



Junior wins
Miss American
Jr. Teen 8

the playwickian



Should colleges
lower the
drinking age?
5

Choir sings into holiday spirit



During school on Dec. 12, students from orchestra, band and concert choir gathered in the Theodore Kloos Auditorium and brought holiday cheer to audiences.

Photo/ Mariam Bazzi

Assistant superintendent replaces Kadri

By CJ Colando
Op-Ed Editor

After Neshaminy said goodbye to the school district's Superintendent Paul Kadri, Neshaminy welcomed hsi replacement, the Acting Superintendent, Dr. Louis T. Muenker. Unlike Kadri, Muenker has been a part of Neshaminy School District for a very long time before being appointed. This is Muenker's eighteenth year in the district.

He started out as Elementary School Counselor at Herbert Hoover Elementary School. His other positions over the years include assistant principal at Poquessing Middle School, principal at Walter Miller Elementary School, followed by four years as Principal at Lower South Elementary School.

Muenker was then appointed Super-

visor of Pupil Services for two years and prior to the recent appointment as Acting Superintendent he was the Assistant Superintendent and Director of Human Resources for the past four years.

Muenker's position is only as acting superintendent, and been appointed for a period not to exceed a year until the School Board determines who will be appointed on a permanent basis.

"There are a number of challenges that the Neshaminy School District faces during the current school year and for the future," he said.

"Some of these include: successful student achievement (curriculum & instruction); completion of our high school construction project; transition of current eighth and ninth graders to the high school for 2009-2010; staffing (teachers) for 2009-2010, staffing (support staff) for

2009-2010, re-location of the Tawanka Learning Center for 2009-2010; facilities; employee contracts that need to be negotiated; support of community groups, and development of a budget."

Muenker said that this would require the support of students, staff and the community at large.

When asked for his interest in becoming the permanent Superintendent, Muenker said for now he's taking it "one day at a time."

"During my 35 years working as an educator I have focused my energies on supporting the students that I have worked with in the various positions that I have held," he said.

"As Superintendent I will focus my attention on 'all' of our students from kindergarten through 12th grade with a goal of helping each reach their potential."

Construction on schedule, budget concerns arise

By Lindsay Lipsky
News Editor

As the renovations to Neshaminy High School start to dwindle down, more issues arise. The district has a \$3.2 million



The construction budget may lack enough money to pave a gravel lot.

Photo/Mariam Bazzi

budget to work with, and with about 46 weeks left of construction, there is about \$248,000 left, according to the Bucks County Courier Times.

"Our goal is to do what we need to and hopefully have something left," Damien Spahr, project executive for Reynolds, explained in the Nov. 14 issue of the Courier Times. Every part of the new high school will be built as planned.

When students come back from winter break, there will be many changes upon entering the school. The auditorium will again be attached to the rest of the school via F and G Wings. A new E Wing will also be open, housing technology and art classes.

According to Rick Marotto, the liaison between school officials and construction crews, the project is exactly right on budget, and the task is expected to remain on budget for the remainder of the time.

Parts of the fund have been spent to meet Middletown mandates, such as roadwork. It has also been spent for possible contractors' claims and in case the school needs a gravel lot behind the school.

A few board members, such as William Spitz, are concerned about having to pave the lot, which would probably make the board go over its funds. Other officials, such as Ritchie Webb, are confident there will not be a problem, according to the Courier times.

"...We do believe that [there's] plenty [money] to get through the rest of the construction," Spahr reported. "We just need to continue to hold back spending."

The construction is expected to be finished completely in September 2009. Many students, parents, and officials are hoping there will be a sufficient amount of money in the budget in order to complete all of the scheduled renovations.

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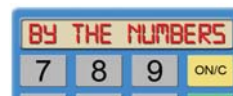
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12

Every 12 seconds
someone contracts AIDS.

33,000,000
Total number of people living
with AIDS.

16

AIDS takes the life of some-
one every 16 seconds

NEWS FLASH

2009 testing dates

4SIGHT Reading Test:

Jan. 15 & 16

All sophomores and juniors will be tested in English class

4SIGHT Math Test:

Jan. 20 & 21

All sophomores and juniors will be tested in math class

PSSA Writing:

Feb. 10 & 11

Juniors report regular time to school
Sophomores and seniors delayed start

PSSA Reading/Math:

March 17, 18, 19

Juniors only

No school for sophomores and seniors

PSSA Science:

April 28 & 29

Juniors report regular time to school
Sophomores and seniors delayed start

Blood drive proves success

By Kristen Hammond
Staff Writer

The Neshaminy Blood Drive, hosted by the National Honor Society and the Community Blood Council of New Jersey (CBC-NJ), was held on Wednesday, Dec. 10 in Gym Two. The blood drive donated approximately 205 pints of blood. Students and teachers were able to donate one pint of blood, which can save up to three lives.

