

Turf Wars

By: Alex Greco

You play on them. You run on them. You walk on them to raise money for various causes. What are they? North Shore High School's track and field. To the naked eye, everything about them looks normal; there are no visible problems. However, the track and field are in severe disrepair and their potential disintegration has placed an unwelcome blip on the District's financial radar screen.

On December 3rd, 2009, the Board of Education, along with community members, met to discuss the issue of the athletic track and field. After receiving a report by John Hall, the District's Facilities Director, a quick consensus was made that the track and field were quickly deteriorating and that one way or another, they would need to be fixed in the near future. Specifics of this plan, such as the type of material that would be used on the field, were also discussed. Trustee Amy Beyer urged that the necessary repairs be done, "sooner [rather] than later."

The proposed new track and field are not cheap; the total installation would cost around three million dollars. Some residents, however, feel that the project is worth the money because of its benefits to the High School's extra-curricular activities and sports programs, while more fiscally conservative residents see it as a flat-out waste of taxpayer money.

"[It]...seems to me that people always want to have the best, 'bells and whistles'" said resident Richard Beck at the December Board meeting. He is a resident from Glenwood Landing who claims to have lived in the community for over thirty years. "Education is the primary focus here, not athletics," asserted Beck.

Early opponents of installing a new athletic track and field include residents who live near the high school, whose *bête noir* is the concept of large, industrial lights blazing from 5pm to 11pm at night. The Town of Oyster Bay approached the Board to look into the idea of building a field in coordination with the District. This jointly-owned field would have the detested lights and after a great deal of community backlash, the concept was put away as unfeasible. While a field with lights is no longer the community's main focus, some issues with the Board's plans still remain.

The Board has made it very clear that the repairs to the track are more than necessary. The track is built over asphalt, which is the same material that is used when building roads. Like all roads, the track has a limited lifespan due to the nature of its construction because asphalt deteriorates over time. While the condition of the track is not as bad as was previously anticipated, it is still in need of repair. Also, maintaining the current track and field adds about \$18,000 to the District's annual budget.

Some community members fear, however, that North Shore's athletic program is suffering and will continue to suffer if the necessary changes are not made to the track and field. During the December Board meeting, Trustee Carolyn Genovesi raised a concern over the future of the Cross Country team, noting that it is ranked thirteenth in the country and questioned, "If this [the repairs] fails...where are we with that team?"

The field has also has its fair share of problems. It's made of grass and has the tendency to form puddles due to drainage problems which sometimes hold off valuable practices that are needed by the teams.

Community member Brian Janelli also noted that with the current state of the field, field hockey players, "couldn't compete" and resident Gwyn Lennon of Sea Cliff told Board members, "...it's really handicapping our field hockey."

Isabella Ahrens, a sophomore and varsity field hockey player at the High School, explained how the field handicaps players. "When we play... we're a lot slower than other teams... We're at a huge disadvantage." Don Lang, the District's Athletic Director, explained students' and parents' frustration with the current field. He states that if the school built an artificial turf field, the players would have a flat surface to move on, allowing for a "faster game." He also notes that the ball "rolls smoothly" on the artificial turf, unlike on the grass. Taking on the issue of practice time, Mr. Lang said, "It will enable us to practice almost every day of the year." The prospect of more frequent practices is a good one for many athletically-oriented residents, yet many health-conscious community members are also concerned about the proposed material which is going to be used in creating the athletic field.

According to a "fact sheet" published in 2007 by the Connecticut Department of Health, certain chemicals in the rubber material used in artificial turf have proven to be "toxic or carcinogenic...when tested on laboratory animals." It also notes that athletes are at the highest risk of exposure to these chemicals because of their "high ventilation rate." Another report published in May 2008 by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene echoes these concerns. It states that crumb rubber found in certain kinds of turf fields contain COPC's (Chemicals Of Potential Concern) such as Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC's) and Polycyclic

Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAH's). According to the report, "PAHs have caused organ damage and cancer in animals" while VOC's, "are a mixture of chemicals that can cause eye, nose, throat and skin irritation, nervous system effects and organ damage." The idea of these chemicals being around students and community members is frightening; however, the report notes that despite this, the presence of these chemicals does not necessarily result in harm.

"We will have to address members of the community...who have health concerns" said Board President Igor Webb. A hybrid field, a concept proposed by some Board members, would use a significantly lower amount of the potentially harmful rubber material and would be a mix of grass and rubber. As of the December meeting however, no decision has been made about the kind of substance that is going to be put in the field.

Overall, paying for the new track and field will be a challenge. With a hefty estimated sum of around three million dollars, planning how to obtain and spend this money will not be easy. Adding such an amount to a school budget would mean a large tax increase of approximately 3% to 4% for residents and due to the country's current financial state, it is highly likely that such a budget would be voted down. Being placed on a contingency budget could mean teacher cuts, bigger class sizes and a generally poorer classroom experience for students in the District. The Board, seeing a potential financial dystopia ahead, is working hard to avoid this. Ideas such as gaining sponsors that would help pay for the new facilities as well as applying for state grants were tossed around. For now, it seems as if the District wants to ensure that the local taxpayer does not have to bear the burden of building a new track and field.

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Gay Marriage And New York State: Will They Ever Go Hand-in-Hand?

Liberty and Justice For All?

By: Jordana Filippi

December 2nd, 2009: Things were looking bright in Albany, New York, where New York Senators gathered to vote for or against a bill that would legalize same-sex marriages in New York. With a State Assembly dominated by liberal Democrats, gay-rights advocates were sure the bill would pass. However, with a 38-24 vote, New York State rejected the Same-Sex Marriage Bill thus, proving that some people, no matter how liberal, are still not ready to fully accept other people's differences.

The decision to not legalize the Gay Marriage Bill was a huge loss for New York considering that, according to a 2007 census by the Williams Institute, New York has the second largest gay population in the United States with 46,490 recorded couples. California, which allowed gay marriage and later repealed its gay-marriage bill, has the most recorded gay couples with a staggering 92,138 couples. Meanwhile, the five states that have passed the same-sex marriage bill (Connecticut, Massachusetts, Iowa, Vermont, and New Hampshire), have a combined total of only 32,819 recorded gay couples. So why is it that these five states have passed this bill while New York has not and yet clearly has a need to?

In reality, the issue of gay marriage stretches far beyond New York and it is a nation-wide issue. In 1996, the Defense of Marriage Act, DOMA, was passed. DOMA says that no state needs to recognize same-sex marriage as a legitimate marriage, and that legally, a gay couple's children are illegitimate. With this act, the federal government gives a clear definition of what a real marriage is: A legal union between one man and one woman. With so many shades of gray in this diverse country, why is it considered constitutional to make such a "black and white" bill like DOMA? DOMA strips gay couples of over 130 federal rights that are acquired through marriage. Some of these rights include joint tax filing, which reduces a couple's income tax, domestic violence protection, and right of survivorship, which gives a surviving spouse legal rights to property and money after their husband/wife passes away. Gay couples also do not have any legal hospital visitation rights when their significant other is ill.

The Fourteenth Amendment of our Constitution states that, "No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property." With 44 states, including New York, that have not yet legalized same-sex marriage, Americans are indeed depriving a plethora of their fellow citizens from having true freedom, thus proving that there really is no, "liberty and justice for all."

Source:

1. <http://www.domawatch.org/index.php>

January 2010

Blurred Vision

By: Gregory O'Rourke

We all have learned about the cold and jagged line of segregation in the 1960's, and the fierce hoses that were turned upon those who challenged it. Hopefully, we have all heard of Stonewall; a gay bar in New York City was raided by police officers because of anti-sodomy laws; after being savagely beaten, the oppressed organized a riot outside of the bar in order to defend themselves. However, recently, it has been the prerogative of New York State to deny equal rights to homosexuals on the basis of ignorant people's irrational fear. This disgusting and segregationist denial of human rights will not stand without fierce opposition from all people who support freedom and equality, whether they are gay or straight.

