

Opinion

NBA needs answers beyond the floor

Anthony Dentino '11

Every time I sit down to watch an NBA game and try to get into it, I find myself changing the channel looking for something else to watch. Why is this?

NBA players are just as good if not even better than before. Sure, there were stars like Magic Johnson, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Larry Bird and Michael Jordan dominating basketball's heyday, but today's era features stars just as good such as Dwayne Wade, Steve Nash, Kobe Bryant, and LeBron James.

When I really look into it, I realize the reason I could fall asleep any time I try to watch a game is that the league has a terrible public relations department. The marquee match-ups simply aren't advertised well enough. Most great regular season match-ups go unnoticed, except for the Christmas Day games, and even the playoff ads, while shown, could definitely improve.

Also, players don't seem to put their best efforts forth until the playoffs. They treat the regular season as a joke, and usually do just enough to help their teams secure a decent spot in the postseason. I realize that NBA players are incredibly gifted athletes, and with



AP Image

With the exceptions of a few superstars, the NBA lacks the star power of the past.

the skill and grace they possess everything looks easy on the court. However, it is usually quite easy to tell when players are slacking off, considering most play as though they have never heard of the terms "pass" and "defense." Nevertheless, I find myself mesmerized by the excitement of virtually any college basketball game, even though I am not a fan of any particular team. The reason is that I am a fan of crisp, fundamentally sound basketball where referees don't refrain from calling a travel or lane violation. Additionally, college players,

regardless of skill level, give it their all. Ironically, these athletes aren't even paid, and only a select few will even play in the NBA and rake in the serious money.

Therefore, I find that the league is getting exactly what it deserves. A league where one superstar virtually makes a team is almost embarrassing to watch. I'd much rather watch a college team swing the ball around to create an effective and open shot as opposed to one superstar go up against five lackadaisical defenders and try to make a highlight reel dunk. The egos

of NBA players, and professional athletes in general, are frightening. To misbehave off the court, and then not even play your hardest on the court is just pathetic, especially when most players are multi-millionaires.

The NBA needs to be cleaned up and fixed immediately. Currently it is in a whirlwind of problems, and there is a definite calling for the one or two superstars that can revolutionize the game. For this to be done however, players will have to start truly earning their paychecks.

Wrestling

Experienced squad inspires confidence

Maria Brasco '10

Washington Twp. Wrestling is known for individual greatness. For the first time in many years, it should be recognized for their team excellence.

Returning with over six of last year's varsity starters and two state qualifiers, this 2009-10 team is fully stacked.

"In my past three years here, I haven't felt this confident in my team. We're going to take one day at a time and I have no doubt we could be number one [in South Jersey]," said James Higgins '10.

To be number one, it will take hard work and dedication. The boys practice hard and drill like it's a

match. It has been years since the program has had a full Varsity and JV team. Upperclassmen do have played a huge role in helping the underclassman.

Along with new underclassmen, the team has gained a senior transfer from Eastern Regional High School. Daymeim Scott '10 has wrestling in his blood and the team believes he will be a quality asset.

"Day is cool and has stepped up our intensity at practice. I think he's going to do well here [at Twp.]," Chuck Everham '10.

The team will be lead by a group of respected coaches. Head coach Mr. Ralph Ross Jr., and assistant coaches Mr. Brett Fetty,

Mr. Mike Ahern, Mr. Dave Tomasette, and Mr. Mark Manchio all have a history of excellence in wrestling.

Most of the coaches were born with wrestling blood, others grew into it. However, each of them made their way through state tournaments. A Twp. prodigy,

Tomasette was a state champion in 2005.

Between the coaching staff and senior leadership, this season should become a great one. Be sure to support your Minutemen wrestlers on their first home match, December 22.

Minutemen Wrestling Season Schedule	
12/22- @ Lenape	1/20- @ Cherry Hill East
12/29- @Collingswood	1/27- @ Cherokee
1/6- vs. Pennsauken	2/3- @ Camden
1/9- vs. Buena	2/4- vs. Timber Creek
1/13- @ Eastern	

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Concert spreads holiday cheer

Music department performs for community



Photo courtesy of Mr. Robert Frampton

The music department shared a variety of favorite holiday compositions with audiences in the TD Bank Performing Arts center on December 2. They reprised some of the numbers at an assembly for the student body.

Jessica Bowers '10

The Washington Township High School holiday concert, held in the TD Bank Performing Arts, is a way for students involved in musical activities to give some holiday cheer to the community.

The Wind-Ensemble performed a beautiful, sophisticated version of the song, "The Eighth Candle." Before the song, Mr. Casey Corigliano said to the audience, "It's a very mature piece for them to play, and it captures the entire season."

Looking around the audience, the families and friends of the performers were captivated by the performance.

"I really enjoyed their rendition of "The Eighth Candle." I've never heard the song, but I really liked it," Hannah Angle '10 said.

The Wind-Ensemble was one of five acts at the holiday concert. First up was the Guitar IIA class. They started off with "God Re Ye Merry Gentlemen," which was very soft and pretty. They also performed "Carol of the Bells" and "Joy to the World." Both pieces were blended.

"The holiday concert started off great...[Guitar IIA] had the perfect attitude to begin the show," Shacarra Almon '10 said.

Guitar IIB class was up next; they performed the traditional "Jolly Old St. Nicholas," the French traditional "The First Noel," and an old Welsh version of "Deck the Halls." They stayed together during the upbeat songs, and all of the songs had pretty melodies.

"Even though they were high school students, they sounded like professionals! Guitar IIB played upbeat, catchy songs," Rachel Lombo '11 recalled.

Guitar III played immediately after the Guitar II groups. They started off with the funny and enjoyable "You're a Mean One, Mr. Grinch." They finished with the more mature pieces "Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairies" and "Christmas Time is here." They were the most advanced of the Guitar groups, because they've been playing longer.

"Guitar III was so good! I wish I could play like them; they brought the holiday spirit to the concert." Jacqueline Jones '10 exclaimed.

After the guitar groups were

done, Chorale took the stage to sing. They played four songs: "Candleglow," "Jubilate Deo," "Angels We Have Heard on High," and "December Child." Altos, basses, sopranos, and tenors all used their voices to deliver the message of the holidays. The songs blended beautifully, and they were easy to understand. Before "December Child," Mr. Van Antwerp, the director of Chorale, said "The kids

really enjoyed singing this, and I enjoy listening to them."

Leanne Abrams agreed with the director, she said, "The audience was smiling during the entire song."

After Wind-Ensemble, the Chorale came back on stage to join the Wind-Ensemble for the finale piece, "Trilogy for Christmas." The two groups were perfect together; they brought the whole concert together in a beautiful way.

Inside

People	page 3
Features	page 4
Commentary	page 6
Odds & Ends	page 8
Comics	page 9
Tech Talk	page 10
Lifestyles	page 11
Arts & Entertainment	page 12
Sports	page 15

Apologies for a snow news day

This issue was scheduled to come out before the winter break but the big snowstorm disrupted our production schedule. Consequently, a few stories may be a little out of date but we hope they still provide an interesting read. -The Editors

Students perform to help needy families

Jordan Wilson '10

Sunday December 6th was a touching and emotional day at WTHS, thanks to Ms. Theresa Pietrowski and her organization of Twp Hope: Arts for Life. This collaboration of the dance department, color guard, ROTC, and choir was for more than just entertainment purposes. It helped to raise approximately \$7,000 for five ill students in the high school.

When Ms. Pietrowski first approached Ms. Christina Richardson and Ms. Eisa Jackson [dance teachers at WTHS] about this event it was originally to be named Twp Hope: Dance for life. However, when Pietrowski realized how many different organizations wanted to get involved they needed to broaden the name so that it welcomed all art forms.

Not only were students from the high school involved but students in the Chestnut Ridge choir, students from Gloucester Catholic High School, and dancers from local studios were also involved.

In addition to selling tickets for the show for \$10, t-shirts were also

sold so that as much money as possible could be raised for each of the five students and their families. Faculty and students showed their support by wearing these shirts Friday, December 4 before the show. Sunday had a great turnout of residents of Washington Township along with others who wanted to support this great cause.