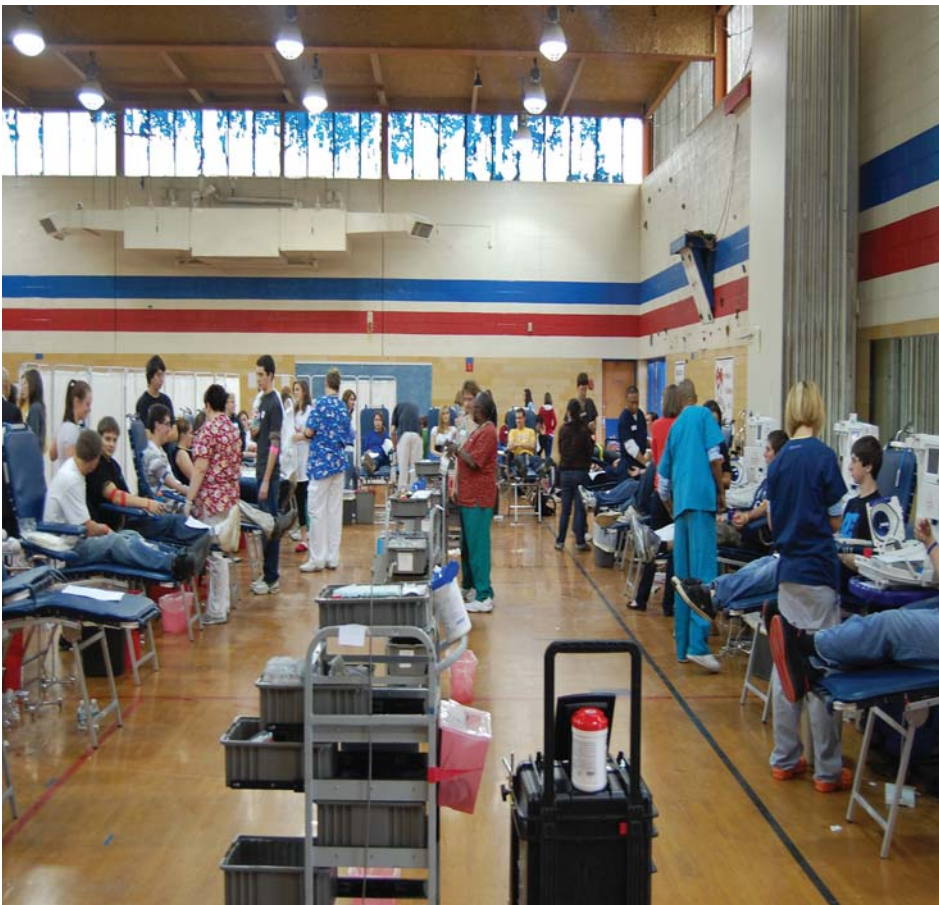
This year, approximately 300 students volunteered to give blood-exceeding last year's donors. "I'm surprised at the turnout of young kids who want to give back," Nurse Kelly, a nurse running the blood drive from CBC-NJ, said.

In past years, Neshaminy has donated the blood collected to the American Red Cross but has changed to CBC-NJ because they will be giving scholarship money based on the amount of blood collected. CBC-NJ has been serving the Trenton and Bucks County area for the last 30 years.

A portion of what is donated will go to St. Mary's Hospital. "Our expectations are to exceed the amount of donations received last year, which was 225 pints" National Honor Society advisor Therese Szczurowzski said.

To be eligible to give blood, one must be at least 17 years old and 110 pounds. If a person has gotten a tattoo in the past year from a Pennsylvania tattoo shop that person cannot give blood. If one is eligible, he or she will simply sign up and will receive a confirmation slip in homeroom which tells of the time the person will be donating the blood. "It makes me feel good to give blood because I know it'll save someone's life" senior Zoe Fienman said.

Donation is a quick process, and for participating (and to replenish), volunteers handed out refreshments before sending donors back to class. "If you didn't donate this year, you should really consider it in the future. It feels good to give back," Neshaminy Honor Society President Jared Middleman said. Giving blood is a completely safe process and makes a difference. A few minutes can save someone's life.



The blood drive, held in Gym 2 on Dec. 10, yielded 205 pints of blood, just short of last years margin of 225.
Photo/ Becca Stough

weird NEWS

A veterinary charity in Britain is holding a 100 day fitness contest for the countries fattest pets.



A 430-pound Canadian convict was released early from prison because the facility could not accomodate his massive frame.

The one syllable word "meh" has been added into the dictionary. The word, orginating from North America is an expression of indifference.

On the Net:
CNN:<http://www.cnn.com>



Rao Devi, a 70 year old indian woman, miraculously birthed her first child.

Suicide program awarded

By Becca Erskine
Copy Editor

Neshaminy School District was rewarded with a Proclamation recognizing its suicide prevention efforts at the Bucks County Commissioners meeting on Nov. 19. Neshaminy has launched programs such as the Committee for Positive Change, Yellow Ribbon, Celebration of Life and Lifeline, and a Health Curriculum-based program on suicide.

These programs have assisted in preventing school-aged children from suicide attempts. All of the programs inform and educate Neshaminy students about the warning signs of suicidal behavior and intervention steps.

One particular program launched by Neshaminy is The Celebration of Life and Lifeline, which stemmed Challenge Day, another program run by Neshaminy to eliminate suicide. It was made to establish an environment filled with respect and to create awareness, understanding and compassion in the hopes of combating tragedy, including suicide. One hundred and fifty students and faculty members participated last year.

Celebration of Life and Lifeline is a program where students are educated on management of stress, bullying and other issues at home. The students were directly involved and were willing participants throughout the week-long program.

Its memorable slogan, "Hold On" was printed on rubber bracelets and t-shirts to promote hope within the students at Neshaminy.

"[The week-long program] calmed negativity and created a more positive environment, everyone could participate and everyone felt equal," said Dana Martell, founder of Celebration of Life and Lifeline, and former Neshaminy student.

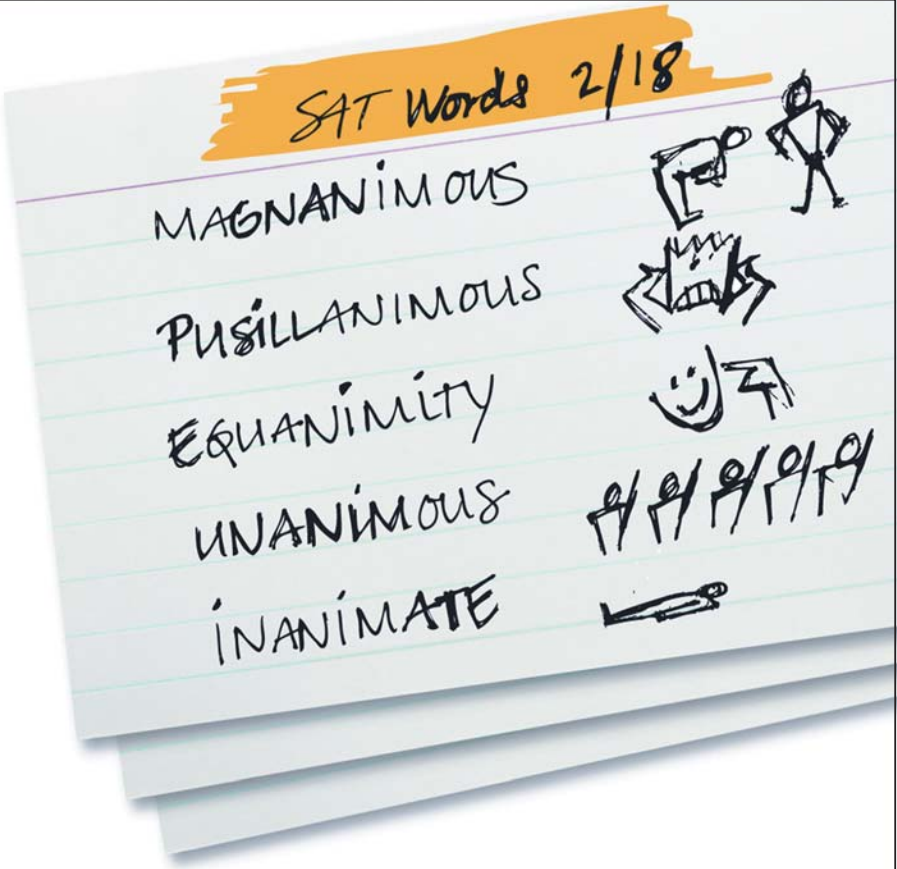
Yellow Ribbon is another one of Neshaminy's prevention programs. It was originally formed from a family in Colorado whose son, Michael Emme, had committed suicide. Yellow Ribbon is a program that encourages teenagers to ask for help. The Yellow Ribbon card handed out to students symbolizes a lifeline; it is a signal that the user needs help. The card also gives information on Yellow Ribbon's suicide hotline and website, www.yellowribbon.org.