New York, a state which prides itself as being "tolerant," followed in the footsteps of Maine and California late this November. After the debacle of Prop 8, where lies were spewed about homosexuals, the New York Senate voted down a gay marriage bill. Republican Tom Libous said, "I just don't think the majority cares too much about it at this time because they're out of work..."³ Mr. Libous apparently does not realize that this Union we have forged cannot be a union of any perfection until all of its citizens have equal rights. This "separate but equal" concept Mr. Libous thinks is okay for gays is no different from the Jim Crow laws for blacks.

Being a genetic phenomenon, it is unjust and unconstitutional to deny homosexuals equal rights. The Fourteenth Amendment, which grants citizens equal protection under the law, must be applied to homosexuals.⁵ If heterosexuals have the right to be married, the right to see their husband or wife when he/she is sick in the hospital, the right to receive his/her husband or wife's insurance benefits, and the right to have the same chance as the rest of us, we must extend these same rights to homosexuals. To discriminate against a genetic group is no different from ethnic oppression, which so many are willing to openly scorn.

It appears as though those who oppose gay rights want to eliminate the separation of church and state that is outlined in the First Amendment.⁶ Representatives such as Michelle Bachman, Steve King, and Randy Forbes, openly oppose gay marriage on the basis of religion which shows the unconstitutional basis for their views. To those who attribute the denial of gay rights to "democracy," it is not right by any standard to put human rights up to a popular vote; if we did, slavery would still exist. To those who support "equal"

"civil unions," you support something separate, but equal, which is the same bigoted rhetoric of segregation. Furthermore, is it not enough that two people love each other? Heterosexual couples sometimes get divorced after only days of being married and homosexual couples who have been together for years and would take their marriage vows seriously are not even being given a chance. Goodness knows the number of sham marriages that have come from this intolerance of the love we should all value.

It is a positive thing that our school is getting involved with these issues, as shown by the recent production of *The Laramie Project* and an assignment that students in the Senior Program, ACS, had to complete in which they had to write letters to their state senators. Mr. Schiff, a teacher of the class, believes, "every generation-if they're lucky, has a great civil rights struggle they deal with, and we believe this is yours, and we don't want you standing at the sidelines." So I- we -all stand here, not on a question of gay or straight, but on a question of freedom and love. You might be wondering- if I'm not gay, why do I care so much about those who are? Simply put, when there are some groups of people that are not free, none of us are. I would not have considered myself free in the forties during internment, nor in the fifties during segregation. The hope, the ember of hope is, that one day, people of every creed, every race, every gender, every ethnicity, every sexuality, can stand together, all equal, all free, and do what Dr. King so beautifully did those infamous years ago: quote the words: "free at last, free at last, Thank God almighty, we are free at last!"

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5 <http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/data/constitution/amendment14/>

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"If They're Going to Drink..."

By: Holly Mandel

The Viking View would like to applaud the North Shore parent who wrote to Superintendent of Schools Dr. Edward Melnick after this person's thirteen-year-old child was served alcohol by local parents at a Halloween house party in 2009. Even those familiar with the lasting, detrimental effects of underage drinking may be unaware of the role that social hosts, adults who allow minors to drink in their private residences, have in fueling teen consumption of alcohol. Additionally, recent events demonstrate that not all North Shore adults are aware of Nassau County's Social Host Law.

In July 2007, Nassau County adopted Local Law 13 in response to what it called, "an immediate threat to the public health, safety, and welfare" of its residents.¹ This law banned adults from knowingly allowing minors, other than their own children, to consume alcohol in their homes, making an exception for religious ceremonies. If convicted, first and second time offenders are subject to fines, and a third offense can result in up to a year in jail. Enforcement is certainly lenient, but this kind of law is not unusual; while New York is not among the states that ban social hosting, Suffolk County passed a similar law in December 2007.²

Despite these measures, parents and other adults in this community continue to serve alcohol to minors. One of the most common misconceptions about underage drinking helps explain this otherwise baffling reality. Many parents believe that minors will use alcohol whether or not they themselves supply it, and that if teenagers are going to drink, it is better for them to do so in the presence of adults. Both of the assumptions are misguided. Studies have shown, perhaps not surprisingly, that restricting minors' access to alcohol reduces the prevalence of underage drinking. Additionally, research indicates that house parties - including those furnished by adults - are the primary source of alcohol for minors and lead to the heaviest drinking. Even if hosts take measures to ensure their guests' safety, these steps cannot prevent the drunk driving, fighting, sexual assault, vandalism, and other problems that often result from alcohol abuse. One study found that the largest portion of underage drivers arrested for driving under the influence became intoxicated at a house party or private residence.³

It is our hope that local adults will stop contributing to North Shore's serious underage drinking problem by no longer supplying minors with alcohol. We sympathize with the outrage and sense of betrayal felt by parents who learn that their children have become intoxicated in the presence of other parents. Some adults may genuinely believe that allowing minors to drink under their supervision prevents more dangerous behavior, but the evidence indicates that the opposite is true: the ready availability of alcohol at house parties contributes to some of the greatest dangers of underage drinking. Any serious consideration of these risks makes it clear that there can be no excuse for giving alcohol to minors.

¹ "Social Host Law." Nassau County NY. Nassau County Office of Consumer Affairs. 12 December 2009. <nassaucountyny.gov/agencies/OCA/SocialHostLaw.html>.

² "Suffolk County Exec. Signs Social Host Law." WCBS 31 December 2007. 12 December 2009 <wcbs880.com/Suffolk-County-Exec-Signs-Social-Host-Law/1409709>.

³ "Holding Adults Accountable for Underage Drinking at House Parties through Social Hosts." PublicStrategies. The Archs Institute. 12 December 2009 <publicstrategies.org/PDF/20091015_Social_Host_While_Paper_Final_R3.pdf>.

Just Book It

By: Sarah Manzone

Reading; it's not something many students look forward to. When most high school students think about picking up a book, they think about the boredom that comes with it. They think about wasted time, or they think about all of the things they could instead use that time to be doing. Students have many other ways these days to be entertained that do not include sitting down and reading a book. The concept of reading a book may seem outdated, but the idea of reviving reading just for the love of it, rather than because it's required by a teacher, seems necessary.

Reading in school may create stress or a greater unwillingness to read, but it does allow us to gain a greater comprehension when it comes to understanding the structure of a book; it also encourages a love of reading. If a teacher learns the dynamic of her class, when it comes time for her to pick a non-required reading book, she can make a selection that is tailored to suit the likes of this class. Teachers are constantly making an effort to create an environment that supports reading because it is the basis of knowledge. In many books we find valuable life lessons, morals, and values. The reader can also pick up a broader vocabulary, or he may find that he relates to a character in the book. When books are relatable, they become interesting on a whole new level. Reading can take a person to a different world. When the readers can immerse themselves in a book, then the author has done an exemplary job.

However, this love of reading does not exist much on the high school level. The revival of reading though is possible through the selection of books that comply with each individual student's interests. Unfortunately, this type of structure is not very likely in most classrooms. Some

students may like one book, while others do not. Also, some students feel that being graded on how well they know a book "sucks the fun" out of reading. Others feel that a written test doesn't really test one's knowledge of a book. While our high school English class experience is molded around the acknowledgement of certain literary elements, perhaps a focus on just reading would create more of a love for it.

All students and teachers need to keep in mind that there is a book for every individual, whether it be a war story, a vampire story or a high school story. The recognition of a reader's interests, likes, and dislikes can help in the selection of a book that suits her. The love of reading is something that has to be developed in one's own time; it cannot be forced. However, reading is timeless and books will most certainly always exist. They are one of the best things a teenager can turn to turn to on a rainy day. They bring groups of people together, raise new ideas, or create controversy. They allow the reader to tap into another world and to learn more about our world. They allow the reader to learn about society as a whole and they allow the reader to learn about history, or individuals that have had an impact on the world as we know it.

Having many books "under one's belt" adds to a person's conversational skills and knowledge bank. A great feeling of accomplishment comes with tearing through a book in one day because it is just that enjoyable. We all need time to ourselves, and reading is the perfect tool to help us escape, relax and learn.