"I was overwhelmed to look into the audience and see all of the people in front of me and to turn around and see all the students who participated in the event behind me," said Pietrowski.

Some of the students which Twp Hope: Arts for Life benefited had the courage to get on stage and say a few words to all of the audience members. During their speaking the auditorium fell silent.

"Everyone's heart was touched by the words that were spoken," said Jill Doud, a performer in the show.

Although Ms. Pietrowski hopes next year all students at WTHS will be healthy, but as long as students are in need she will continue organizing this event each year.

Pietrowski said "I could barely talk at the end of the show, I felt myself trying not to cry not because I was sad but because I was so happy."

The performance was a great success as the school and community came together for a great cause to help those in need.

Classroom kisses



CHRISTINIA SCHILLACI '10 / The Patriot

On December 18, the cast of Monthly Rewind enjoyed a day of skipping class, hanging with friends, and kissing classmates.

Students anticipate challenge day

Kristen Kellenyi '10

Last year, a special program was brought to WTHS that would have a positive impact not only on individual students, but the behavior of everyone in our school community. Teachers and students would learn things about themselves or others that they never knew before. This life changing event was called Challenge Day and is scheduled to repeat this January.

Challenge Day is a program which gathers a large group of students and teachers to come together. There is a set of leaders, and a set of volunteers. Together, they talk about their feelings, differences, and even similarities.

"Challenge Day brings up emotions and painful experiences that you didn't know you had, but when you allow yourself to share

them with others, it's like a weight being lifted off your shoulders", said Ryan Elles '10.

During this life changing day, students will do group exercises. In one of the exercises the groups of students were lined up on one end of the room. As the leader announced

I noticed a huge difference in the students

- Taylor Vandell

specific feelings, and events the student moved to the other side if it applied to them. Each volunteer and leader was assigned to a "family". Your family is the group of people you would keep going back to or do a group activity with. However, you still received a chance to meet with

and talk with everyone else involved.

After Challenge Day, a difference was made at the high school. Taylor Vandell '10, had been eligible, but did not participate in this event but still recognized its impact. "I noticed a huge difference in the students after Challenge Day. People were nicer and more respectful of others feelings. If I had the chance to go back, I would have definitely chosen to be a part of that day", says Vandell.

Many students, like Vandell, did not participate in Challenge Day for many reasons. Some were afraid of what to expect, and others thought "it wouldn't work". Ultimately, Challenge Day made a positive effect and a tremendous impact on our school.

Diana Hamilton '10, who is part of the committee, is passionate about the program. "When I signed

up for Challenge Day, I didn't know what to expect. Now that I have experienced it for myself, I try my best to get everyone involved", announced Hamilton.

Hamilton believes that participants will learn more about yourself and others than you had ever expected. You will learn to treat others as you want to be treated. "Be as open to the experience and others as much as possible because the more open you are, the more you get out of the Challenge Day experience" said Elles.

Many students who took part last year encourage underclassmen to get involved in it this upcoming January.

"Being a part of Challenge Day was one of my most memorable experiences at WTHS, I recommend that everyone and anyone be a part of it!" says senior, Jordan Wilson.

Sports

Team mentality motivates Minutemen

Weston Eldridge '10

After making it to the State Championship last season, the Boys Varsity Basketball team returns this year with high expectations.

"We expect to have a very good season but we really do not set goals as far as number of wins-we just try to be the best team we can," said head coach Mr. Robert Byatt.

Byatt's different approach to winning has had a positive effect on his players, evident from their successful run down the stretch last season. A 20-10 record last year enforces Byatt's approach in that he was not worried about how many wins they had but that they were getting better each game. With a tough schedule, Byatt feels that staying level-headed and realistic will not be an issue for his team.

"I feel that Byatt exploits all of our negatives, making us want to prove him wrong and play better," said Craig Bosnjak '10.

Along with a lackadaisical approach to the



season in terms of number of wins, Byatt also strongly enforces a "team first" mentality among his players. In effort to maintain that "team first" mentality, he selects no captains. Byatt expects all of his seniors to be leaders.

"As a senior I display leadership with actions rather than words," said Adam Marcucci '10. "Byatt's approach to captains makes it so that anyone can step up and be a leader."

A core group of seniors lead the way this

season, building off of good team chemistry. Matt Lopez, Marcucci, Chris Grabbe, Nick Favatella, and Chuck Clark are expected to lead by example as they are projected to fill starting lineup.

"The team gets along well and have been playing together for a long time," said Byatt.

Along with those five starters, Byatt foresees Bosnjak, Ben Maffet '11, Dante Orlando '10, Orlando Williams '10, and Mark Jankowski '11 seeing plenty of game time as the season evolves.

Throughout the season, Lopez looks to continue to improve in hope of easing the transition from high school to collegiate play. Lopez signed with LaSalle University as a red-shirt freshman.

"My three personal trainers have all played professionally and have done great on preparing me for college and I think I'm ready," said Lopez, "I have the best team I could ask for, filled with good friends and great coaches."

Byatt wants his team to work hard and continue to improve as the season goes on. He hopes to have his team playing their best basketball at the end of the season for the playoffs.

"With our returning players, a solid off-season of hard work, and a good preseason, we feel we are ready to do our best and let the chips fall where they may," said Byatt.

Giedemann, Rohach lead team forward

Kevin Whitehead '10

A new era of Minutemaids basketball is sprouting within the system of Washington Twp. From freshmen to Varsity, there are 35 roster spots. 22 of them are occupied by freshman.

There is a lot to be said about the class of 2013.

"We are extremely excited about our youth," former player (1992-95) and four-year head coach Mrs. Jennifer Natale said. "They are a very talented group."

This group will be paramount to the success in 2009-10.

"[We will] develop our younger players, teach them our concepts and plays," former player (1991-94) and Junior Varsity head coach Mrs. Carolyn Johns said. "When they're at the Varsity level, we [will] all grow with each game and learn from each other as the season progresses."

The 2008-09 Minutemaids squad went 26-4 and won the Group IV Championship. There were seven

seniors on that Varsity squad. This left a gaping hole in the Minutemaids to start this season.

This talented freshman class couldn't have come at a better time.

"Our biggest challenge is our lack of Varsity experience, [but] we're looking to improve every day we step on the floor. We have some big shoes to fill," Natale said.

Returning leading scorer and vocal leader Ashley Giedemann '10 will join Jess Rohach '10 as the Minutemaids captains. They plan provide leadership and direction for the younger players like freshmen Morgan Cosgrove, Shannon Cowles, and Maureen Flemming.

"Ashley's leadership is second to no one. She's an extremely confident kid, the minute she's walked through the door as a freshman," Natale said. "And Jess is our emotional leader who leads by example. They're a really nice balance for one another. Very different personalities for us and it works to our advantage."

The leadership of Rohach and Giedemann will be vital to the success of such a young group.

"We need to know how to play with each other. Me and Ash are real close so we want the whole team to be like that," Rohach said.

Also, Giedemann, who is 140 points away from the prestigious 1000 point mark in her career at WTHS, feels the Minutemaids have a good possibility for an Olympic Conference crown.

"Anything can happen, especially when playoff time comes around. We have the height this year which is one thing we haven't had," Giedemann said. "We're going to be a tough team to defend. We have a great shot."

Along with the young players, four year veterans Rohach, Giedemann, and Natale will mold around the system that has been put into place.

"From my past experiences, we've always been very close," Giedemann said. "Very talkative on

the court, and always working together. I think we just need to feed off of each other. We'll get there."

The camaraderie and chemistry will build as the season moves forward. The more they play together, the more the team will build. It's just a matter of time.

"They spend so much time together, they consider themselves like family," Natale said. "Our team chemistry has helped us reach levels of success in the last few years."

The Minutemaids have a well balanced group of players, minimizing opposing teams to key on one player.

"We don't have that one superstar," Natale said. "They know that any given night, they could be the superstar."

The Minutemaids are planning to have continual success due to the talent of this year's group and its youth.

"We definitely are going to have a foundation and [we'll] just build from it," Johns said.

Disney breaks new ground

Taylor Vandell '10

Disney's "The Princess and the Frog" is the latest of Disney's creations, was released on December 11. It's the perfect twist on a classic tale.