In addition to Neshaminy's efforts, a sanctuary room was established as a "safe area" where Neshaminy students have the option to take a time out. The room helps students cope with multiple issues. This area is yet another aspect that lessens negativity within student's lives.

It is extremely important that students realize how serious and permanent suicide is. Approximately 32,000 Americans commit suicide each year. It also said that a suicide occurs every 16 minutes in the United States, according to Virginia health. The issue of suicide has grown and will continue to grow if not brought to attention.

On Saturday, Nov. 22, the American Federation for Suicide Prevention (ASFP) sponsored its tenth annual National Survivors of Suicide Day, an effort to reach out to thousands of people who have lost a loved one to suicide.

Suicide prevention has always been as issue and will continue to be something Neshaminy addresses in its health curriculum and various other programs in order to maintain a healthy, safe environment for Neshaminy students.



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Failing economy affects district spending

By Jami Notarfrancesco
Staff Writer

With the high prices of food and the rising costs of fuel due to the economic crisis, Neshaminy school administrators have recently had to cut down the amount of money spent in the district.

Neshaminy Business Administrator Joe Paradise stated, “The economic crisis is affecting us more and more as time goes on...all in terms of lower tax receipts and other local revenue, high costs, and lower investment income. They all add up to a potentially difficult financial future for most school districts and local and state governments.”

The cost of fuel has greatly affected the transportation system. This year, the district had to put a lock on the price of fuel for the year along with other districts from the county. There are two ways of bidding fuel costs for the year, firm or floating price.

Firm is when they take a bid for the year and the price would stay the same throughout the school year. When the district would order fuel, floating would pay for the current cost of the fuel would be at that time.

“This year the district bid firm thinking that the price of fuel would keep going up. Who would have ever thought that the price would have dropped like it did?” Director of Transportation Services Frank Lambert said.

The state passed a new law saying that busses and trucks cannot idle any longer than five minutes. School busses may only idle longer if they have students on the bus. Before the bill was passed, administrators of the transportation services had asked the drivers to cut back on this idle time.

“The cost of diesel fuel to run the buses has risen dramatically. It has doubled over the last two years. We have tried to eliminate or lessen idling time for buses,” Paradise added.

The transportation system is not the only system that needed budget restrictions because of the high cost of fuel. Heating the facilities during long hours that Neshaminy

schools are open has been a great challenge for the school facilities administration.

“The cost of heating facilities has increased enormously. We will have to lower the interior temperatures in the winter for classrooms and offices. Attempts to cut programs to accommodate the rising costs of fuel are also being made to be more efficient with our fuel usage,” Paradise said.

The cost of serving breakfast and lunch has also increased; it has gone up approximately 15 percent since last year. Director of Food Services Marie Wallace stated, “The economic crisis has definitely affected Neshaminy’s food services since we are not immune to rising food and fuel costs. Fuel surcharges were imposed upon us on awarded bid items (normally the bid price covered the cost of the product including delivery.) We have watched our margin shrink year after year as prices and the cost of doing business continue to rise.”

“The Food Service Dept continually works to streamline our operation and make procedure improvements where possible to decrease costs and offer the best food and service available to schools to increase sales as well as breakfast and lunch participation,” Wallace added, “Enrollment decline also affects Food Service profits. It has continued to decline since 1998.”

In Montgomery County, enrollment numbers in public schools increased rapidly because of the rising costs of private schools. The enrollment numbers in Neshaminy have been fairly steady and have kept pace with the projections so far. There has been a decrease in approximately 100 students from 2007-2008 due to the rising costs of private schooling, but only to a small degree.

“I believe you will see other changes being made to cope with the slumping U.S. economy become more ‘front and clear’ as the budget discussions begin for the 2009-10 year, starting in January,” Paradise confirmed.

Transportation, heating, and food prices are directly affecting Neshaminy through the economy and will continue to do so despite astronomical prices fluctuating.

“The economic crisis is affecting us more and more as time goes on.”
~Business Administrator
Joe Paradise

GYM NIGHT CAPTAINS 08-09

Blue Red



Jared Gentile - Color captain
Jen Huchinson - Color captain
Chris Boland - 12th grade captain
Alexa Gargani - 12th grade captain
Ariel Hoffman - 11th grade captain
Alexa Bell - 11th grade captain
Kyle George - 10th grade captain
Paige Dumke - 10th grade captain
Marissa Benedict - 10th grade captain
Not photographed: Seth Jeffries, Caitlin



Maria Mattioli - Color captain
Ryan Vaccaro - Color captain
Michelle Nemeroff - 12th grade captain
Dan Wenclewicz - 12th grade captain
Jess Mazur - 11th grade captain
Jill Sincavage - 11th grade captain
Ryan Matzke - 10th grade captain
Spencer Shipley - 10th grade captain
Katey Smyth - 10th grade captain
Not photographed: Tyler Orr, Natalie Sikora

Obama selects cabinet members

By Jess Thorson
Staff Writer

President-elect Barack Obama has already jumped into the national issues he will be faced with as President. Still a month left until his inauguration, he has high hopes for our failing economy. “We cannot hesitate, and we cannot delay,” Obama said on Nov. 23 according to CNN.com.