The Printed Word Is Leaving Its Mark On At Least Some Of Us

By: Alex Steinman

As more advances are being made on the technology front, the print media may be faced with a traumatic future. Publications such as newspapers, magazines, and books, cherished for their authenticity and readability, are slowly falling into the abyss of the digital era we are currently stationed in. All of the print media that is available to purchase in its original form are being obtained through numerous digital mediums such as the internet, cell phones, and the kindle, just to name a few. While these pieces of technology are convenient due to their accessibility, they pose a threat to the English language.

Social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter also offer the expectation of brevity and quickness when it comes to casual conversation. North Shore High School teachers, Mr. Perles and Mr. Schiff, possess their individual concerns about the advancement in technology. Mr. Perles believes that, "narrowing the language people talk can narrow the depths of people's conversations." As a result, contemplation and introspection are lost due to brevity and conciseness. "If people respond fast, they don't

always respond well," Mr. Perles added. Mr. Schiff believes that the internet is, "forcing people to read each other's work, leading to people rewriting what other people say instead of actual thought." He also believes that, "prints aren't going anywhere," whereas Mr. Perles is skeptical that technology will change us dramatically like people say, but he does believe that the print media is disappearing and technology will bring about its death."

The accessibility of conversation via the internet and other technological devices comes at a cost because there is a loss of face-to-face conversation. It is true that social networking sites bring people together socially when they aren't able to chat in person, but this is bad for our culture. There is an expectation that the internet is a tool for convenience and a place where one can share his thoughts candidly without being scrutinized in person. However, relying on these pieces of technology will radically change our culture and the print media; along with that, the English language just may lose the beauty that it currently exhibits.

"New York, New York. It's A Hell Of A Town"

By: Gregory Knox

In 1919, Harry Frazee, the owner of the Boston Red Sox, let the New York Yankees have Babe Ruth for \$125,000. With the arrival of Ruth also came the arrival of one of the oldest and fiercest rivalries in American professional sports. However, the rivalry between the cities of New York and Boston did not start when Babe Ruth became a Yankee. The rivalry between these two cities goes way back, to even before the American Revolution took place.

Before America was its own independent nation, New York and Boston, as cities, shared a heated rivalry. According to Wikipedia.org, for more than a century, from the 1700's into the 1800's, Boston was regarded as the educational, cultural and artistic power in the United States. Boston was America's closest port to Europe, which made it a center for trade. Boston was also home to many top schools including the elite Harvard University. During the same time-frame, New York was looked down upon as Boston's over-populated, dirty cousin.

New York however, soon gained the economic edge over Boston thanks to the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825. Along with the economic power, New York enjoyed a growth spurt in the manufacturing, shipping, insurance and financial services businesses. By the beginning of the 1900's, New York was the center of American capitalism, especially on Wall Street.

With some "rivalry" out the way, let's fast forward a century and a decade to the current year, 2010. The rivalry between Boston and New York is still a major topic of debate, without even including the Red Sox and the Yankees. Both cities, without question, are respectable places that have a number of things to brag about. Boston is a great city, but despite this, there just doesn't seem to be any comparison to New York. According to Wikipedia.org, New York is a global hub in economics and is now one of the three "command centers" for world economics; London and Tokyo are the other two. It is also a leader in worldwide commerce, finance, culture, fashion, and entertainment. New York is the largest media market in North America (followed by Los Angeles, Chicago, and Toronto). The city of New York is the most populous city and the most densely populated city in America with a total population exceeding 8.3 million people, blowing out the second place city, Los Angeles, by over four million people; this makes it the 13th most populated city on the planet. Also, New York's high population comes with a

surprisingly low crime rate. Since 2005, New York has had the lowest crime rate among the 25 largest cities in America. During a time when the violent crime rate rose across the entire country, New York's violent crime rate decreased by more than 75% between 1993 and 2005. Also, let's not forget about the world famous New York accent. Although Bostonians have an accent as well, "Brooklynese" or "New Yorkese" is one of the most recognizable accents in the English language with pronunciations like "'New Yawk'" for New York, and "Joizey" for Jersey.

Bostonians do like to argue about how their city and their teams are better than New York's. The only thing Boston has on New York though is that it is cleaner and less crowded than New York, but trying to compare a Boston to a New York is a one-sided argument. New York is in a class of cities with London, Tokyo, Rome, and Madrid, all of which are the most populous cities in their respective countries. Boston is in a class with Seattle, Denver, Washington D.C., and Milwaukee. Just look at the nicknames: New York is the "Empire City" and Boston is the "Hub." To try to compare Boston to New York is like trying to compare a Toyota to a Mercedes, or Nintendo to an Xbox 360.

New York: "City that Never Sleeps," "Big Apple," "The City," "The Empire City"
Boston: "Beantown," "Hub," "The Walking City," "The Cradle of Liberty"

New York: Pizza, Bagels
Boston: Baked Beans, Clam Chowder

New York: 9/11
Boston: Boston Tea Party

New York: Billy Joel, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Aaliyah, Carmelo Anthony, Larry Brown, Sean Combs (P. Diddy), Robert De Niro, Duke Ellington, Lady Gaga, Lou Gehrig, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Theodore Roosevelt
Boston: Samuel Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Paul Revere, Samuel Morse, Edgar Allan Poe, Tony Amonte, Bobby Brown, George H.W. Bush, Dane Cook, Patrick Ewing, Tom Glavine, Jay Leno, Bill Russell, Touré

New York: Central Park, Statue of Liberty, Empire State Building
Boston: New State House, Paul Revere House, Bunker Hill, Beacon Hill, Boston Tea Party Ship and Museum

New York: St. Patrick's Cathedral
Boston: Trinity Church



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Back It On Up

By: Katie Mattner

In a social setting there is an invisible line that represents personal space. It is an imperative rule that this line shall not be crossed at any time while holding a conversation with someone. Much to the world's dismay, this social etiquette technique is not followed by the entire human race.

Ariel Leve states in her "Cassandra Articles" which can be found on Timeonline.com that, "Unless I'm about to kiss you, there is no other reason to be that close." For those "close-talkers" who believe that practically touching noses with someone while talking will deliver a greater message, it does not. In fact, your plan to create a greater impact backfires! How is a person able to carry out a conversation while he/she is distracted by thoughts of when he/she should hold his/her breath out of fear that he/she will smell the close-talker's lunch breath or get some spit on his/her face?

A report from *Nature Neuroscience* states that close-talking relates to having lesions in a part of the brain known as the amygdale. This part of the brain involves the processing of emotional and social information that could be linked with having no concept of personal space. Close-talking could be linked to culture, past experience or even a lack of awareness when it comes to picking up on social cues.

So to all of you close talkers, remember the rule: if I can feel your

breath on my face and we are not romantically involved, you need to back up at least a foot. For the victims of close-talkers, here are some techniques that eHow.com provides in order to help you avoid the sting:

1. Be unapproachable. A chronic close-talker will single out individuals who will not shield themselves.
2. When approached, do not lean away; lean in. Those who shrink away just encourage the close-talker to get closer.
3. During the conversation, take a step forward and see if the close-talker leans back. This will give you a clue as to how aware the other person is of physical space issues.
4. Be polite. If you have to tell the close-talker to back off, do it calmly.
5. For extreme "close-talkers," conventional methods may not work. Try making your voice louder, leaning close to or away from the person or distracting him or her from a monologue. If all else fails, involve others in your conversation and quickly work your way out of the circle.

The show *Seinfeld* even found it necessary to warn people against "close-talkers." In one episode when Elaine dates Aaron, she finally admits to her friends why he bothers her so much. In a conversation with Jerry she says, "You know what drove me crazy about him? Did you ever notice that he stood too close to you when he talked?" Even a person who is romantically involved with a close talker finds it to be an annoying trait.

Space is a beautiful thing, so respect it! Keep your friends and significant others; back it up!