The movie takes place in New Orleans, and is the story of a girl named Tiana who is mistaken by a frog to be a princess. She always has longed to be a princess, but it never quite happened for her. Prince Naveen was cursed to be a frog by the evil magician Dr. Facilier. The only way to break the prince's curse is for him to kiss a princess.

When Naveen sights Tiana in her tiara and dress on her balcony, he assumes she is a princess, and asks for a kiss. When he kisses her, he expects to become a human again, but both are extremely surprised to find that that is not the case. Tiana becomes a frog as well and they journey on together to find a spell to change them both back to humans.

Along the way, Tiana and Prince Naveen become friends with a singing and dancing alligator, and a hopelessly romantic firefly.

With the same directors from the Little



"The Princess and the Frog" is a movie that will certainly join the ranks of the Disney classics.

Mermaid, Aladdin, and Hercules, this 2D animation movie intends to have great expectations. As the 49th Disney Classic Film, it is said to have a huge impact on this nation. Having the first African American princess really opened

up the eyes of many young girls in this country. This movie creates the hope that for every little girl, no matter what race they may be, that your dreams can come true and anything is possible if you just believe.

The music in this movie is also fantastic. Including the true rhythm and blues and jazz music from New Orleans, *The Princess and the Frog* sets the tone for a modern day Disney Classic.

True to form, Disney did not fail to add a popular artist to sing a song for the movie. Ne-Yo opens up the movie with a tune called "Never Knew I Needed." The song sets the film's tone, introducing the "Jazzy" setting of New Orleans and the main character Tiana.

The Princess and the Frog is a movie that will certainly be considered a classic forever, and if you want to join in on the phenomenon of the tale, make sure you go see this film. It will truly open up your eyes to a whole new world of princes, princesses, and frog-kissing.

Visitors destined for extended stay

Weston Eldridge '10

Sometimes I catch myself wondering what life would be like if there was human existence outside of Earth. With that curiosity, I find myself glued to my couch every Tuesday night, anxiously awaiting the new ABC hit series *V*. *V* models a world in which technologically advanced alien species arrive on Earth. This American science fiction television series is a re-imagining of the 1983 miniseries created by Kenneth Johnson. The show develops a mysterious nature by initially portraying the aliens as peaceful, when they actually have sinister motives.

The "visitors" arrive on Earth in 29 giant spaceships landing all across the globe. Anna (Morena Baccarin) is the leader of the extra-terrestrial species and continually reminds everyone that they come in peace. In effort to gain the approval of the human race, Anna has her medical unit work miracles ranging from curing cancer patients to making the blind regain their sight. Refusing

to believe the "visitors" are as nice as they seem are Erica Evans (Elizabeth Mitchell), Father Jack Landry (Joel Gretsch), Ryan Nichols (Morris Chestnut), and a few other humans. Nichols is a "visitor", only he is part of the Fifth Column, a group of traitors. With inside knowledge, Nichols works with the other non-believers in effort to slowly bring down Anna in her plan to deteriorate the human race.

Creating a sense of confusion among the viewers is the fact that the "visitors" and humans can't be differentiated by the naked eye. The only way to determine whether it's a "visitor" or human is to cut open the skin. Watching the show, the viewers may be convinced that someone is a human when in fact they are a "visitor", or visa-versa.

Along with confusion, the show ties in action and romantic drama. Action unfolds in every episode when the "visitors" sense even the slightest obstacle to their plan. For instance, when the Fifth Column presents itself as a threat, physical confrontation is in the near future.



GOOGLE IMAGE

Creating a sense of confusion among is that the "visitors" and humans can't be differentiated by the naked eye.

The future is something Nichols anxiously awaits in regards to his girlfriend, a human. The more his girlfriend begins to believe in Anna and the "visitors", the higher the risk becomes of telling her he is a member of the Fifth Column. Nichols will eventually have to decide between loyalty to her or his involvement with the Fifth Column.

The V is great for a wide variety of viewers due to its incorporation of a vast array of inner elements such as confusion, suspense, action, drama, and the existence on extra-terrestrial activity. Ending for the holidays with numerous cliff-hangers left unanswered, the series returns in March.

People

Lopresti finds teaching rewarding

Chirstina Cockerill '12

Mrs. Linda Lopresti is no stranger to the Washington Township school district. Not only did she grow up here, she once walked these halls just like any other student, running from class to class. After senior year, she went on to Rowan University, getting her education to become an English teacher. Of all the great components of college, she said her favorite must have been finally being seen as an adult and all the freedom that came with being one.

After Rowan, she went on to work in Egg Harbor Township. A year later, Lopresti was actually able to get a position at Orchard Valley Middle School and two years later, her old high school, Washington Township.

When she was a student, her favorite class was definitely gym. She loved being competitive and having the chance to move around, rather than sitting in a desk all day. Her least favorite class was geometry, although other math classes she wasn't quite as negative towards. "I just couldn't visualize or make sense of it."

Her feelings as a student have also affected her views as a teacher. A former student, Brandon Ramsaran, described her class as, "An energetic and astonishing class. One of the few classes I liked that year." When asked, Mrs. Salkowski commented, "With her energy, no one could fall asleep in her class." Not surprisingly, her least



GREG FURMAN '10/The Patriot

Mrs. Linda Lopresti likes to start off her day with a quote for the students.

favorite aspect of teaching is the grading and the math involved with it.

When she teaches, Mrs. Lopresti tries her best to bring personal experience into the lesson. She finds kids remember it best that way and are

then able to relate and remember. Her opinion on standardized tests is extremely low, stating that she doesn't believe that they're a true or valuable unit to measure a student by and tries to keep her class a lot more personal than something like the SAT's. One of her favorite memories as teacher would have to be sharing a room with Mrs. Salvator, another English teacher, but the thing she likes most about teaching would have to be the kids. "I can teach the same thing year after year, but the kids will always make it interesting."

Currently, Lopresti has a minimal amount of spare time because of managing her schedule full of her two boys, teaching here in TWP, and going to The College of New Jersey for her masters degree in Educational Leadership and Instruction. Her two boys—"The loves of my life," she described happily—are five and seven years old and both go to a private Catholic school.

However, when she does have spare time, she really loves to be outside doing anything. Oil painting, yoga, and reading are all things she tends to enjoy while outdoors. At the moment, she's reading *Eat, Pray, Love*, a story about one women's quest for a religion she can truly believe in. As for music, Lopresti is a classic rock fan, liking the Beatles and other big rock'n roll names.

As for advice, Lopresti would advise all students to do two things; "Always work to your full potential and always tell yourself you can."

Counselor enjoying career choice

Jordan Wilson '10

"I love my job!" exclaimed Mrs. Nelson, a guidance counselor here at Washington Township High School. Students and staff concur, our school is extremely fortunate to have such an enthusiastic faculty member. Like the students she helps every day, Mrs. Nelson also attended WTHS.

She was inspired by her teacher, Mrs. Clark [currently still a teacher at WTHS] to become a Spanish teacher. However, after graduating high school in 1978, Nelson changed her mind and decided to attend Rowan University to become a history teacher instead.

In 1984 Nelson was back in WTHS, only this time she was the teacher not the student. She taught US History 1 and 2 for nine years and absolutely adored it. (She was even named Teacher of the Year.) To this day, she is still very fond of history.

However, she soon found herself spending more time with students and their issues than on

the subject matter. Consequently, Nelson went back to Rowan University to get her masters degree so that she could become a guidance counselor. Everything seemed to fall into place.

Naturally, Nelson said "This career chose me." The thing she likes most about her job is "Being a major part of someone's high school career."

Although she does not get to know everyone as much as she would like, she wants all of her students to know that she is available at any time. "Whether you need me for a day, a week, or a year I'll be here." said Nelson.

Besides her job, Nelson also enjoys doing crossword puzzles, exercising at the gym, and crocheting. In her free time, she watches her favorite show *Curb Your Enthusiasm*. Vacationing in the Caribbean is her favorite getaway. Her family consists of her husband, two sons, and daughter and their significant others.

Ask anyone at WTHS and they will certainly agree that Mrs. Nelson is an asset to



KEVIN WHITEHEAD '10/The Patriot

Nelson began her career as a history teacher but later made the switch to the guidance office.

our school. She has been at the high school so long, she considers the people, both staff and students, to be like a second family to her.