Obama has proven that he wants change by stepping into action months before he is president of the United States. By developing a strong Cabinet Obama has reinforced American belief in what he has promised to do for our nation.

Not only will Obama and his staff incorporate many new jobs to help the unemployed people, they will also help our environment by going green.

With the rapid decline occurring in our nation’s economy Obama has no time to wait until his inauguration on Jan.20, 2009. According to CNN.com, with the ongoing recession Obama sees this problem as an opportunity to rebuild our troubled economy.

Obama’s Cabinet Selections

• Treasury Secretary:
Timothy Geithner

• Secretary of State:
Sen. Hillary Clinton

• Attorney General: Eric Holder

• Defense Secretary:
Robert Gates

• Homeland Security Secretary:
Gov. Janet Napolitano

• National Security Adviser:
Retired Marine Gen. James Jones

• Commerce Secretary:
Gov. Bill Richardson

• National Economic Council Director:
Lawrence Summers

• Office of Management and Budget Director:
Peter Orszag

Tawanka relocates

By Dan Coleman
Copy Editor

The Tawanka Learning Center program is the alternative education path for Neshaminy School District students and now the program might be moving into the high school.

Joann Holland, the principal of Tawanka, said the Tawanka program consists of 53 at-risk students with social, emotional, and behavioral issues, according to the Nov. 18 issue of the Courier Times.

There are four options for this program’s new location. The first and second options are the integration of the program in either Maple Point Middle School or Carl Sandburg Middle School. The third and fourth options are the renovations of either Eisenhower Middle School or the high school.

The high school option would move the Tawanka program to an isolated section of the old building. The Tawanka students would be segregated from the general population. However, they may be integrated in activities such as physical education classes, etc.

The motives behind the relocation to the high school are economically driven. With the decline of the economy, the school board is looking to spend as little as possible. “It is estimated to cost approximately \$65,000 in material costs

for modifications to the one wing of the older portion of the high school... This would be the least expensive alternative being considered by the Board at this time,” Business Administrator Joe Paradise said.

Tawanka itself will be leased to the Bucks County Intermediate Unit, allowing for additional profit. “Economically it’s a solid option, but educationally-speaking I’m not completely convinced,” School board member William O’Connor said.

Tawanka’s students often struggle in large group environments, causing the potential success for the program to be questioned if moved into the high school.

The school district officials are still debating the issue. If the high school is chosen as the new location, the move will be completed for Sept. 2009.

“We are still working on many of the questions,” Acting Superintendent, Dr. Lou Muenker said. “I will therefore provide a response as soon as I can,” Muenker added.

The Tawanka program is vital to the district and will remain a functioning alternative education process. The issue of its move will most likely be debated at the Jan. 13 and 27 school board meetings. Currently, no decision has been made regarding the Tawanka program’s relocation.



Alternative school students may have to say good-bye to the Tawanka building and hello to a renovated home on the high school campus. Photo/ Steph Catrambone

The Playwickian

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Holiday Spirit:
selfish, not selfless

Contrary to Christmas Day, Christmas shopping is hardly about giving; it’s about getting. Shoppers go absolutely wild when the holidays roll around, trying to consume as much as they can for as little as they can, positively raping stores of sales and discounted items.

Consumerism sweeps across America like a plague as shoppers go to desperate measures to buy exactly the right gift at exactly the right price just in time for the holidays. If this holiday is centered around the joy of giving rather than receiving, why are shoppers acting like barbarians in the malls and stores?

More puzzling yet, is the amount of actual violence that takes place around this season devoted to kindness and caring. Jdimytai Damour, thirty-four, was trampled to death by over-eager shoppers at a Wal-Mart in Valley Stream New York on this year’s Black Friday. The shoppers had been lined up by the doors at 5 a.m. in order to take advantage of the low-priced, under-stocked items the store had for sale. When the doors were opened, Damour was trampled to death by people dashing for the shelves. Damour’s family is currently trying to sue the Wal-Mart for hyping up their sales and creating the mob like crowd.

So is Wal-Mart to hold the blame? Or is the economy to blame for making people overly money conscious? No, America itself, the land of opportunity, the land of the free, and the land of consumerism, is to blame. The attitude taken by American’s to buy, buy, buy is simply sickening. No cheap piece of plastic or low priced limited- time offer is worth a life, even if it’s the life of a stranger.

Shoppers were actually heard complaining when they were forced out of the store so the police could conduct an investigation. Imagine! The nerve of those police men, wanting to close down a store so a body could be removed from the aisle and a murder investigation could be started. No worries though, the store was reopened just a few hours later so shoppers could resume the pursuit of holiday bargains.

Although the consumerism disease worsens during the holidays, it is never absent from American life. Consumerism’s twin brother Marketing is never far from sight as well. We, as Americans, are constantly being bombarded with advertising and marketing techniques no matter where we are. Whether we’re listening to commercials on TV, walking past signs or billboards, reading labels on products, or seeing logo’s stitched on clothing, advertisement is everywhere. In a world where everything has a brand name, number, and price tag attached as a back thought, it’s kind of easy to understand why people feel like consumerism is the way to happiness, or even just a necessary part of daily life.

In a way, life in America has moved away from survival of the fittest and moved towards survival of the richest. Jobs equal money, money equals product, and product equals happiness. Few live outside the system and can survive completely dependent from the consumerist world. Everyone living in modern America is influenced somehow in some way by either advertising or the idea that possessions can grant you happiness.

People need to realize the way to happiness doesn’t always have a price tag. There’s nothing wrong with a little shopping, or enjoying whatever possessions you own or plan to buy. If shopping makes you happy, then go right ahead and buy until you go broke, but by no means sacrifice someone else’s or your own safety just to purchase an item. Nothing is more important than life itself; don’t spend it worrying about what you think you need to buy or obsessing over things that don’t really matter.