Texting Gone Bad

By: Cassidy Kakaounakis

Before cell phones existed, a high school student communicated with his/her friends by passing notes across the room or in the hallways. Well, that method has gone by the wayside. Teens now text...like crazy. So much so, that texting has begun to take over their lives and whether they know it or not, interfere with their daily activities and even quite possibly, their reputations.

"Sexting" has become a part of the lives of many young adults. This is when their cell phones are used to send sexually-explicit texts to one another or even photos. What many of the senders of these types of texts do not realize however, is that what seems like harmless flirtation, is not. If the recipient of the text chooses to save these messages, he/she can and then he/she can later send them to whomever he/she wants without the original sender's knowledge. Teenagers are often too trusting of one another, especially when it comes to the people they are dating at the time. However, this naive way of thinking must end before it's too late personally-speaking or legally-speaking.

Besides "sexting," teenagers are using their cell phones to text at the wrong times. Here at North Shore, as this writer is sure applies to almost every other high school on Long Island, students text during class-time when they should in fact be paying attention to the lessons that are being taught. Whether they do it out in the open or underneath their desk, this act is not only rude and distracting to the teacher and the texter's classmates, but it is also distracting to the texter him/herself. The same applies to texting while driving. It is just a given as to how dangerous engaging in that behavior is. And for the record, what could one possibly be writing that is so important that it must be sent at the most inopportune times. The texter is not only risking his/her own life, but the lives of those around him/her.

Finally, when a teenager sits down for a meal with friends or family, the cell phone should be no where near him/her. This is a time to engage in ACTUAL HUMAN CONTACT. The text message can wait because quite honestly, it just can't compete with that.

Overall, if none of the above is sinking in and you still don't know when it's not the right time to text, just remember "The Golden Rule:" Do unto others as you would want done unto you.

The Rules Of The Boys' Bathroom...In Case You Did Not Know

By: Sarah McNulty

Since a girl's middle school years, she has heard stories and rumors about the "rules of the Boy's Bathroom." She listens as boys share their awkward encounters with other students, faculty and staff, which could have been avoided if every boy/man adhered to the proper Men's Public Bathroom Etiquette.

So what are these rules? One is: "You can't use the urinal in the middle; only use the ones on the ends. If the ends are taken, either wait on line or use a stall," states Nico

Schinco, a Junior. However, going to a stall when urinals are available might make people assume something. That's why this activity should only be engaged in when the bathroom is extremely busy. Ryan Kianofsky, a Junior, adds though that the aforementioned, "rule does not apply if there are dividers between urinals." These dividers add more privacy while one does his "business."

Other "laws" of the Men's Bathroom include, according to Giovanni

Grella, a Junior, "No talking while you're at the urinal peeing." Another student commented, "It's always awkward when a teacher comes in; some," states Alex Greco, a Junior, "tend not to not obey the 'don't use the middle urinal rule.'"

Also, one needs to be aware that in co-ed bathrooms such as those found in certain colleges, new rules apply. According to the www.listafterlist.com article, "Men's Bathroom Etiquette and Toilet Stall Rules," a guy in a co-ed bathroom should, "Never, ever, comment on how [girls] look in the morning" and "Don't ask

what the little wastebasket [in the stalls are] for."

A bathroom is not the most expected place to have to exercise etiquette, but for men it is. There are some behaviors that are socially acceptable and obviously, many that are not. For boys, knowing how to behave in a restroom is a basic essential that should be taught to them as early as their childhood years. If they were never taught, there is no time like the present to learn.

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GIVE ME AN N.....

We've Got Spirit; Yes, We Do?

By: Madison Pappas

Remember the infamous high school varsity jackets? Unfortunately, while you might, the current North Shore High School (NSHS) students are unaware of some of the popular "fads" that have died out.

Varsity jackets represented a sense of commitment and pride towards ones school's sports teams. However, they also bonded the school as a whole. Trends like these are constantly changing along with the enthusiasm and interests of teenagers. While kids once waited in anticipation for school Pep Rallies and ceremonies such as "Moving Up Day," now many of them line up to be signed out by their parents. Also, traditional class rings seem like nothing, but a waste of money to the current NSHS student body. The question therefore becomes, what can be credited to this new era and its imminent modifications?

Not only have fashions changed, but so has the level of enthusiasm surrounding certain school activities. North Shore faculty member and former NSHS student, Melanie Lisberg, agrees that the school has definitely gone through some adjustments. She described Pep Rally and "Moving Up Day" as events that were once a "really big deal and everyone used to dress for the occasion." However, the two are currently the days with the highest cut and sign-out rates. Kristen Lincks, a special education teacher at NSHS and a former classmate of Ms. Lisberg's, expresses similar concerns. While she was recently a class advisor for one of the most spirited grades in NSHS history, their graduation signified a further plummet of North Shore's character. Now our school is seen as very casual and it's sad that even, "Friday night football games aren't allowed because people are getting drunk." We have undergone a revolution that is evident in our interests and goals. Believe it or not there was once

fun without "getting crazy" and kids just enjoyed friends and events... and not at house parties.

However, the social scene isn't the only place where "developments" have occurred. When Jordana Filippi, a junior at North Shore, was asked about class rings, her hasty response spoke the opinion of many: "School rings are so expensive and they're just shoved in your attic when you're older." She also showed her indifference when she claimed there's nothing to do with them. The numerous sales representatives for school rings are continuously ignored despite the popularity they once had. The rings may sit in attics, but they are a memory of one's high school experiences. After coming across it after possibly 25 years, one's first instinct might not be to slip it onto his or her finger, but to instead reminisce about old times and even old friends. While maybe they seem expensive, isn't it worth that instant of remembering?; it's a "blast from the past." The same goes for varsity jackets. NSHS hallways are now filled with Ed Hardy and North Face sweatshirts as opposed to maroon and white leather jackets. Find me an 80's high school-based movie where the main character isn't clothed in his infamous jacket and taking pride in his school and its achievements. Ms. Lisberg states that North Shore trends, "catch on so quickly." It's as if every month there's something new to buy that everyone else wants. It's doubtful that these changes will slow down, but it'll be fun to watch what comes next and even see which items regain popularity. We can only hope one of the things that is revived is the spirit of the students and their level of involvement. If one grade can start it up again, it'll seem only natural to incoming students and can then be passed on. Thus, a new era of enthusiasm will be created and students will only benefit from

North Shore Love-In

By: Brittany Cacossa

Most students that attended North Shore High School (NSHS) have said at one time or another, "I do not like North Shore." Well, why don't they like North Shore? The expected response would be something along the lines of, "it's just not a good school" or "I don't like the teachers." But, in fact, that is not the response at all. Most students will say they do not like North Shore because of the people. Clearly, this has nothing to do with the school itself. Thus, I feel it is safe to say that North Shore does not get the credit it deserves.

Many students may not appreciate the their fellow classmates, but the school should be recognized for all of the great opportunities it has to offer. Our off-campus policy is probably one of the most student-loved policies (sorry freshmen; your time will come.) The overall look of NSHS is a clean and presentable one, which sadly, is not the case for many schools. Our staff of teachers is extraordinary. They are always making time to give students the extra help they need and they are all very approachable. We also can't forget to recognize the wide variety of courses that are offered as well. Our classes vary from cooking all the way to Mandarin Chinese. Overall, what North Shore has to offer is exclusive and a privilege. But unfortunately we tend to disregard this fact. A person never really appreciates what he/she has when he/she attends such an upper-crust school that has such a giving environment. Something that Math teacher, Chuck Wankle thinks about a lot is that, "our country has been wealthy for so long. We have become spoiled, and we constantly complain. We are complaining about everything we see that is wrong, rather than giving our attention to the positive things in our lives, which by far outweigh the negatives for most of us." If any student here has not had the opportunity to experience another high school's environment then he/she may not realize how well North Shore takes care of its students.