Features

Activities warm winter season

Jordan Wilson '10

During the winter, many teens prefer to hibernate inside until all the Christmas lights are taken down, the ice has melted and the temperature rises. However, in Washington Township there is no reason to hide indoors; there are plenty of fun winter activities in which to take part.

Try spending one night in the quaint town of Pitman. Around Christmas time, residents of the town volunteer to set up light displays in their back yards. The houses which participate are located in the Grove section of Pitman. It is only a short drive, and then you are free to stroll through this charming display. Gather your friends and enjoy the lights. This activity is sure to get you into the holiday spirit.

If you want to do something that doesn't require bundling up, go to the IMAX Theatre at the Tropicana in Atlantic City. Avatar will begin showing December 18. It takes approximately 50 minutes to get to the Tropicana from Washington Township. However, this amazing 3D experience will make the drive worthwhile.

Another activity to try is

attending The Holiday Light Show at Macys in Center City Philadelphia. Annually, the store begins the show on November 27, 2009 and it runs through New Year's Eve, December 31, 2009. There is a show at the start of every hour. The lights are accompanied by festive holiday music. Be entertained by the show and then complete some last minute holiday shopping! It's the perfect plan for any day or evening!

Do you like the book or motion picture *The Polar Express*? The New Hope & Ivyland train stations offer a train ride that can provide you with a similar experience. This is the perfect activity to share with family members.

It is an evening train ride that takes you to the "North Pole" to see Santa. The ride also includes a reading of *The Polar Express*, hot chocolate and cookies. During the ride Santa and Mrs. Claus make a guest appearance. Passengers are encouraged to wear pajamas just like the characters in the book and film. Train rides are available every weekend through December 23. It is a great opportunity for people of all ages to get into the holiday spirit!

Ice skating is another classic winter activity. Although it does not



Flickr Image

The Lightshow at Macy's in center city Philadelphia is a fun and free activity for the Christmas season.

get cold enough here to skate on a pond, there are plenty of other options. If you want to stay local, Hollydell Ice Arena hosts public skating weekdays from 12:00 to 1:30, Friday and Saturday nights from 8:00 to 10:00, and Sunday afternoons from 1:20 to 2:45 and 3:00 to 4:15.

The price for weekdays and weekend afternoons is six dollars and seventy five cents per session and

two dollars and twenty five cents for skate rental. On Friday and Saturday nights it is slightly more expensive. They charge nine dollars for the session and three dollars to rent skates.

So what are you waiting for? Grab a hat, scarf, hot chocolate, and a few friends and try something new! Participating in any of these activities will guarantee you an incredible winter!

Students celebrate winter holidays

Julia Hahn'10

During this time of the year, a person's attention will tend to go towards Santa Claus, Christmas time, and towards the singing of holiday carols. But there are two other holidays that are celebrated this time of year that many people, several students in Washington Township High School, celebrate.

One of the winter holidays is called Hanukkah "The Festival of Lights". Hanukkah is a Jewish holiday that commemorates the destruction and the rebuilding of the holy temple in Jerusalem hundreds of years ago. In the holy temple, there was only enough oil to last for one night, but a miracle occurred and the oil lasted eight nights. That is why there are eight candles on the menorah, in addition to the one large candle in the middle 'the shamash'.

Every night of Hanukkah, a family will light

the candles, and have dinner together.

"Sometimes my family likes to have my extended family over, or even some of my friends so they can experience something different," states Rebecca Caughron '12. "My two brothers live really far away, so it's nice to have them home to celebrate the holiday with them."

While Christmas is known for its candy canes and turkey, Hanukkah is known for its potato latkes, which are potato pancakes.

"My dad makes the best latkes! I could eat a hundred of them every year," exclaims Caughron, "but the best thing about the holiday by far is that I get to spend it with my family." Other students who celebrate Hanukkah feel the same way.

"I love spending Hanukkah with my family. It's the one time of year we all know we'll be really happy together," explains Viniar.

Another holiday celebrated during this time

of year is Kwanzaa.

Kwanzaa is a festival celebrated for the purpose of learning about African-American empowerment or betterment.

Kwanzaa also strives to teach the people who celebrate about those who have helped them become better. Kwanzaa is celebrated over a course of seven days and there is a candle for each day. There are three green candles, three red candles, and a single black candle. One each of the seven nights one candle is lit, and the people celebrating learn about the principle that that certain candle represents.

"I like to celebrate Kwanzaa because it's so different than any of the other holidays. It makes me feel unique about being myself," said Anthony Williams '12.

"It's not so much about giving gifts, but it's about a sense of unity and self-betterment. I really like that," he said.

Performance

Radio station hosts holiday hit

Leanne Abrams '11

Every December the radio station Q102 sponsors a holiday concert called Jingle Ball that sells out within hours. Q102 gathers popular artists and bands of that year to perform in one concert in one night.

This year it took place on December 9. The Wonder Girls kicked off the show at six o'clock singing one of their hit songs, "Nobody". Following them new found R&B singer Jay Sean from London got the crowd going singing two of his chart topping singles "Do You Remember" and "Down".

Bands Owl City who sings the hit song "Fireflies" and Cobra Starship who sings "Girls Go Bad", showed their talents as well.

A 15 year old boy from Canada who was discovered on Youtube and signed by Usher turned out to be the star of the Jingle ball. Justin Bieber, who's single One Time, became famous quickly was the act of the night for sure. More than half of the girls who attended this concert

had shirts and posters just for him. When he performed girls from the back were running up the stage screaming and even some tears were shed for Justin.

"I never saw anything like it, as soon as they said his name girls just piled around the stage" says Heather Abrams.

Following Bieber's performance, Jordan Sparks did her thing and still managed to keep the crowd pumped and screaming after the tough act before her. The Fray then delivered the most songs of the night and slowed the crowd down, with some of their slow songs. Pittbull was the last performer of the night and with his hip shaking music, it was the perfect way to end the show.

The show gets over late, so be prepared if you plan to attend.

"I go to Jingle Ball every year with my friends, and we have such a blast, Q102 always has my favorite performers there!" says Jessica Jewuisack. Don't be to upset if you missed this year's concert; keep your ears open around November of next year, when Q102 announces Jingle



LEANNE ABRAMS '11/The Patriot

Q102's annual Jingle Ball features fresh acts who have distinguished themselves in the past year.

Ball 2010.

"Every year it gets better, Justin Bieber was by far my favorite, everyone else did a great job too, can't wait for next year!" said Melanie Brzezinski.

This concert may be a little pricey when it comes to the ticket

cost, seats start at 90 dollars, but with 8 performers in one night some might think it's worth it.

"It was great to see some of the most popular artists of 2009 together!" says Erica Eisenstein, who feels the concert is a great way to kick off the holiday season!

Music

Unconventional indie folk-pop

Christina Cockerill, '12

Gregory and the Hawk (actually Meredith Godraeu) is an indie folk-pop singer and songwriter from upstate New York. Signed with FatCat records, she's released a total of two albums. First released was *In Your Dreams* in 2007 and a year later, *Moenie and Kitchi*.

While the sweet, soft spoken singer may not be for everybody, she definitely can please certain crowds.

Her song "Boats and Birds" easily spread through out Myspace, using a mixture of acoustic guitar and poetry to please her listeners.

Godraeu writes a mixture of traditional lyrics, but gives them a more realistic approach than some other singers, who often try too hard to be deep.

I feel that when I listen to her that it's a real girl sharing her thoughts, almost as if by listening to her music, you can get to know her. Her lyrics, although a little unconventional at times, make it much easier to sometimes relate.

Gregory and the Hawk has a number of different song topics, rather than obsessing over love like many other artists of this day. Her one song "Avalanche" isn't a metaphor—it's actually about the number of natural disasters in Switzerland.

Though some songs are a little more morose, such as "Stone Wall, Stone Fence", which deals with the emotional damage of closing yourself off. She does several cheerful selections, like "Neither Freer" and "Boats and Birds."

As for the vocals, I must give her four out of five stars. Against the light guitar playing, Godraeu's truly outstanding

voice shines, though it gets rough in certain selections. She has a clear, pretty tone that you find yourself remembering rather than the auto-tuned, computer edited songs put out by most female pop artists today.