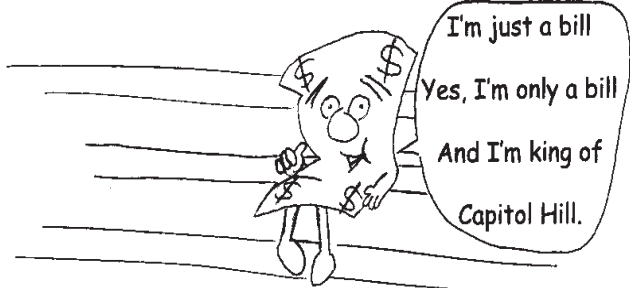
This unsigned editorial represents the majority view of the editorial board.

Policy Statement

Published monthly, the student newspaper of Neshaminy High School is a public forum, with its student editorial board making all decisions concerning its contents. The student exercise of freedom of expression and press freedom is protected by PA Code Section 12.9 and the First Amendment to the Constitution. School officials exercise their right to Prior Review.

The Playwickian refers to the “Associated Press Stylebook” on matters of grammar, punctuation, spelling, style and usage. Unsigned editorials express the views of the majority of the editorial board. Letters to the editors should not exceed 300 words. Letters must be signed and of appropriate subject matter. Guest opinions, 500 words or more, will be published as space allows.

The paper reserves the right to edit letters for grammar and clarity, and all letters are subject to laws governing obscenity, libel, privacy and disruption of the school’s educational process. Opinions in letters or commentaries are attributed to the author. Such views are not necessarily those of the staff, nor should any opinion expressed in a public forum be construed as the opinion or the policy of the adviser or administration, unless so attributed.



If all the nations in the world are in debt, where did all the money go?
Cartoon/Dallas Luce

Letters
to the
Editor

A collaboration from teen mothers at Neshaminy in response to the October 24, 2008 article by Nicole Onisick, “Society’s double standard on teen pregnancy.”

My best friend is a three month old baby.

~ When I first found out I was pregnant, I was really scared. It’s hard telling your parents because you’re afraid of what they’ll say. At first, you don’t want people to find out because it’s still a shock. You don’t know what to do and you feel alone. Making a decision about what you’re going to do is one of the biggest decisions of your life.

~ Being young isn’t easy. It comes with a lot of pressures, one being sex. I don’t know the percentages, but a lot of people in high school are sexually active. People think that because we were irresponsible at the moment that our babies are a mistake. That is not the case. From the moment we decide to give birth to our babies and to raise them, we take on all the same responsibilities as any other mom.

~ If you do not have a baby, you can’t really know what you’re talking about when it comes to teen moms. Having a baby is the biggest change in a woman’s life. Teen pregnancy and parenting take away your social life. The first year is the roughest time. We lose a lot of sleep on top of going to school and work. When I want to go out I have to pack a diaper bag full of baby necessities, including diapers, blankets,

bibs, extra clothes and pacifiers. Being pregnant or raising a child takes a lot of responsibility. You have to reorder your priorities. My baby’s needs are my top priority.

~ When people pass judgment on teen pregnancy it makes me feel upset and hurt. The things we go through are so hard. No one who doesn’t live in the same situation knows the struggles.

~ You give up all the socializing and going out because to you the only thing that matters is that one little person who calls you “mommy.” Some of us don’t have the baby’s father around to help us out. Why not get on the males who help make the babies and then leave us stuck with those babies.

~ Not all guys walk away. Most people assume the guys want nothing to do with a child. There are a few decent guys that are willing to do all that they can to be part of their child’s life. Raising a baby is hard, so we need all the help we can get. Some guys think it’s the end of the world. Others know its hard but it is a joy in the end.

~ Those who don’t have the children think it’s cute, that it’s easy, or even that it’s dumb to be in this position. But is it dumb that I could be raising a great basketball player, an astronaut or even the next president? Teen moms are the same as older moms. Our kids are the greatest thing that’s ever happened to us. I love my life as a mom and we love our babies more than anything in this world.

My best friend’s idea of a good time is to suck on his fingers and slobber on himself. Watching him do it is my idea of a good time.

Written by the teen mothers of NHS

Thumbs up Thumbs Down	
Thumbs Up	Thumbs Down
- The Turkey Feast, Beefy Cheesies, and Big Daddy lunches, that we could not make it through the week without.	- We’re still not sure whether to use the “soap” in the bathroom to wash our hands, or as hand sanitizer.

Awards

The publication has received recognition by the Columbia Scholastic Press Association in the following years - First Place: 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1986, 1989, 1990, 1992, 1993, 1994. Bronze Medalist: 2001. Silver Medalist: 1995, 2000, 2003, 2008. Gold Medalist: 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007.



Send Us a Letter!

Email your Letters to the Editor at
Playwickian@yahoo.com



CROSS FIRE



Presidents from approximately 100 universities, including Duke and Dartmouth, are instructing lawmakers to lower the legal drinking age to 18, according to USA Today. Mothers Against Drunk Driving is fighting against the cause, accusing the presidents of looking for an easy way out of a major problem.

Don't lower drinking age... or bottoms up at 18?



By Jami Notarfrancesco
Staff Writer

When a person turns 18, they enter the beginning of adulthood. There are many rights-of-passages that come along. That new adult can legally vote, buy cigarettes, and enter the war. One thing they cannot do, however, is legally buy and drink alcohol.

Lowering the drinking age would only help college presidents not have to take responsibility for the deaths on campus from underage drinking. According to USA Today, Mothers Against Drunk Driving said the presidents are misrepresenting science and looking for an easy way out of an inconvenient problem.

Someone who may disagree with me on this issue would probably say that lowering the drinking age would make kids not want to do it as much because it's legal. A person would rather do something to be a "rebel" instead of following the law.

I believe that because it's legal, a person would actually drink more. If the drinking age was lowered, an 18 year old wouldn't have to worry about getting in trouble with the law or their parents for going out and getting drunk. Since that person wouldn't get in trouble, they would drink heavier.

The average teenager gets their license at age 17, giving them one year of experience to drive before turning 18. Personally, I believe one year isn't even enough experience for a teen to drive not under the influence and be able to handle some of the situations that occur on our roads today.

Allowing an 18 year old, who has their license, to drink, would be like putting a death sentence on them. The number of drunk driving accidents would increase rapidly if the drinking age were lowered.

