse career.

With just a few more months left in Fort's successful high school career, she is looking forward to leading the Minutemaids lacrosse team to a successful season.

JV Soccer

Lanza looks ahead

Kevin Whitehead '10

Soccer. It is the most popular sport in the world. So when you talk to someone who loves the game and can share his knowledge—you listen.

David Lanza '10 is an important part of the Washington Township JV soccer team. Most, who know him, think highly of him and his playing skills. He excels in this sport because of his speed and extremely aggressive play. His motivation on and off the field are his brother, and his two other sisters. All of whom have played for the WTHS soccer program.

"I want to be as good as them," Lanza said.

To reach that goal he strives to be a better player but he feels his weaknesses are completely covered by his strengths. His strengths are his speed, aggressive play, and poise on the field. Before soccer games Lanza listens to "Welcome to the Jungle" by Guns and Roses to get him pumped up.

On game day, his mind is entirely set with a winning attitude. He's willing to do whatever it takes to win the game that day. Also, as he says, he hates to lose.

After a loss he usually feels that he and his teammates simply did not get the job done and could have played better.

Sadly, all this motivation could not be transferred to the field due to his health issues. Lanza was eligible to play, but had to wait on treatment results. He did contributed to the team's success in his brief stint this season. This year, the Boy's Junior



Alyssa Figueroa '08/The Patriot

Though missing much of the season, David Lanza helped provide leadership for the undefeated JV soccer team.

Varsity Soccer Team finished the season at 10-0-1.

"From one to ten, I would give our team chemistry a ten," Lanza said.

A soccer team needs chemistry and teamwork to be successful and move in the right direction. The Junior Varsity soccer team has a couple of standout players. According to Lanza, their most prominent player on defense was Jerry Guzzo until he moved to the Varsity team. Presently, Steve Morrone is filling the void for the promoted Guzzo.

"Kyle Jordan is probably our best forward," Lanza stated, "because he's fast and he scores a lot." Their team accomplished Lanza's preseason goal, which was to win a lot of games or go undefeated.

"We're intimidating because we think that no one can beat us. But we can't get too full of ourselves."

Sports

Jones, team tumble records

A.J. Nisbet '08

Having not had a single taste of defeat during regular competitions during the season, the Washington Township Gymnastics team finished the season with a 14-0 record and claimed multiple championship titles. With contributions from everyone on the team, they were able to become conference champions, sectional champions, and earn a sixth place in the state.

While the team was able to break the school record three times, senior and third year team captain Sammi Jones managed to break or tie all standing school records.

Being on top is nothing new for Jones as this season was only one of multiple conference and sectional titles. Adding to the Jones' successful resume, this year she was named South Jersey Gymnast of the Year. She was also named First Team

All State and ranked second all around in the state.

While Jones was a key part to the success of the team this season, the team had a strong performance from girls in all grade levels.

"Cara Cianci was a freshman that came in strong and kept up the hard work all season," Said Jones.

The team also had a strong sophomore group in Brittany Patane, Dana Villisin, and Demi Lenox. Patane was often able to overcome adversity this season.

"She always gave it her all no matter what, even when her hands were busted and her ankles were hurting," said Jones.

Villisin and Lenox added to the team success with consistent hard work and commitment.

With another gymnastics season in the books, success is the only word that can describe the team and their season.



Photo courtesy of Sammi Jones '08

The WTHS gymnastics team finished the season undefeated with a 14-0 record.

One team, one brotherhood

Max Giorgi '08

To the Washington Township Football team, a senior class is something special. The same group of guys start out as freshman and grow and work together for the next four years. They become almost like family and when it is all finally over, it is a very emotional but also gratifying and fulfilling time.

This season was a prime example of this.

Mike Schatzman (senior starter and captain) said that, "We definitely overachieved this season. We were the underdogs but we won the conference."

The Minutemen were not favored to win most of their games this year, and with the grueling loss in first game of the season, critics didn't have much good to say about the team. But the Minutemen did not panic "in the face of adversity". (A phrase commonly used by Head Coach Wechter.) They pulled together as a "brother hood" and won the remaining regular season games.

The Minutemen, playing with sort of a chip on their shoulders, overcame all of their division rivals. The most gratifying perhaps might have been the Homecoming game, a victory against Cherokee. All in all it was positive season with positive achievements. Schatzman received the "Back of the Week



Stephanie Mordente '08

Award" at one point during the season.

He talked briefly about scoring touchdowns and says, "It's a great feeling, but it's more for the team than me. It's a team effort."

To end the season, the Minutemen lost to Southern Regional High School 21-7 in the first round of the playoffs, but soon redeemed themselves with a 27-21 victory over Eastern Regional High School, which allowed them to be the sole winners of the Conference. Vincent Marcucci had two interceptions that game, and also knocked down Eastern's pass towards the end-zone that might have put them in the lead. Leaving the field for the last time was difficult,

especially for the senior Minutemen.

As Marcucci left, he felt what many of the players were thinking and says, "I didn't want to leave it (the field). I just didn't want it to be over. I'll miss being with all of the guys and spending time with the team."

This football program changes lives. It turns boys into men, and teaches valuable life lessons. It is a program that can mold and shape a person to bettering themselves.

Marcucci says, "It builds character and teaches mental toughness." Patrick Herring comments to any lower classmen coming up through the program to, "Keep your head when faced with adversity."