Google Image

Gregory and the Hawk, Meredith Godraeu, mixes acoustic guitar and poetry into her songs.

However, I must say, while listening to her music, you may develop the need to listen to something a little louder and harder afterwards. But for fans of soft, easy listening, this is definitely something you should check out.

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Join the Game Club

The game club meets every Thursday 2:20 in Cafeteria B.

Arts & Entertainment

New Moon drama heats up

Sarah Kurtz '10

Finally the wait is over. *New Moon* was released on Friday, November 20, at 12:01 am. After waiting in line for three hours, the line started moving and fans of all ages began to cheer. The theatre was packed; every single seat in the whole movie complex was filled with people who pre-ordered tickets as far as months in advanced. Then at about one am after all the seats were filled, the movie began.

New Moon is the second book within the *Twilight* saga, and for the Jacob Black fans, much better than the first movie. The movie was impressively close to the movie in details and even lines.

The film opens with Edward, the most gorgeous vampire to walk to the earth, leaving Bella, his human girlfriend, who then becomes more and more depressed about him as the months drone on. To pass the time, Bella begins to hang out with her best friend Jacob Black on a regular basis. Jacob however, is a werewolf. But after hanging out with Jacob, Bella begins to feel somewhat



Google image

New Moon characters, Bella (Kristen Stewart) and Jacob (Taylor Lautner) have inspired a following of millions of fans.

normal again and decides to start to hang out with some friends again. After leaving a zombie flick, Bella spies a bunch of bikers in front of a bar. Seeing them she also recalls Edward's warning not to do anything reckless and she even sees a ghostly visage of him. "Keep walking," he says, "this is dangerous." He then disappears. Excited, and wanting to have another visitation, she assumes that Edward will appear before her only if she's

doing something that will endanger her. Bella has now basically become an adrenaline junkie. Bella continues to write e-mails to Alice throughout the film, resembling a narration of the film just like Bella narrates during the book.

Bella then starts to re-build old motorcycles with her best friend, Jacob Black. Another ploy to keep Edward somewhat "close" to her. After another one of Bella's stunts, Alice saw in one of her visions Bella

jumping off a cliff, and returned to Forks, Washington to make sure that Bella has survived the risky behavior. Edward found out why Alice returned to Forks and decided that if her life was over, his should be as well. He went to Italy to provoke the Volturi, vampires that enforce the law above all other vampires. But Bella was not in fact dead, and Alice saw a vision of Edward attempting to commit suicide and her and Bella rush to Italy to try and save him in time. Edward wants to expose himself in the sun, making his skin glitter with diamonds, in front of everyone in the town square so that the Volturi will end his life immediately.

The film was directed by Chris Weitz, who took over for the first director, Catherine Hardwicke, who directed the first movie of the saga. The movie was much more entertaining and enjoyable than the first. *New Moon* was closely similar to the book which made the book fans pleased. The next movie of the saga will be released June 30, 2010, and will hopefully live up to everyone's now high expectations.

Jersey Shore, MTV's new guilty pleasure

Jessica Bowers '10

On December 3, MTV premiered its new reality show *Jersey Shore*, which takes place in Seaside Heights, New Jersey. Though it has been criticized for building on negative stereotypes and glorifying wild behavior, many people have tuned in to watch.

Jersey Shore is similar to MTV's other reality show, *The Real World*. MTV brings cameras, chooses eight people who have never met, and lets the show unfold from there. *Jersey Shore* differs from *The Real World* because the cast of *Jersey Shore* consists of all Italian-Americans, from the same area. In *The Real World*, the eight are from different parts of the United States and are more diverse ethnically. *Jersey Shore*'s cast doesn't want to do anything but tan, do their hair, party at clubs, and fight, but that's what makes the show funny.

Out of the eight castmates, four of them are boys. They all have ripped bodies and gelled up hair. Pauly D is from Rhode Island, and he claims his hair takes him 25 minutes to style. Ronnie is from The Bronx, and claims he is the number one

brawler in the house. Mike calls himself "The Situation," because his abs are so ripped they are a "situation." Vinnie wants everyone to know he can pound his fist like a maniac. The boys take pride in their Italian-American roots and refer to themselves as "guidos."

Ready to bring drama to the Jersey shore, the four girls of the house spend hours getting ready to go out and don't care what any other person thinks of them. Angelina "Jolie" is from Staten Island, and she claims to be the Kim Kardashian of her hometown. Jenni "J-Wow" is from Franklin Square, New York. Nicole "Snooki" claims she invented the hair poof. Sammi "Sweetheart" has both castmates Ronnie and Mike chasing after her.

Of the eight, only two are originally from New Jersey; the rest of them are from New York. Some viewers are mad, saying that the show doesn't represent the "real Jersey shore." However, it does center on how these eight people react to the location, it is not meant to represent New Jersey.



MTV image

Jersey Shore gains viewers while upsetting many Italian American groups.

MTV's *Jersey Shore* is harmless fun, and it doesn't further any negative stereotypes or over-emphasize any bad behavior. The things happening in the show would happen anywhere when eight strangers live together in a house and get taped for a reality TV show.

Now, you can see people fist pumpin' in public and claiming they invented the hair poof. *Jersey Shore* is a guilty pleasure for anyone. Exit 98, HOLLA!

Spanish Club shares food, friendship

Julie Ling '13

For those who find that they have much spare time when they come home from school, an alternative is to become engaged in after school activities.

Many uninvolved students are simply too lazy to get involved, and it can often seem a lot more relaxing to just get on the bus home. As any club or sport member can validate, becoming a part of school after eighth period can make life at Washington Township High School even more enjoyable.

Individuals who are looking for a fun club to join and are particularly interested in learning about foreign cultures should come to one of the Spanish Club meetings to see if it something of which they would like to be a part.

Everyone is welcome to the Spanish Club; you do not have to take have Spanish as your foreign language course to participate.

They meet monthly after school on scheduled days in K-209. For any questions, you can see the adviser Mrs. Katy Anicic, who is energetic, humorous and exceptionally kind.

Spanish Club is not a demanding club that requires tedious work and input. Instead, they take trips to many places outside of school to taste some aspects of the Spanish traditions, and take part in activities related to Hispanic culture.

Mrs. Anicic describes it as a "social club that enjoys field trips to many Mexican restaurants in South Jersey" and its main purpose is "to expose students to the Hispanic culture."

So far they have visited On the Border, a Mexican restaurant that served various delicious

foods like tacos, enchiladas, salads, and Spanish desserts that the members of the club really enjoyed.

Some other restaurants the Spanish Club may be going to are Don Pablo's, La Esperanza, San Miguel, Mexican Food Factory, Los Amigos, and the end-of-the-year celebration at Taco Bell. Not only is the Spanish Club about eating, but they also do other things such as singing festive Christmas carols for the senior citizens at Cardinal Village, and constructing Hispanic themed floats for parades.

There are always many exciting activities planned for the year.

"Spanish Club is great to be a part of because you're exposed to other cultures while having fun with friends at the same time," said club president, Angela Snyder '10.

A good way to learn more about Hispanic cultures and to experience a great school year with friends is to join the Spanish Club.

Members meet new friends, and find an alternative to the boredom of having nothing to occupy their time after school.

"You're exposed to other cultures while having fun with friends at the same time."

**- Angela Snyder '10
Spanish Club president**

Getting eco-friendly

Christopher Ale '13

If you believe a healthy environment can be achieved through hard work and dedication, than the SAVE club is right for you. SAVE is actually an acronym for "Students Against the Violation of the Earth". The main goal of the save club is to promote environmental protection awareness and create ways to live safer, less wasteful lives.

SAVE club's advisers are the husband and wife team of Mr. Parker and Mrs. Pancari. "[SAVE] should influence the [environmental] decisions students will make here at the school, and then maybe they will think about their wider lives and the impact they actually have." Says Mrs. Pancari.

SAVE has some key students who lead the meetings and bring up topics to discuss. These include Parth Parihar and Beth Burns-Lynch, who are Co-Presidents. More key members include Michael Rettano, who brings up topics to research, and Melaina Wright, who

takes notes and relays them in future meetings.