English teach Sara Millman feels, "Many of the students at North Shore are of the opinion that nowadays, North Shore High School is too strict. However, in many high schools across Long Island, this strict environment of which these youngsters speak is truly a reality. For instance, high schoolers have to wear their school ids around their neck, carry a pass any time they are in the hallway during class-time, and sign in and out of the bathroom. In addition, in other schools, students are not given the opportunity to "schedule" their detention. It must be whenever the administration decides. Related to this, in some school's, a typical session of detention is a minimum of an hour and a half and can be as long as three hours. Students in the detention room also can not speak at all and must serve their time after school only." Frankly, if any of this went on at North Shore, the students would be in an uproar. Yet, we do not appreciate our staff and how great our school really is, which is why I

asked some of the students at North Shore High School to say one nice thing about their school so that this thought-process could begin.

Junior Matt McGill said: "I really enjoy the amount of extra-curricular activities that North Shore offers, as well as the number of student run activities that allow students to emerge as leaders."

Junior Danielle Valasiadis feels: "North Shore is a great school because the teachers try their best to make learning easy and fun, as well as to keep class enjoyable."

Junior Maddison Pappas thinks: "It's nice how our school trusts us to go off campus as early as sophomores; a lot of schools don't have that opportunity, but we're trusted and given some good responsibilities."

Junior Melissa Kulikowsky says: "One great thing about North Shore is definitely the open-campus policy. Sophomores, juniors and seniors all have the opportunity to leave campus during their off-periods and go wherever they want. Most schools around us only have that for seniors, and here, the students just have to sign out and walk out the doors."

Sophomore Tyler Sakry says: "One nice thing about North Shore is that the teachers care about their students, meaning that they want to see them succeed. This is unique to North Shore because not many other schools take that much interest in their students."

Sophomore Lisa Vetrone feels: "One distinct aspect of North Shore is the fact that the teachers are very nice, which makes learning all the more enjoyable."

Sophomore Nikki Argyropoulos says: "Compared to my old school, North Shore's teachers are much more willing to help. They schedule extra help and focus on what the student needs. North Shore's environment is great as well. It is a very enjoyable school."

Senior Daniel Grabars says: "If you have traveled outside of our country, or simply outside of our North Shore community you will see how some communities and schools are much less fortunate than we are. Some people have nowhere as close to the amounts of opportunities we have." Senior Rich Diwan feels, "We are a very close, tight-knit community which I feel is a good aspect for a school to have."

There are people out there who would give anything to be a part of the North Shore community, yet most of us do not even recognize that fact. North Shore High School is a school that puts the student's needs and wants first. North Shore is student-centered and to say, "I don't like the people" is not seeing the big picture which is what North Shore does for you. North Shore gives you the tools you need to succeed; so use them.



For The Consideration Of N.S.H.S.:

Honor Us With Honors How Pure Is It?

By: Melissa Kulikowsky

On Monday December 7th, all juniors, sophomores and freshmen received their course catalog for the upcoming 2010-2011 school year. While skimming through it, most students noticed the wide variety of electives, that range from Ceramics, to Creative Writing, to Psychology, and even International Foods, but some students may find something a little...off. While juniors with heavy schedules are eager to enroll in a minimal number of classes in their senior year and sophomores are gearing up for multiple AP classes, these students may find that making their schedule is a little more difficult than they thought.

Incoming juniors and seniors may notice that their options for classes such as Environmental, American History, European History, and English 11 only offer the AP course or the Regents course. There are no Honors level classes, thus making it more challenging for students to pick their class. If a student already has two AP classes and does not want to take a third, but does not necessarily want to enroll in a "Regents" class, there are no Honors classes. This can seem pretty unfair. "I really wish there was an Honors class in between for AP Comp. and English 11. For those of us who want a challenge and do not find it in the Regents course, we are stuck in a class that is too tough or a class that is

considered a joke," says Sophomore Leah Capobianco. Junior Sarah McNulty adds, "When making my junior year schedule, I already had two AP classes and I didn't want to take AP Comp., but I had never been in a Regents Course for English before; now that was my only choice. We definitely need an Honors option."

North Shore High School Guidance Counselor Joanne Fawcett said that for certain classes, an Honors option is not available because North Shore is a small school. Therefore, there are not enough students to enroll in Honors classes and there are not enough teachers here at North Shore for that many levels of classes. Ms. Fawcett did say though that many years ago Regents classes received the option of completing "Honors by Achievement." The students who decided to enroll in this program had more homework and projects, but got an "H" on their transcript and report card. This was eventually stopped by the Board of Education because its members wanted separate sections; this option is still available today though for language classes.

Perhaps if enough students request an Honors option for certain classes, North Shore could have it available within a few years. Unless the need is out there and we speak up about it, it will never be an option.

By: Stephanie Jenks

As the flu season made its way along with the cold winter weather, I became more aware of the sudden coughs and sneezes around me in the hallways and classrooms. Along with most other people, I don't enjoy being sick and thus I try to prevent catching any illnesses. When I learned from a teacher that Purell had been banned in school, I was shocked and confused. How could such a purposeful health product be banned from a student's use? Well, it seems as if many young students, especially those on Long Island, have been abusing Purell because of its hazardous contents and as a result, many schools have been forced to ban the germ-killing sanitizer for safety reasons.

According to an article in *The Long Island Press*, many students across the Island have been consuming and inhaling Purell in order to become drunk or high. Hand sanitizer, which isn't effective for its real purpose unless it contains a minimum of 60 percent alcohol, contains more alcohol than many alcoholic drinks. Compared to hand sanitizer, beer has a five percent alcohol content while whiskey has a fifty percent alcohol content. Not only is the alcohol content of hand sanitizer an issue, but there have been instances of students trying to inhale the fumes of hand sanitizers in order to get high. The seemingly endless number of misappropriations of hand sanitizer have been a cause of serious discussions in many schools across the nation.

After a great deal of consideration and New York State's urging, schools in Nassau County, including North Shore High School, have banned the use of Purell within

the school's walls. North Shore High School's Nurse, Mrs. Janice Nunziata, said, "Purell is dangerous if it's accidentally put in the eye and kids intentionally misuse it. She also stated, "After Purell is used eight times consecutively, it is no longer effective. In fact, the chemicals from the hand sanitizer strip the hand of healthy bacteria and leave cracks in the hand that make people more prone to germs." Mrs. Nunziata added that, "The best method to clean hands is by using soap and water. A good hand washing takes twenty seconds and removes 99.9% of germs, bacteria, and viruses."

Many students can agree though that Purell offers a quick and easy way to clean hands from germs. Purell dispensers have even been placed in public settings such as college campuses, supermarkets and public libraries in order to stop the spread of common viruses and bacteria. Thus, to some students, suggesting that they don't use hand sanitizers because of its potential for misuse just proves to be irrational. Senior Kristen Spaeth said, "Kids these days will do anything to get high. Banning every substance that has a remote connection is just ridiculous. At this rate, Expo markers will soon be banned as well. The administration is taking it too far by banning a substance that does more good than bad."

Even though the recommended method of germ-killing is hand washing, the school's "Purell ban" won't have much of an effect on the student body as many students continue to carry hand sanitizer with them and use it within the school setting. Have you had your Purell taken away from you? Stay germ-free North Shore.



Can You Repeat That, PLEASE?

By: Danielle Prush

Stop and think for a second. Do you really believe that a freshman year Health class will provide you with every piece of knowledge you need to know for all of the possible situations that may surface in your future. If you are not in the class now, do you even remember anything from you when you did take it? After all, it was your freshman year and a great deal of the information you learned, did not apply to you then. These were my exact concerns when I heard Natalie Ciappa's story. She was an 18 year old who passed out on a couch while at a party in Seaford, Long Island. The next morning she was found dead as a result of an overdose. How would someone know

what to do in a situation like that? How could a person, or a teenager for that matter, prevent an overdose from happening? What if the person who was passed out was your friend? Calling the police is always an option, but in Ciappa's case, this didn't happen. Her "friends" were too busy cleaning up around her so that the parents would not find out about the party and thus they were not checking up on Ciappa.