More parties would go on with alcohol, more people would be getting drunk, and when those people are drunk and need to leave the party, their resource for getting home will be driving themselves, and possibly a group of more people.

Research has found that more than 40 percent of college students had at least one symptom of alcohol abuse or dependence, more than 500,000 students suffer injuries each year related to drinking, and about 1,700 die in such accidents. With the drinking age lowered, those numbers would quickly increase.

According to cdc.gov, binge drinking is also associated with many health problems including alcohol poisoning, STD's, high blood pressure, liver disease, sexual dysfunction, and unintended pregnancy. Why would college presidents even think about lowering the drinking age when so many problems could happen due to it?

Lowering the drinking age would only help college presidents from getting in trouble for allowing underage drinking to occur on campus. It won't help the young adults drink less and it won't prevent fewer deaths from binge drinking. The college presidents need to stop thinking about themselves and trying to find an easy way out. They need to start putting their foot down and do something about the problem.



By Katey Smyth
Staff Writer

College presidents of nearly 100 popular universities like Duke and Penn State have insisted the drinking age be lowered to 18, due to binge drinking on campuses. Lowering the drinking age would be highly beneficial because it would reduce the desire of alcohol, giving new adults fair privileges they deserve. Lowering the legal drinking age would better college students and their parents as well.

Parents wonder why their kids rebel. "It's kind of like when you're older sibling said 'Look!' as a child. It never failed, that that's exactly what I did," said Kyle Smyth, NHS graduate and Junior at St. Josephs.

From the second that children enter the world, there's something about them that makes them want to do exactly what they're not supposed to. Alcohol is a major example of how young adults rebel against their parents.

"Being on the brink of turning 21, I've talked to many friends who have already taken the jump and they say drinking loses much of its appeal because there's not that much risk anymore," said Josh Sohmer, graduate of NHS and Junior at Penn State. If the drinking age was lowered to 18 then it would not encourage kids to binge drink in college. Drinking would not be illegal, and such a thrilling and tempting risk.

"My parents have always trusted me, so it never gave me a reason to go out of

my way to rebel in that sense," said sophomore Susie Mayer. Parents just make the desire that much more potent when they tell their kids not to drink.

By lowering the drinking age, it would give newly established adults the privileges they deserve as U.S. citizens. At age 18, one can be drafted, drive, buy cigarettes, donate blood, and be considered legal adults.

If they can kill themselves slowly by the hazards of cigarettes, save a life by donating blood and put their life on the line to defend our country, why is having a drink such a big deal?

Alcohol consumption can be dangerous, but so can everything else an 18-year-old does. They are trying to find themselves and test their personal boundaries. Current law won't stop college kids from having a drink. It will only further encourage their rebellion.

If students are going to drink anyway, they should feel comfortable going to the hospital in the event of

an emergency. Several people have died of intoxication just because they were afraid of getting in trouble for taking an underage and obviously drunk friend to the hospital.

It is better to be chastised for drinking than have a friend's death on the weight of someone's shoulders. Secrecy and lies of underage drinking will only add to the issue of drinking itself.

The drinking age should be lowered to give 18-year-olds the freedom they should have as an adult. In the long run, lowering the drinking age would be highly beneficial. After all, is alcohol, a materialist object, really the problem, or is it the people who choose to abuse it?



Should the drinking age be lowered to 18 years old to prevent binge drinking, or is it the easy way out of a not so minor problem?
Photo/ Courtesy of spokesmanreview.com

Money issues force students to rethink dream college



By Stephanie Catrambone
Editor In Chief

As seniors make their final decisions and send their letters of consent to the colleges they will ultimately attend, it seems that factors like class size, location, athletics, majors and national ranking are simply irrelevant in comparison to the money factor. Now more than ever,

students are flocking to affordable in-state schools in avoidance of the MeritAid.com projected \$10,000 of debt of the average college student.

With the market's meltdown, a new bailout every time one turns on the news and home foreclosures, even well-off families are on-edge. Sacrifices are being made, whether it's resorting to reclusion because one night out costs half a paycheck, or turning the heat down a couple of degrees in order to save money off the heating bill.

But are ambitious hardworking students willing to sacrifice their dream college and settle for the local, affordable college that was never initially on their list? It appears so; public colleges, with

an influx of bright, financially unstable students, are getting a boost up on the national scale, according to USAToday.com.

But private colleges, the Ivy Leagues in particular, are expecting fewer applicants for fall 2009, which makes perfect sense; CollegeBoard.com reveals that while the average cost of tuition yearly for a public college is \$13,000 (some public schools can cost less than \$7,000), private colleges' tuition stands at more than twice that number at \$27,000 yearly for what, to me, is the same education. And this doesn't even take the costs of room and board into account.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor,

of the 3 million 2007 high school graduates, over half applied for financial aid.

For parents especially, the idea of college has become a burden. While they want the very best for their children and it kills them to see their children not attending their dream school, students are unrealistic in assuming that their parents can afford to spend an unimaginable amount of money, when what they're paying for is a name.

Have you ever seen, in person, \$50,000 dollars? Didn't think so.

Unless you want to be in tens of thousands of dollars in debt, debt that you won't pay off until well into your career, strongly consider a college that won't annihilate your parents' bank account.

Surrounded by ‘frenemies,’ who can we trust?

By **Kenny Thapoung**
Business Editor

Gossip: Addictive, malevolent and absolutely despicable. Gossip happens to act like a social epidemic. But gossiping itself is not the problem. Sure, it causes drama that everyone tries to avoid but it couldn't live if we were surrounded by

trustworthy people. Maybe we should take a harder look at who we tell, instead of just what we say.

Friends are our support systems. They're our third leg when we can't seem to stand on our own, our buddies we go with to a midnight premier, and most importantly our confidants when we need someone to talk to. Amigos, chums, pals or however one wants to label them, those

we form life-long bonds with are the ones we tend to spill-out our guts to.

So how can we tell which friend is trustworthy? How can we be sure that he or she won't "accidentally" spill the beans? And how well do you really know somebody?

I was sitting in English class, and usually it's an absolute bore, but one assignment actually grabbed my attention. Our teacher posted a prompt on the board for us to write freely about: "What characteristics must a person have for you to know you can trust them? Can you ever really trust someone? Why or why not?"