"I hope that SAVE will be able to reach more people and truly garner enough support to make a lasting change in the way people view the environment." Said Parihar.

One small project they are working on now, is the collection and proper recycling of plastic caps which are type 5 plastic. You may have noticed cardboard collection boxes in the cafeterias for these caps. This is just one very simple way SAVE and the student body can lighten their carbon footprints.

SAVE works on many different projects to encourage the student body to become more eco-friendly.

The club meets every other Thursday in room J-209. If you have any other questions about SAVE or being eco-friendly email the SAVE club at wthtsave@yahoo.com.

The members feel that joining SAVE can be your first step to a healthier, more responsible life.

"I hope that SAVE will ... garner enough support to make a lasting change in the way people view the environment."

-Parth Parihar

Correction

In the November issue's article on the girls cross-country team, "Girls x-country goes distance", sophomore Dina Iacone's name was misspelled and she was erroneously listed as a freshman. Also Dina's name was left out of the listing of the top seven runners on the team.

Our apologies to Dina and the girls' cross-country squad.

- The Editors

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Commentary

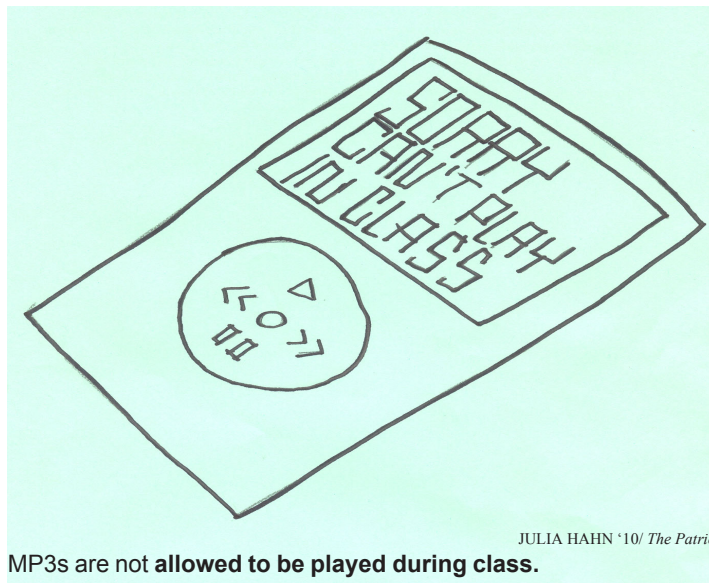
MP3 rules too restrictive

Taylor Vandell '10

At Washington Township High School, the use of most electronic devices is forbidden. Any use of these devices can land you in detention or Saturday school. But one electronic that I do not seem to understand the restrictions on is the MP3.

The use of the MP3 is not and should not be acceptable during a lesson or during tests and quizzes. But during free periods or class work time, I think that listening to music should be accepted. For many people, listening to music is a way to relax, and it even helps some people to concentrate better. Either way, I can honestly say that a large amount of people in this school would agree with the use of MP3s.

There are some teachers who simply don't let their students use their MP3 because when the volume is too loud, it can distract or annoy



JULIA HAHN '10/ The Patriot

MP3s are not allowed to be played during class.

other people. In this situation, the teacher should simply ask the student to turn the volume down, and everyone will be happy. Having the school policy against the MP3 is

a rule that could certainly be changed, if teachers happen to be in favor of it.

I think that having MP3s in the hallways should be allowed as well.

It's possible that if kids listen to music as they walk to class that they would be less tempted to stand around in the halls and chat with their friends. This would result in less crowded hallways, and students would more likely be on time. This is a complaint that many teachers have in this school; students standing around in the halls and students being late to class. Both of these problems could easily be removed by allowing the use of an MP3 during school hours.

I understand that when a student listens to music during a lesson that a teacher will get frustrated and angry with him or her, but when it's down time or independent work time, I believe it would be beneficial for a student to listen to what relaxes them the most. This may in the end make school a little bit less stressful for the students, which would make this school an even better place.

In need of a break

Teachers need to reconsider giving homework over winter vacation

Jenny Gordun '12

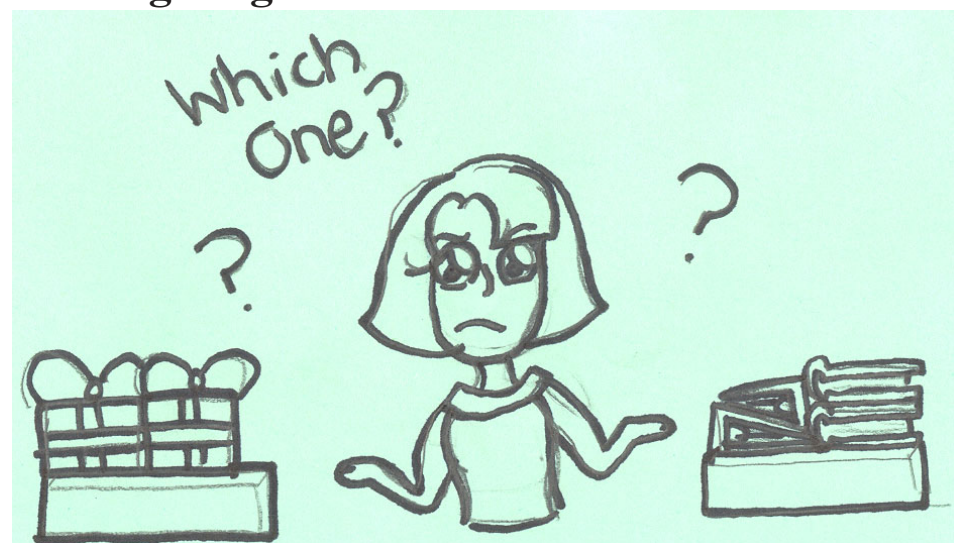
To give homework or not to give homework? That is the question many WTHS teachers will be asking themselves before the winter break starts on Wednesday December 23.

I believe that assigning homework over the break is not only exhausting for students, but it hinders their work more than it helps.

Our winter break is called *break* for a reason. This is a stressful time of year for us students, and the eleven-day holiday that we receive in December is welcomed with open arms as a period to relax, spend time with loved ones, and take a much needed breather.

But with last minute projects to be handed in, assigned readings to be finished, and final tests coming up on the days we return from break, December's title could be changed from, "The Most Wonderful Time of the Year" to "The Most Hectic Time of the Year."

With all the work that teachers try to squeeze in before the break begins, assigning even more work over the break is a complete nightmare for students. The last thing we want to be thinking about during the holidays is the exhausting pile of assignments we have waiting for us in our book bags. I can assure you that many students –



JULIA HAHN '10/The Patriot

Many students at WTHS have homework assigned to them over the holiday breaks.

including myself—would rush through the work, just attempting to get it all finished. "Who cares if it's right, right?"

No students want to be stuck doing math problems or assigned reading on the cherished eleven day break everyone has been waiting for. They'll most likely end up doing half the

problems wrong, or not even pay attention to what they are reading.

This is why I believe that assigning homework over the winter break would be extremely unconstructive. Let the students have some time to themselves, and give them a *break*; everyone needs one every once in a while.

Lifestyles

Fashion

Headbands make casual statement

Chloe Dawson '10

Around the hallways of WTHS you see many girls wearing different style headbands. Some of these headbands have over-sized flowers, bows, or peacock style feathers.

The headbands that are coming to play into fashion have everything from different types or patterns, materials, and widths. You can find some at the store that look like there from the 70's with hanging tassels, or more classy silk headbands even stylish plastic headbands as well.

The flower headbands are intricately designed with studs, zippers, or simply bigger than average size to give it more emphasis on your outfit. Wearing headbands lessons the need for much jewelry to go with your outfit, because the hair accessory is taking most of the

eye's attention away from everything else. When you wear the headband pick stud earrings over chandelier ones, try to keep it simple.

Bows are very flattering for a more feminine approach on an outfit you are wearing. Most of these headbands come in neutral colors like, brown, black, white, and tan.

The bow, like the flower or feathered ones are placed on the side of band and it looks like the object is cocked to the side of your head.

The feathered headband is not a traditional headband like a solid plastic one. Most of these headbands are bigger than usual and are noticeable in color and size. The good thing about these headbands is that you can mix and match with different colors and whatever style of clothing you prefer.