So what do we do about this? Well, I met with Ms. Reichel, one of our Health teachers in order to discuss my concerns and to learn her opinion as to what we as a school should do to raise awareness and potentially prevent such a tragedy. When

we discussed Ciappa's story and other similar situations, Ms. Reichel said, "Yeah, people would be mad at me if I called [the police]; I completely understand that, but I know if I did something stupid and I was the one who passed out, I would want someone to call." We then went into the current Health Curriculum that a teacher is required teach; it includes Skill-Based Communication, Stress Management, Goal Setting Planning, and Relationship Management. I am a former student of Ms. Reichel's and have forgotten some of the information we went over in each subject area. How therefore, would I ever be able to apply it to my life now? People change over the years and something that was taught

to me two years ago, did not stick because I was not doing those potentially life-threatening things nor were my friends. Ms. Reichel even said, "Our prefrontal cortex isn't developed until we are 18 to 20. Freshmen wouldn't think of certain things."

Now as a junior, I do know and have friends who drink, do drugs, and are sexually active. We should therefore be able to once again go over what we had learned during that crucial year in Health class, maybe even through an annual assembly. Now, for me, some of what seemed far-fetched two years ago, are daily realities. Our health is a lifetime concern; it should not just be something we look at during our freshman year.

The Glee Collective

By: Leah Capobianco

The new hit FOX show, *Glee*, has made its way to North Shore High School. The Glee Club, advised by Choral teacher Michael Kerschner, has brought a great deal of excitement to the singers and dancers of North Shore. Glee Club is an old-fashioned term used to describe a group of singers who perform popular music. According to Mr. Kerschner, "it is like a cross between a pop group and a choir, with an element of movement and live musicians." "Try-outs were held on December 3rd after school. The students were to sing a song by Journey, and be accompanied by live musicians. After an interview with Mr. Kerschner, I learned more about our future Glee Club.

Q: How many people tried out? Did anyone get cut? How did you go about holding auditions?

A: We do tryouts as a way of indicating dedication through preparation, and it turned out that we had around 70 auditions. We have a very talented school! Not everybody made it into the group because the group needs to be smaller than a choir to work.

Q: How many people are in the club? And is there a certain job for each person?

A: We are going to be called the Glee Collective because it really will be a team of singers and instrumentalists who perform different songs in different instrumentations. As of now, the collective has around 40 students.

Q: What's the agenda for club meetings?

A: We will be rehearsing songs, dances, and arranging songs.

Q: Is it too late for someone to join? Is the group accepting new people?

A: As of right now we have a core group of singers, but we are still looking for students who can participate as band members and choreographers.

Q: Is the group planning to have any concerts? What songs will the group sing?

A: So far we have planned songs by Journey, Queen, Seal, and others are in the works. We will also do some musical theatre. I hope to do a performance in the Spring.

Q: If there was one thing that you could tell the whole school about the Glee Club, what would it be?

A: Like all things sponsored by the Music Department, this is an ensemble dedicated to fun through excellence.

The students that are participating in the Glee Club love it. For instance, Senior Ryan Hart says, "What really got me going for auditions was that the piece we had to sing was Journey's "Don't Stop Believin'." I tried out for Glee because it's an entirely new approach to music. It's something new for everyone; it was like a little dream everyone had, but we didn't know how to start it. Then once we saw auditions for Glee, it's as if we all were united. Singing and dancing with a chorus of people to modern songs, with genres ranging from Hip Hop/Rap to Alternative Rock is just a different and entertaining experience for our culture."

The group is still not sure what day its members will meet, but if it works for everyone, it will most likely be on Thursdays right after school.

January 2010

Get Enlightened...It Won't Kill You

By: Lauren Gerard

Do the names Barak Obama, Joseph Biden, or Hilary Clinton ring a bell? What about Kenneth Salazar, Timothy Geithner, or Kathleen Sebelius? The first three names are respectively the names of our President, Vice President, and Secretary of State. The second set of names are respectively the Secretary of the Interior, Secretary of the Treasury, and Secretary of Health and Human Services. These are only a handful of the members in the Cabinet. It's safe to say that most of us do not watch the speeches President Obama makes or read the newspaper in order to find out the status of the health care plans. It is important for us however, to start paying more attention to our government because the decisions that it makes will affect us in the future. So why is it that many teenagers do not care to update themselves on the actions of our government?

We may be between the ages of 13 and 19, but that doesn't mean we should disregard what is going on with our government and our country's relations with other countries. We have so many distractions that it is understandable that at our age we don't have time to watch CNN or read *The New York Times*. However, when we do have "down time," we are not changing the channel to watch *60 Minutes* or surfing the internet news sites. Junior Leila Sharifi said she doesn't choose to read about politics because, "it's not [her] number one priority right now. Junior year is very hectic and [she] would rather spend her time focusing on school and SAT work rather than watching what's going on in the White House." Not only is Sharifi busy, but when she is relaxing she, "would rather not be watching politics." If she is done with school work, you will not find her, "going to read about what is going on in today's economy; [she] will be hanging out with her friends."

There is definitely a large number of students who do not care to listen to or talk about politics. There is also a handful of students who appreciate politics. These students keep themselves informed because they know that one day, very soon, we will have a say in our government. They think we should know what Obama does and be able to formulate an opinion on his actions so we can decide what we like and do not like in a future president. Within the next decade or so, our generation will be paying taxes for things that our past and present president has decided upon. There are issues that will affect our generation which pertain to civil rights, the economy, education, foreign policy, health care, homeland security, immigration, taxes, and many more. Junior Ryan Glassman thinks, "If you allow yourself to remain ignorant, your voice and your influence can be easily manipulated, which is a constant danger in a society." We are lucky to live in a country where our voice matters so why not inform ourselves as to what's going on in the country? Lily Mansfield, who is also a junior, agrees with Glassman and thinks, "Our generation is the future so we really need to follow what's going on in the world."

So, the next time you walk past that newspaper that's on your kitchen table or you're flipping through the channels on television, maybe you'll read an article or watch a speech. There is nothing to lose by enlightening oneself when it comes to the political issues of the day. Ryan Glassman had it right when he said, "Imagine how much greater this nation would be if everyone paid attention to what was going on in Washington and in his/her state capital. Or how much more effective our government would be. It will never happen, of course, but the more people that do pay attention, the better off we are."



It's Coming

By: Jaclyn LiPera

Regardless of race or religion, everyone is talking about, or at least has heard about the so-called upcoming "end of the world" which is to occur in 2012. By doing some research online, a person can find hundreds of websites that are primarily focused on the different conspiracies as to how the world will end, but most seem to be a bunch of "garbage." However, December 21st, 2012 does mark an end to the very reliable 5,126 year Mayan calendar.

The Mayan calendar formally looked a lot like a small pyramid that was based upon an accurate 365 day year and originally came about around 5,000 years ago. Many other civilizations that followed the Mayans adopted the calendar and added their own touches to it. Over the centuries, the calendar has changed, but that doesn't mean that the Mayan calendar is any less precise. Mayans had an organized means of keeping track of the date and time through a series of numbers and periods called the Long Count System. It says that creation is written 13.0.0.0.0 in the Long Count and that on December 21st 2012, the calendar will return again to 13.0.0.0.0.

It wasn't any surprise when nothing happened when the world was predicted to end on 6/6/06 which was believed to be the day of the devil or on the first day of the millennium when everyone was worried about the Y2K problem. Yet, this phenomenon seems different. Many great prophets, religious scriptures, and scientists agree that a possible apocalyptic event will occur in the year 2012. Ridiculous stories are storming the web of alien invasions and the sun exploding, but good sources realistically expect the sun to flip its magnetic poles as it does at the end of every 11-year sunspot cycle. Even though this often happens, according to a hypothesis, the Sun will precisely align with the Milky Way at the intersection where the celestial sphere and the orbit of the Earth meet, at the winter solstice of 2012 or, as we know it, on the first day of winter. Other unreliable sources believe that Asteroid 433 Eros is going to pass within 17 million miles of the Earth in January, but who knows if that will have any effect on the Earth. These stories have emerged out of nowhere and are "spreading like wildfire" around the world thanks to the media and discussion groups.