On the night of the last official practice, the senior class all met at the stadium. Through the dark they heard Coach Wechter say that this would be the last time most of them would play football. The seniors felt a wave wash over them because they knew how much football had meant to them and how they all weren't ready to let it go. They knew that a win against Eastern that Friday was mandatory.

When the game finally came, and when those final seconds ticked away, and when everything became oddly quiet the second before Vince knocked down the pass, they knew they all had done something great together, as team, as players, as a brotherhood.

Winter sports preview

Swimmers seek to fill key roles

Weston Eldridge '10

The boy's swim teams hopes for another promising season after making it to the State Tournament last season.

"We would like to improve our record over last year's, and qualify as a team for the State Tournament" said Coach Bill Albertson.

Albertson's other goals for the season are to be competitive in every meet, and have at least three swimmers qualify for the Individual State Meet. He feels that it's important to be competitive because of the team's rebuilding mentality after losing many crucial seniors last year such as Billy Creager (State Champion), and Blaise Lacca (State Qualifier).

Filling the shoes of those graduated seniors are Bill DeMarco '08, Dan Bower '08, and Matt Marzolf '08. They'll be part of the Varsity medley relay that looks to be one of the team's major strengths going into the season. Joining them and swimming the butterfly is a talented freshman, Sal Liberto '11.

Along with the medley relay, the team looks to be strong in the 50 freestyle, with DeMarco leading the way. Another promising event is the 100 breaststroke, in which Bower hopes to repeat last year's appearance in the Individual State Meet.

Other events that look promising for the upcoming season include the 500 freestyle, and the 50 butterfly.

However, Albertson feels the team's major weakness (setback) is their lack of depth in each event.

Albertson named three captains, DeMarco, Nick Verrillo '08, and Marzolf. Albertson expects these



Weston Eldridge '10

The team takes a break during a practice session.

three captains to provide leadership and encouragement to the team.

"I feel honored because I've been working hard for three years to get to the point where I am now," said DeMarco, "I'm also glad to have the opportunity to be a role model and a leader to

the team."

"As a captain, I provide experience," said Verrillo, "There are many new kids on the team, and I will also try to provide leadership at practice and during meets."

With a rebuilding mentality, the team works hard in practice. A typical practice for the team consists of stretching in the beginning, then the main set, and finishes with a warm-down. However, the day before a meet, practices are easier so the swimmers stay loose coming into the meet.

"I like to mix it up with distance some days, and sprints other days," said Albertson.

As the season goes on, Albertson will also focus on helping the younger swimmers improve. He feels that the younger swimmers' improvement will be important for future success of the WTHS boy's swimming program.

Girls look to start strong

Linda Hanford '11

To some, basketball is just another sport, but to the girls of the Minutemaids basketball team it's much more. It's a sisterhood - a bond that is unexplainable. It gives these girls the heart and desire they have for the game. Along with finding time to make bonds with each other they also put everything into their work ethic. This year is different from past years, mainly because

these girls are determined to go all the way.

Senior Captain, Gina Turdo said that she expects everyone to come together as a team and have the most successful season possible, make it to the state tournament, and have great memories along the way.

That answer seems to be the popular oamong the girls, since they've known each other for a long time.

"We are a family," said Ashley Giedemann '10.

Last season the team ended with a 21-7 record and the conference title. The girls are all hoping to be just as successful this season.

Alex Koutras '09 said that one of the main goals right now is just to become the best team all around and improve everyday.

If you are to walk into the gym while the girls are practicing you can see the heart and care for their friends and teammates, but more importantly you can see their true love for the game.

With their head coach and former Minutemaid Jennifer Natale, the girls are guided on and off the court. The team chemistry amongst the girls all started when Natale became head coach. The girls can relate to Natale in many ways and many feel she has a way of creating a comfortable atmosphere.

The 2007-2008 girls' basketball team is something worth coming out to see. Their first game is Fri., Dec. 14th vs. Shawnee at home. Come support the team and see what being a real team is all about.

Diving into a new season

Weston Eldridge '10

The Varsity diving team looks to have another strong season with the return of their three top divers (Ben Brendlinger '10, Elaina Verderchio '08, and Elliot Moreno '08).

"I would like to go to the State Meet again this season and finish better than last year (15th place)," said Brendlinger. In addition to the strength of the upperclassmen, Rachael Bunting '11 also looks to impact the team.

Coach Glinnie Elmore hopes to have three of his top divers qualify for the State Meet at the end of the season.

This goal was achieved last season when Verderchio, Moreno, and Brendlinger all qualified. Elmore also expects to be competitive in the Tri-County meet, 11-dive Meet, and the

6-dive Meet (Gloucester County Championships).

To work toward these goals, Elmore felt that Verderchio and Moreno were the most deserving of the captain positions on the team.

"I expect the captains to set the tempo for the workouts and display a positive attitude," said Elmore, "If the captains are lazy, then the rest of the team will be lazy."

A typical workout for the diving team begins with stretching, body-shaping, positioning, basic rolls, jumps, and summersaults. After that, the team practices their dives that they will perform in the meets.

If everything goes as planned for the upcoming season, Elmore expects that fans can look for the WTHS Varsity diving team to finish in the top three in the 6-dive Meet (counties).