Flickr Image

Headbands are rising in popularity due to their simplicity and wide variety of colors, patterns, and design.

If you have a bad hair day you can always push your hair back or pull it back with a large headband at least about an inch away from your forehead and it will create a very organized look.

If you have a round face, headbands might not be the best thing to wear but wide and thick headbands could help. Instead, what you can do to make it work is wear a detailed headband with a feather or ribbon.

Headbands are there to create light and emphasis on your face and

keeping your hair under control on a bad day. Many stores around town and at the mall sell all types of headbands individually or together in an assorted pack for reasonable prices. You can go with solid colors that can go with an everyday outfit or for a quick fix hair-do and a hooded sweatshirt.

On the other hand, the splashy and funky headbands will catch someone's eye when you walk down the hallway or go out with your friends and turn your hair into an eye-popper.

He said, She said by Luke Verrillo'10 and Sarah Kurtz'10

Relationship chit-chat

In each edition of "He Said, She Said" Luke and Sarah will offer advice on contemporary concerns from both the male and female perspectives. If you have a problem that you would like to share, contact them at...

wthspatriot@gmail.com Attn: Advice

My friend is the "other woman" in a relationship. She's always talking about it and the guy. I feel as though she's wrong, but don't know if I should say anything. Should I?

Dear *concerned friend*,

Everyone has different opinions about cheating so clearly your friend doesn't feel that it's wrong in any way if she's taking part in this love-triangle. But if it truly bothers you to hear about her personal business like that, tell her to keep it to herself. You shouldn't have to sacrifice your friendship over an uncomfortable topic. Remind her, it didn't turn out well for Tiger, so remind her how it'll work for her.

- Sarah

Dear *concerned friend*,

Love triangles are never a good idea, especially in high school. Just read the tabloids. Tell your free-wheeling friend to break it off or else someone is going to get hurt. Affairs never end well and this is no different. But definitely

don't expose it because that's sure to start up a whole mess of problems. Talk to your friend, speak your mind, and let her decide where to take it from there. Hopefully, she'll make the right choice.

- Luke

What is the best way to "come out" of the closet?

Dear *Unsure*,

You should take some time to think about how you're feeling and go from there. "Coming out" is a huge step for a person and only they can figure out for themselves how they can do it. Don't let anyone pressure you and always put your feelings first

- Luke

Dear *Unsure*,

It's not as much what others think of you, it's what you think of yourself. But if it's important to you to have others know than go for it. Try a simple approach of just simply talking to your family and friends and letting them know your true orientation.

- Sarah

How do you find the confidence to talk to the guy you have liked for three years?

Dear *not so confident*,

You don't have forever! High school will

be over before you know it! So just do it! Ask him to hang out just you two, and go on a date already! You don't want to be the one looking back thinking "what if."

- Sarah

Dear *not so confident*,

After three years, you really need to go up and talk to the guy. If you don't, you'll regret it forever. Who cares if you make an idiot out of yourself, it'll be a funny story for later and you'll feel good for having done it. Set up a dinner date at Olive Garden, because when you're there, you're family. Do I hear wedding bells?

-Luke

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Tech Talk

World of Warcraft continues to please

Jessica McFadden '10

There are tons of video games out on the market this year, and they are even more popular than ever.

Whether they are for your computer, Nintendo DS, Xbox, PS3, or any other system you favor, there are games out for everyone!

One game that is popular this holiday season is *World of Warcraft*. Over eight million people play this online game, each trying to defeat the other.

While playing, you can battle other individuals in PvP (Player-versus-Player) combat. There are two servers that offer PvP: a normal one in which you cannot be attacked without giving consent, and the actual player-versus-player server, in which you can be attacked without warning.

When you defeat other players, you gain 'Honor Points', which can be used to buy new equipment, weapons, and mounts. Your points will not go away until you use them

up, so no need to worry about that!

"It's fun to get new armor and to beat the other opponents. The feeling of triumph is overwhelming and knowing that you're better than the other player feels great!" Nick Frank '10.

When you create your character, you start off adventuring into the world and quickly encounter a monster. This will not be the only monster you will have to defeat in the game, nor the biggest.

As you travel across the world, you will experience many new elements of nature, and many different landscapes. But don't be distracted! Monsters of all types are lurking everywhere.

World of Warcraft is not the only game offered. There are two expansion packs so far: *Burning Crusade* and *Wrath of the Lich King* with another *Cataclysm*, scheduled for future release.

With each expansion pack, the level cap increases, and the amount of skills and talents will change, as



CHRIS HALL '10 / The Patriot

These and many more creative characters are one of many reasons this game is popular.

well. As of now, the highest level offered is 80.

You must pay to play, unless you use one of the free ten-day trials. Once that time is up, you must pay a fee that is around \$15 a

month for one, two, and three month packages.

This game is rated T for teen, mostly because of the fighting in the game. Whether you've been playing or starting new, have fun!

Audio books grow in popularity

Nicole Heath '10

The new craze in the literature world is not some new genre. It's not a hot new writer nor a new form of writing. The new craze that has people of all ages and cultures rushing online or to their local library is audiobooks.

Audiobooks are whole novels, poems, or any other written form that has been spoken and recorded for a listening audience.

While in the past audiobooks were seen as a way for the blind or seeing impaired to be exposed to novels, now they are reaching all readers.

The accessibility of these audiobooks have rapidly increased. Bookstores, online sites, and even the iTunes app store offer a variety of different audiobooks. Most bookstores have them, and online sites such as simplyaudiobook.com and learnoutloud.com offer free versions of classical books.

Their popularity stems from



flickr image

Audiobooks are now offered in most public, highschool, and college libraries

the ability to multitask. Readers can clean their house, drive a car, jog and still be able to get through their novel. Students have the ability to read their English novel while doing homework for another class.

Though cassettes are still made, the CDs serve as the most popular form of audiobooks. Many find that they travel more easily to bring than the actual book. For the ultimate convenience people can simply

import the audio files for their mp3 player.

Not only do audiobooks allow listeners the freedom to multitask, but they reach an audience who would seldom pick up an actual book. Those who are find themselves bored by staring at a page full of words, are intrigued with the liveliness the voice of those who dictate the story. Publishing companies elicit both Broadway and Hollywood actors such as Derek Jacobi and Keith David, to lend their voice to a novel. These professionals bring the characters to life, engrossing some who would be dulled by a page of words.

The WTHS IMC has dozens of books on cassette, CD, and on play-away, a small individual mp3 player. WTHS has also acquired the Over Drive Media which offers hundreds of audiobooks that range from Stephenie Meyer's *New Moon* to classics like Dicken's *Bleak House*, and even to advice books like *The Idiot's Guide to...* series.

Report cards better as hard copies

Meghan DeSimone '10

Students in all school levels know the significance of report cards. It can be the paper that parents stick on the fridge, or the paper that gets you punishments. Although all parents are different, they all do rely on our reports to update them.

This year, report cards are no longer sent home by mail, now its by e-mail. Everyone now knows the new plan Washington Township has put into play.

Yes, you could say this new plan is much healthier for the environment, but is it right thing to take it off the mailing list? Out of all the letters taken off, does it have to be the most important to students?

Most teenage students aren't going to update their guardian on the amount of homework missing or failed tests. That doesn't mean all students are irresponsible. It's just that even the best students may not update regularly. All year long students and parents alike await the letter in the mail addressed to, "The parents of so and so". But now that feelings gone. Many parents

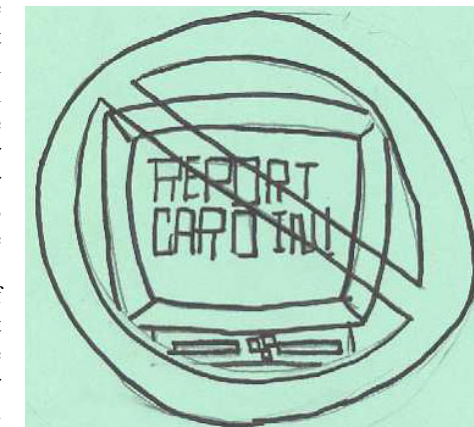
have no idea what the students passwords are, or even what the power school is. Most rely on report cards.