When researching the "end of the world" on Google, a reader can find questions posted on Yahoo Answers that ask things like, "Is the end of the world really going to happen?" "How can I prepare for 2012?" and even, "should I kill myself on December 21st, 2012?" It's interesting how many people are actually taking the "end of the world" seriously. Besides a number of articles on scientific research on the subject, guides and books have been published in order to prepare and even Hollywood is buying into the hype by bringing the "end of the world" phenomenon to the big screen in films like *2012* and *The Road*.

Almost all scientists agree that no matter what, something is definitely going to happen, even if it doesn't have any effect on the Earth. I guess we'll just have to wait and see.

REVIEW:

Bad CALL for This DUTY

By: Ryan Hart & Rob Delucia

"First-day sales of *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2* demolished entertainment industry records, selling 4.7 million copies and raking in an estimated \$310 million in North America and the United Kingdom alone. The release overran the former champion, *Grand Theft Auto 4*, which sold 3.6 million copies in April 2008" (*New York Times*). As one of the most highly anticipated games ever, it also rose to become one of the most gruesome and unethical games ever. The game features the most popular and "enjoyable" First Person Shooter (FPS) online or offline experience for gamers. Experienced gamers of the *Call of Duty* franchise were excited about the new online play and the features it contained; the online play was one of the main reasons why this game had earned its high level of popularity.

However, what gamers didn't expect is a disclaimer when the disc is first imported into their gaming system. The disclaimer warns that some players may find one of the missions highly offensive, but it does not state what the mission contains. Most gamers let their curiosity supersede their morals and decide to find out why that mission is highly offensive. It happens somewhat early on in the game's story mode when the mission begins; the player is in an elevator and is unsure of what is going on. He/she never gets a second warning.

The mission title then reads, "No Russian" as one of the surrounding men in

tuxedo says, "Remember, no Russian." Suddenly the elevator doors open up into a crowded airport terminal and the surrounding men begin to fire into the unsuspecting crowd of Russian civilians. The game makes the police in the level basically harmless so that the player can keep unloading into the crowd, which is where the gruesome gore really starts to take flight. The player's character then walks at a pace of one mile per hour and he/she witnesses images such as a person dragging his dying friend only to be shot in the head...to people leaning against a wall praying for their life. The way the game creators made the civilians behave in this scene after they are shot is "too realistic" and can really make any gamer cringe.

Personally, as we initially played through the mission together, we couldn't help but gain images of Virginia Tech and the Columbine shootings. Neither of us has ever had a game really leave an impression like this one did. As brutal as *Grand Theft Auto* can get, it does not compare to the aforementioned. It's somewhat scary to think that in our society, a game that involves the most gruesome moment in a video game, is also the most popular one. Plus, this game is mostly played by kids who are under the game's recommended age of 18. Five years ago, people said the *Grand Theft Auto* series was the worst, but now that *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2* is seen as being more gruesome and has topped *Grand Theft Auto's* sales, it's hard to tell how realistic the violence in video games will get in the future.

Packaging Is Everything

By: Amanda Rachlin

Be honest and be willing; take chances and know oneself. The college application process forces every student to look closely at herself in order to figure out what is so special about her that would make a college admissions officer notice her among so many other applicants.

Applying to college is by no means an easy task. Students suddenly become all that they have learned in school. The experiences they have accumulated over the course of eighteen years catches up to them. Now it is time to gather these memories and talents and package them for the admissions process.

Is the student well-rounded enough? What about her SAT or ACT scores? Where does she rank class-wise? What has she done for her community? Has she completed an internship? How many clubs or quarters on Honor Roll can she list? All college-bound students must create a package. The amazing thing is that most of us do

it and find a school that fits us. It may not be easy and it is certainly a time consuming process, but we do it no matter what it takes.

It is clear that nowadays there are more applicants applying for college acceptances than there are spots, especially when it comes to certain schools like the SUNY's. Hofstra University's pool is even widening; for example, the school accepts 2,200 undergraduates out of a pool of 24,000 applicants. Obviously one's package must have all of the elements that fit the school's requirements. Thus, an applicant should document and collect all of the things that makes him/her marketable and special.

It is time to take ownership of all of our past years and make them work for us. Reflecting and capturing our accomplishments or lack thereof can be a daunting task, but eventually it pays off when our package is ready to be opened by that admissions officer.

All Nine Knives

By: Olivia Filipowicz

For many years, dissections have been a part of a plethora of high schools' science curriculums. The dissection of animals such as frogs and fetal pigs are often the beings of choice, but this year, here at North Shore High School (NSHS), one of the science elective classes, Anatomy and Physiology, happens to be dissecting cats. Although the dissection process of these animals has been going on for a few months and will most likely continue through March, many people in the school were not even aware that this was taking place here and they should be. While some people find it wrong to use cats in a dissection, others find it an acceptable practice because they think it will help students to advance their knowledge of the field of science as well as advance in their future endeavors.

"I don't think the dissection of cats is that horrible if medical students are using cadavers for science," says Izzy Ahrens, a sophomore. "If it is approved by the school, I guess it's respectful. Anatomy students learn a lot from it and it's beneficial for them." On the flip side, people need to be aware that places like the Carolina Biological Supply Company, a very well known business in North Carolina, earn a high profit from selling these preserved animals for dissection to places like our school, and according to "http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Carolina_Biological_Supply_Company," it is the largest supplier of cats in the United States. Even though the company's website, www.carolina.com, states that, "Carolina has the finest—and safest—preserved cat specimens in stock and ready to ship" and claims to sell euthanized organisms, a few years ago, PETA conducted an undercover investigation of the Carolina Biological Supply Company and reported that the company mistreated the animals and put them into gas chambers so that they could die—which caused the company to face charges (<http://www.peta.org/factsheet/files/FactsheetDisplay.asp?ID=107>). Gassing is a lot cheaper than euthanizing. In addition, the Carolinas have a huge animal control issue and do not really have the money to deal with it; thus, one has to question whether or not he/she is getting the whole truth off of the Carolina Biological Supply Company's website. Dan Grabarz, a senior, said, "I think it is wrong for cats to be dissected in our school. It's horrible; it's a cat and I could never picture myself doing that." According to <http://www.animalworldnetwork.com/bsurpetstat.html>, cats are considered to be domesticated and companion

animals, especially since about 57 million cats live in the homes of Americans.

Cat dissections are not new to North Shore High School though; they were performed about twenty to thirty years ago and the practice was discontinued up until this year. From a scientific perspective, the students who participate in these cat dissections receive a great opportunity for hands-on-learning because the muscles of a cat are similar to a humans, whereas those of a frog's are not. However, when asked if a cat dissection program on a computer could be used in place of the real thing, the current Anatomy and Physiology teacher, Ms. Jessica Zima, said that research from the National Association of Biology Teachers shows the actual dissection is more effective, and she added that the students would feel, "robbed of an experience," since they learn a lot from the process. However, according to Ms. Zima, "The first day is a shock," but since the class is an elective, the students usually make up their minds early on in the course about whether they want to remain in the class since they know a cat dissection is in the curriculum from day one; students have the option to choose to be in the class. If a student opts to stay in the class, he spends days prior to the beginning of the dissection preparing for it and learning what to do and why he is doing it. During the actual dissection process, the skin of the cat is cut so that the muscles can be isolated and the internal cavities of the cat can be viewed. Ms. Zima added that 21 out of 25 students in her current class have aspirations to someday go into the medical field and thus, dissection is a valuable way to learn some of the skills that are needed. "I have pets of my own that I love," she said; "This [the cats used in the dissection process] is not a pet. It's a science specimen; this cat's life is dedicated to them [the students] learning about Physiology."

As far as safety is concerned, Ms. Zima stated that The Carolina Perfect Solution was used on these cats in an attempt to eliminate such a harsh odor from being exhaled. However, the consensus of many students, including those who are not even in the class, is that the process is still a smelly one. When Ms. Zima was asked about how the cats would be disposed of once the dissection process ends, she said the plan is to call the Carolina Biological Supply Company in order to see what should be done; one can only hope this is the case so that safety-wise and respect-wise, the proper thing is done.