Is it the comforting way they caress our backs in the hopes of lifting our moods, or is it the way they put you in your place when our heads engorge into blimp sized stature and we forget who we are? Who knows?

"I gain trust in someone as I get to know them," junior Brittany Brown said. "As I get to know people better I learn whether or not I can trust them."

You may think you can trust your friend of 17 years, but in reality you can't be too sure. Things tend to slip and peer pressure pushes so hard that some people are forced to reveal the truth. Stuff happens. Don't get me wrong, I love my friends as much as everybody else. But let's be honest, would you really tell your closest friend something so horrifying, so

humiliating and potentially dangerous that it could ruin you?

Life-long friendships could just as easily turn into eternal hatred. So what would keep an ex-friend from telling everyone all of the secrets you confided to them?

"If a friend tells a personal secret and you don't want anyone to know then I would find it hard to trust them," senior Carinne Mettus stated. "But if you have a disease or something and someone is worried about you and your friends tells someone, then that just shows that they care."

It's obvious that there's no clear solution as to who we can trust. I can't pinpoint the exact hormone in our biological systems or the correct neurologic connection within our brain that sways us into believing we can put our faith in someone.

The only person that can tell you who to trust is yourself. Lame, I concede, but true. If we each look for different aspects in a personality, like honesty and loyalty, that it would be a crime for me to dictate as to whom you should trust.

We all slip; our parents, teachers, and friends, but don't banish a relationship because of some incident of mistrust. Chances are, the relationships we construct now will stay with us for as long as we want them to.



Are your friends spilling your secrets to the rumor mill? Photo/Steph Catrambone

American gun violence snatches too many lives

By **Tori Hyndman**
Copy Editor

Throughout our nation's history, we have overcome many things never imagined by the average citizen. We now casually head up to the moon, browse the internet regularly, and cure incredulous diseases daily. So, why can't our nation rid itself of violence, the epidemic affecting our everyday lives?

Just by walking through the mall on any given day, one could easily tell how violent America truly is. War games and movies are stocked on the walls of all the entertainment stores, with grown men and little boys drooling over them hopelessly.

According to www.guncontrol.ca, gun related deaths in the United States are among the highest recorded in the world. In Michael Moore's 2004 film "Bowling for Columbine" it was said that Canadians, being the true hunters they are, own more guns than Americans do. This was reinforced in a press release by Ron Paul that Canadians own more firearms per capita in each household than Americans.

Despite how many guns that Canadians hold above us, the number of citizens killed each year by these guns in Canada is only a tiny fraction of the number killed each year in America. Again, guncontrol.ca claims as though in 2005 alone, there were more than 10,000 gun related homicides in America compared to approximately 200 in Canada.

As of now, it seems as though to anyone living in America, or even abroad, our nation is nothing but a hotbed of violence. In controlling the amount of violence our country feeds off every day, maybe limiting the amount of guns distributed and illegally acquired would be a sufficient thing to consider.

"Criminal entrepreneurs," gun traffickers, take advantage of weak federal and state laws to build illegal distribution centers... These are then the guns that are used to wound, maim and kill in our communities," said Thom Maynard, current President of the States United to Prevent Gun Violence, in a SUPGV press conference referencing violence in Chicago, and America as a whole.

This just goes to prove when people have the power or tools necessary to do

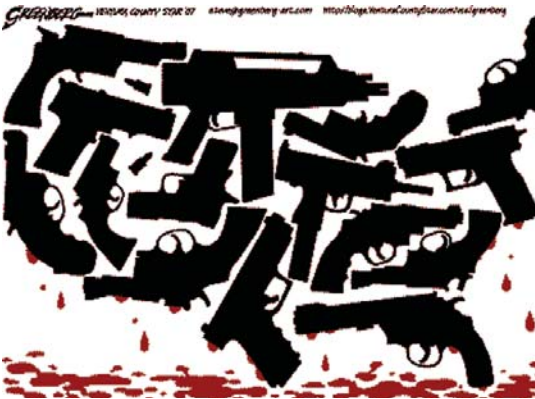
something bad, they are more than likely to utilize these tools negatively than say a person who would not normally own such things, in this case firearms being the topic of interest.

Barbara Hohlt, executive director of States United followed in saying, "There is much that can be done to prevent the flood of illegal guns on our streets... Our Communities can be made safer by focusing on the ways guns become illegal and by disrupting the deadly business of illegal gun trafficking." Here meaning having ownership of firearms, illegal or legal doesn't matter, they are both just as deadly.

And it's true. Many times when gun owners claim of "protecting" their family or belongings by possessing a gun, they are really only putting them in even more danger. A recent study from the New England Journal of Medicine found that guns kept in a home to supposedly protect a loved one were 43 percent more likely to kill such a loved one than a dreaded intruder would be.

Okay, so it is a crazy world out there, is no denying that, but it truly doesn't have to be that way. If people could just learn to trust the people out there to do their jobs of protecting us, instead of shooting them to death much like the recent happenings in Philadelphia, we wouldn't have such a need for these said security weapons in the first place.

President-elect Barack Obama answered in a Politico pre-Potomac Primary Interview this past February, "We can have reasonable, thoughtful gun control measure that I think respect the Second Amendment and people's traditions," and that's exactly what America needs.



Photo/ Courtesy of venturacountystar.com

What's the worst holiday gift you've ever received?



Senior **Greg Diamond**

"A sweater that was made for a twelve-year-old, when I was 17."



Senior **Becki Beadling**

"My friend Kenny Thapoung gave me a live tropical frog in a cup."



When the one minute bell rings I am...



Junior **Andrew Keeling**

"Outrageously concerned."



Senior **Mike Wynne**

"Late 'cause I'm flir-tin' with hall aids."

Who's your favorite holiday character?



Senior **Mike DeAngelis**

"Buddy the elf, because he loves syrup."



Senior **Sean Bradin**

"The Grinch because in the beginning he's all angry and in the end he's cool."

Penn State Alumnus inspires students at NHS



Ed Miller on a typical day of work.
Photo/Jenn Zaidman



By Jenn Zaidman
Circulation Editor

Ed Miller, a teacher known for his obsession with Penn State, and his ineffectiveness to tell a story under 15 minutes, has become one of the most favored teachers by Neshaminy students.