Although parents do see their child's grades, they probably don't know how to access it themselves. Also the main reason alone she actually got on the website was because I brought it up. As a student who gets decent grades, I had no problem showing her. This raises a question of how the students with academics below average would react. Who would voluntarily show their parents if they don't already know how to enter the website? The parents' inexperience with this set-up could save them momentarily from the eventual punishment.

Environmentally, this new course of action is the beginning of many very important steps this school can take. But, that is not the only important element to think about. With our generation we were raised on computers, cell phones, and the basic knowledge of technology.

Our parents though, with some exception, are a different story all together. I seriously doubt that parents are seeing the grades on the online system.

Having a system of doing things for years, to be suddenly changed to a completely new set-up, and thrown out there. Some parents might not be onboard. I believe this program could use some altering.



JULIA HAHN '10 / The Patriot

As of the 2009 - 2010 school year, report cards are only visible through PowerSchool.

Sparknotes: the solution, not the problem

Nicole Heath '10

It's eight o'clock. You're twelve hours and 200 pages away from taking your eighty question test on Huckleberry Finn. What do you do?

Ignore your math, history, and French homework, like you did cleaning your room, and try to plough through the pages of your book, knowing there is now way you're going to finish.

Or, do you go to your computer, type in Spark notes, and look up your novel name? There you'd read the chapter summaries, take the practice quiz, and study the key symbols and motifs and still have enough time to conquer your French work.

Most students have found themselves in such a situation and learned that the second method is the best. Though the idea of looking to the internet for schoolwork may make some teachers cringe, it's a great solution when time is running out. With little time and lots of work, a student could not justify spending all their efforts on one subject.

Most students won't be able to read every line of a 500 page novel. Students have more than one subject, and some even have sports,

clubs, jobs, and community groups to occupy them. These heavy workloads, are problematic.

When colleges ask for a 'well rounded student' they want students who have academically challenging courses as well as extracurricular activities. All this means a time consuming schedule. If a student decides to use cliff notes, it doesn't reflect poorly on the student.

Other students find themselves only capable of reading a few chapters of the novel, and

going online for general summary of the rest. Would not a teacher or any instructor prefer their students to at least get a general sense of the whole novel rather than every detail of only a quarter of it?

This is the choice that many students face when given thick novels and only a week to get through it. There is nothing wrong with reducing the amount of text with Spark notes.

The great fear that students will put down the novel

all together can be put to rest.

Summaries on Spark notes may be shorter than the novel, but they are in no way short. A student that don't bother to read a page of the novel, will be the last to read and study the paragraphs online. Those who utilize these sites are usually students who have read chunks of the novel, but do not have the time to read it in its entirety.

Though nothing can completely substitute for the text, online summaries such as spark notes remain a viable tool for students.

The Patriot

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Odds & Ends

Seasonal fun a short trip away

PA and NY offer holiday treats

Chloe Dawson '10

If you are having a hard time getting into the spirit of the season, two places that are sure to put you in the holiday mood are less than three hours away, Longwood Gardens and Rockefeller Center.

Longwood Gardens is located in Kennel Square, Pennsylvania with seemingly over 1050 acres of beautiful flowers, trees, and greenhouses decorated with every plant possible. Every season, the ground keepers have flowers looking perfect. The gardens have intricate designs with swirls and twirls. During Christmas time the Gardens decorates almost every plant and tree with Christmas lights.

When visiting make sure you have a scarf, gloves, and a heavy jacket. The majority of the time you will find yourself outside gazing at the variety of color lights and trees they have.

The first thing that might catch your eye is the water show they have. You can either sit down enjoy the show or keep moving. The water show is some what like the water in Las Vegas. The water is in sync with Christmas music and is specially lit too. The show is about three to four minutes long and replays about every ten minutes. If the weather is colder than 32 degrees, they shut

down the show for the night.

After the water show you will find your self to looking at the Christmas lights as if you were a little kid again. Walk the paths to different observatories you will find all types of people sharing the same common interest as you have, the happiness that Christmas brings. Little kids break free of their parent's hands and run free under the huge lit snowflakes that hang from the trees. Couples walk hand and hand bundled up in their favorite scarves and jackets. The cold winter night will go by fast as you are struck by how someone can make flowers and trees become so pretty and festive. Longwood gardens is family fun and also romantic.

New York City takes on a different dimension during the holidays. An easy, fun, and inexpensive way to get into the city is by the train. There are multiple train stations in northern New Jersey that you can take. The price for a round trip, from Trenton to New York, is twenty dollars. The train ride is an hour and half and lets you off only about three blocks from Rockefeller Center. As you come up from the subway you will hear the bustle and blare of the New York taxi horns.

When you start to approach Rockefeller Center the streets and

sidewalks start to become overly crowded and spilling out into the streets so hold tightly on to your belongings and grab a hold of a hand to stick together. Your eyes will be struck as you turn the final corner and see the tree is stringed with 78,000 lights. People not just from the United States but all around the world come to take pictures with this iconic symbol of New York City Christmas.

Children being carried on their father's shoulders and toddlers being pushed in strollers lean up to get a glimpse. Not only does viewing the tree make entertainment and enjoyment but the ice skating rink down under the street does as well. The rink is crowded with children and people attempting to do figure eights in the ice.

You can walk around the three and snap pictures of glide around the ice with friends and family which ever you chose Rockefeller Center won't let you down. Once you're done, you can stroll the rest of what New York has to offer during the holiday season. Radio City and Times Square are less than ten blocks away.

Longwood Gardens and Rockefeller Center brings enjoyment to all different ages and walks of life not only during Christmas but every season.

Sharing Xmas customs

Julia Hahn '10

Christmas is a time of year that people love to spend with their family. It's a time where they come together and celebrate a holiday full of food, laughter, and traditions. Although the holiday season is filled with repeated customs, there are some families who celebrate things a little different.

Every year, when my family puts up the tree, we hang it upside down. It's a fun thing we do every year that makes us feel different and it's always a challenge to do.

-Deanna Canalicchio '10

When my family puts up all my lights, a friend of mine will come by when my parents are gone and switch around a light up seal and polar bear in weird positions. He did it four or three times last year.

-Kevin Coroneos '10

My family sets up this calendar for all the days of Christmas with little pockets for each day. On every morning there is a little gift in the pocket of the day and my parents always used to tell us that a little elf brought it from Santa's workshop.

- Chelsea Earley '10

On Christmas Eve, in addition to putting out the cookies and milk for Santa, my parents always had my brothers and sisters put out carrots on the front lawn for Santa's reindeer. We used to put a little red mark on the one that was meant for Rudolph.

- Alexa Simone '11

My dad's sisters live in a different time zone than us and Christmas morning actually comes earlier for them than it does for us. So every year we open up the presents from them on Christmas Eve, to symbolize that they're celebrating it with us.

- John Marolodo '12

Boat House Row, a local landmark

Andrew Gerber '13

Many enjoy seeing lights strung on the houses of the famous Boathouse Row in Philadelphia, PA. The tradition of putting lights up on the boathouses started in 1979 when the then unloved boathouses were in need of repair. They suffered from so much decay that the city was considering of tearing them down, despite their more than century-long history. Raymond Grenald, a designer of lights for buildings at the time, proposed to install lights on the frame of the boathouses, in hopes of raising public awareness

and appreciation of them.

Grenald's strategy must have worked—today the boathouses are occupied by the crew teams of major universities, such as the University of Pennsylvania, and they have been renovated to show off all of their Victorian glory.

The row is a National Historic Landmark and it also has been added to the National Register of Historic Places. The lights were replaced twice, but remained as incandescent light bulbs until 2005, when more energy efficient LED lights were installed. These new lights change colors, allowing the lights to adapt

to and reflect the time of year. The boathouses have spread Philadelphia's name all throughout the rowing world. The row of houses were came into existence to serve the recreational needs of Philadelphians. The houses not only serve a purpose for beautiful Christmas lights but a major center for rowing and bringing fame to the Philadelphia area.

Thanks to Raymond Grenald, who wanted to save Boathouse Row from demolition, the public now can enjoy the structures at night, like glowing gingerbread houses across the Schuylkill River.

Comics