I'm A Celebrity (And You Can Be One Too)

By: Lily Fagin

On the most recent episode of the MTV reality series *Jersey Shore*, Mike Sorrentino (better known as "The Situation") shot to instant fame by punching a castmate, who happened to be a girl, in the face. Viewers disgustedly watched him humiliate himself, yet they could not tear their eyes away. Mike (and his ridiculous nickname) successfully maintained the public's interest for his five minutes of fame in the wake of his outburst. He became a celebrity through infamy rather than merit. This trend of people gaining celebrity status through their exploits on reality TV is alarming, and is changing what it means to be a celebrity.

Merriam Webster defines celebrity as, "a famous or celebrated person." Conventional celebrities like actors, musicians, comedians, etc. are "celebrated" for some extraordinary talent or quality that justifies their being "famous." Some people even become famous just because they possess an unusual beauty, which, however shallow the distinction may be, separates them from the average person. On the contrary, stars of some reality TV series possess no exceptional skill or trait. There is no difference between one of these characters and a typical person aside from that aspect of their personality which made them dreadful enough to be entertaining to watch. On *Super Sweet 16*, it is a bratty, spoiled attitude; on *Jersey Shore* it is a remarkable lack of intelligence and culture. The list of shows continues. This is what we "celebrate" these newfound celebrities for.

Now all it takes to make headlines—to be the name rolling off of everyone's tongues—is a remarkable willingness to publicly make a fool of yourself. Celebrities are accessible in a culture where people who are completely devoid of any extraordinary characteristic are elevated to fame. Anyone can go ahead and become the next "The Situation" or "Snooki." Anyone can be famous. But if even the most undeserving people can become "famous or celebrated," what does the word 'celebrity' even mean?



January 2010

Should We Have Nipped Jersey Shore or Tucked the Botax? Takes Over Our Shore

By: Isabella Ahrens

By: Giovanni Grella

The comprehensive world of medicine includes thousands of doctors who diagnose and treat diseases by means of surgeries, drugs and clinical procedures. Recently however, the treatments and benefits that these physicians provide were threatened by the government, specifically in regards to the specialty of Plastic Surgery. In an act to reform health-care, the Senate had proposed a five percent tax on all cosmetic surgeries that would have been effective January 1, 2010. This tax, nicknamed the Botax, would have had a profound effect on the careers of Plastic Surgeons, potentially limiting their patient lists and diminishing the importance of their contributions. Proposed by Senator Harry Reid, the tax mandated: "IN GENERAL—There is hereby imposed on any cosmetic surgery and medical procedure a tax equal to five percent of the amount paid for such procedure, whether paid by insurance or otherwise." In response to this draconian measure, many plastic surgeons were outraged and the American Society of Plastic Surgery (ASPS) had set up a web page, www.plasticsurgery.org, bashing the Botax.

Six reasons were proposed by the ASPS for opposing this tax: It:

- 1) taxes the middle-class
- 2) discriminates against women
- 3) violates patient privacy
- 4) compromises patient safety
- 5) is arbitrary and difficult to administer
- 6) has failed state experience."

ASPS also administered a nationwide survey which showed that 52% of the 1,014 Americans questioned were against this tax. One company, Allergan Inc., which makes products that are used in cosmetic procedures, had even set up a website against the tax: www.stopcosmetictax.org. Within a matter of four days, the site received an overwhelming 9,000 letters in response to the tax.

One of the most compelling reasons for people wanting to ban the tax was that, "the tax mistakenly puts cosmetic medical procedures in the same category as unhealthy habits such as cigarettes and alcohol." Although, cosmetic procedures are used for the benefit of patients and to make their lives more bearable, these procedures have the potential to raise, and not assist, the cost of health-care. Dr. Diane Riley, a top Orthopedic Surgeon in New England, puts this concept into perspective: "Things like smoking or tanning beds that increase health problems end up costing billions of dollars. They should require that those doing such activities should pay more for their insurance—because they unnecessarily utilize health-care for things that could be avoided." Because cosmetic procedures in most cases are purely by choice rather than need, was this possible tax truly justified?

Dr. Scott Wells, one of the most

prominent Plastic Surgeons in New York, paints a different picture: "I believe that Botax and other treatments of this type are medical procedures controlled by our government as used only by qualified physicians. Since these treatments are medical, they should not be taxable — the same as all other medical goods and services." In other words, because these procedures are medical, they should not be subjected to an extra tax. Dr. Riley concedes that, although these procedures are cosmetic, in certain situations they are needed: "Not all uses of Botox are unnecessary. It has been used for post-stroke patients and cerebral palsy patients to decrease tone in the muscles of their face. These patients are very rigid and their spasticity makes it difficult for them to do activities. In this situation, Botox is something I think should be covered," she concludes. The complexity of these procedures makes it hard to generalize them and therefore specifications should mediate a tax such as the potential Botax. Dr. Wells agrees, "Mr. Obama proposes taxing all cosmetic procedures ie. those not reconstructive. This would be impossible for the government to regulate properly. Doctors can't even agree entirely how to classify many plastic surgery services."

"For me," Dr. Wells continues, "it would not change any of the procedures I perform as they are all clearly cosmetic. The question it begs is: Are age-management procedures not medically justified?" Therefore, for the Botax to have passed, each procedure must have been justified and approved under specific guidelines in order to enable the best possible means of payment for the patient.

In the end, dermatologists were able to remove the so-called Botax from the Senate's health-care overhaul bill and replace it with a 10 percent tax on tanning services.

The specialty known as Plastics Surgery should not have been threatened or obliterated by the possible creation of this tax and the Senate should have allowed the ASPS to create guidelines so that patients of all needs and requirements were tended to. Although, this tax was predicted to create five billion dollars over the course of ten years, that would have gone towards health-care reform, the Senate should have allowed certain requirements under the tax. On a final note Dr. Wells points out that: "Mr. Obama clearly has a socialist agenda and believes he has a right to try to redistribute the wealth in this country. It is quite unfair to approach this by isolating Plastic Surgery as disenfranchised from the privilege of a tax exempt medical specialty." So ... would this tax have been productive, politically correct, and universally beneficial for everyone involved or would it have been hostile to a sector of the medical community? In other words, should we have nipped or tucked the Botax?

Many people say that MTV's show *Jersey Shore* stereotypes Italians and Italian-Americans. After all, the show depicts "Italian-American" beachgoers, as MTV puts it, as "the hottest, tannest, craziest Guidos." Many Italian Americans think this is offensive and are therefore outraged; they simply want the show to be cancelled. Would a program of this caliber ever be allowed if the group that was being made a spectacle of was African-American, Asian, Hispanic, or even Jewish? No, probably not.

In response to a myriad of complaints that have been received in regards to *Jersey Shore*, an MTV spokesperson said, "We understand that this show is not intended for every audience and depicts just one aspect of youth culture. Our intention was never to stereotype, discriminate, or offend." UNICO National is the largest Italian American Service Organization in the U.S. and it is reaching out to sponsors in order to ask them to stop advertising with MTV until they agree to pull *Jersey Shore*. Domino's Pizza has actually stopped advertising during this show's time-slot and the company is encouraging others to do the same. UNICO told TMZ that the group has received many angry calls about the show from Italian-Americans. "The MTV building in Times Square was getting crazy threats and they are in the process of hiring more security and bodyguards," an insider revealed to Fox News. If this type of action is being taken, then you know something is wrong with this show.

Honestly, this show should be cancelled because it is offensive and stereotypical of Italians. It is giving a bad reputation to us Italians; the cast members aren't even real Italians. J-Woww, one of the cast members of the show and one of the two cast members who is not 100% Italian, has a Spanish and Irish heritage. If you're not Italian, don't be on the show and fake it; do not put a bad label on us Italians. Also, fans of the show need to be aware that cast members are making money off of you all. Since some of them have a following, they are being offered other deals and making the most from a situation that should have never existed.

Just ask yourself how you would feel if people who are from the same background as you are were portrayed in a stereotypical way and were being called stereotypical names on national television. Would you be happy?



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By: Timmy Aughavin



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