Miller has been teaching for seven years, but has only been teaching at Neshaminy High School for three.

Miller first decided to become a teacher when he was in sixth grade, by wanting to be like his social studies teacher from Klinger Middle School.

As a high school student, Miller went to William Tennent High School, where he worked to fulfill his goals in becoming a teacher.

Miller attended Penn State Abington for two years, and then transferred to

Penn State University Park to complete his college education. Miller graduated from Penn State University Park with a Bachelors Degree, Secondary Ed in Social Studies, and a Minor in Geography.

Miller was assigned to Maple Point Middle School for student teaching, and then advanced to teaching at Carl Sandburg Middle School. He also taught at Central Bucks High School.

At Sandburg, Miller taught eighth grade Social Studies, and was also the boys' and girls' basketball coach. He taught there for two years.

"What do I teach?... kids!" Miller said and laughed. Miller teaches 11th grade Honors, 11th grade college preparatory courses, and Sociology.

Miller has taught many subjects in his teaching career. He has taught Sociology, American History, World History, Current Issues, Economics, Government, and Religion.

Miller's favorite thing about teaching is, "obviously the kids," Miller responded. "Oh, and also being able to assign homework... and not have to do it," Miller added.

When teaching a lesson, Miller can always make his lessons fun by adding a joke and a 15 minute story. "He's funny and interesting, which some teachers lack," junior Brittany Carson stated. "He can turn a boring lesson into something not so boring."

"BBW is on my list of favorite things, definitely BBW," Miller announced. Students of Miller or Henry Oppenheimer know that "BBW" is slang for Big Breakfast Wednesday where the two make a huge breakfast on Wednesdays.

"He always has his books out, he's almost always studying," fellow teacher, and roommate, Oppenheimer acknowledged.

Although Miller is said to be always studying, he believes that his weaknesses are organization and waking up in the morning.

He also believes that his strengths are his stories and being able to relate to the students.

"I consider myself more of an entertainer," Miller answered. "And when someone learns something, then it's a good day!"

'Sydney's Closet' is bringing joy to Philadelphia

By Christina Diletto
Staff Writer

Well, it's that time of year again, to be merry and cheerful, a bit more generous, keep your hopes up high because its time for that season of giving.

Now let's be honest, for most of us, the "season of giving" will include a thoughtful gift for your parents and grandparents, and maybe a cheap present for your siblings. But one student here at Neshaminy, approaches this time of the year with a different attitude.

Senior, Sydney Tabaac, has been apart of a tradition that made its debut over ten years ago and continues on with great success. They call it "Sydney's Closet," and every Thanksgiving, Tabaac and her family rent a huge van that they continue to fill with donated clothes from friends and neighbors, along with countless bagged lunches filled with turkey, chips, fruit, drinks, and other snacks.

"Friends always give us their old and unused clothing during the year, knowing that it will be put to use over the holidays," Tabaac said.

With the van loaded, and spirits high, they set out to the heart of Philadelphia. Here they will find families and individuals who are in desperate need of food, shelter, warmth, and clothes during this

time.

Once the van is parked, the family distributes their donated food and clothing. It's a bittersweet moment for all of them, often ending with tears from witnessing the true appreciation from the homeless.

"They are so grateful that words can-

not express their gratitude towards us, it's my favorite part of the whole day," Marla Tabaac commented.

"As we continue each year, we find many more people contributing to 'Sydney's Closet.' It's great to see that people actually care and want to contribute to our

cause," Bradley Tabaac said.

This holiday season, it is important to think about the families who are less fortunate.

It is about giving, because what you get back in return, is something you will treasure for the rest of your life.

Senior Citizens back in the work force

By Lera Salmon
Staff Writer

Neshaminy High School has its share of substitutes, some of which have already retired from their careers. Throughout the day, these men and women spend their time in classrooms delivering the instructions from the teacher while bringing a lifetime of experience.

Some of these substitutes are Steven Rodos, Marla Anderson, Albert Richardman, and Howard Leiter.

As a newcomer to Neshaminy staff, Steven Rodos is enjoying his time with the schools' students. It is Rodos' first semester as a substitute for the high school. "I find the students have been very cooperative with me as a sub, and I appreciate that," Rodos said.

Rodos, a retired attorney, has been attending board meeting for five years. During golf season, Rodos coaches blind

golfers and says substituting is a fun way to fill in the off season days. Rodos encourages others to get involved in the educational world, and take interest in what is going on at Neshaminy.

Another substitute is Marla Anderson, a former teacher at Neshaminy for 25 years. She has been a substituting in the high school for four years and is very proud of what she does. Anderson's favorite thing about substituting is the kids and the Neshaminy family.

As a member of Neshaminy's staff for 28 years, Anderson has witnessed all the high school's transformations. "It is interesting because I've been here though all the changes," Anderson said.

These senior citizens bring a different perspective and experience to the students of Neshaminy. Sharing their knowledge with the kids at Neshaminy mutually build the character of both the student and the teacher.



Steven Rodos enjoying another wonderful day substituing.
Photo/Mariam Bazzi

Coats for Kids at Shady Brook

By Nick LaPalombara
Staff Writer

The holidays are just around the corner, and it's the perfect time of year to give back to the community. That's why 94.5 WPST radio and Shady Brook Farm in Yardley, Pa have teamed up to host "Coats for Kids," a fundraiser that donates coats and jackets to needy children and families.

The Salvation Army has also partnered up with PST to help gather new or slightly used coats. The event is open to anyone willing to give a coat up until Dec. 23.

For both PST and Shady Brook Farm, an event like this isn't anything new. They've always been loyal and faithful to the community, trying to give as much back as they can.

"The kind of stuff that is apart of our job, is to make sure people think of us as big contributors to the area," Matt Hamlin, a consultant at the PST studio said.

Existing for nearly a decade now, WPST has truly shown citizens across the region that they are willing to step in and make a difference. Whether it's an event like this or to raise money for awareness of breast cancer during a walk-a-thon, they are always there for the people.

Students at Neshaminy High School can help directly by creating baskets to deposit any new or used coats placed throughout the school. Then, by the last day of holiday break, all donated coats will be given to Shady Brook Farm.

Be sure to stop by and make a difference throughout this joyous occasion.

On the Net:
WPST: www.wpst.com/page.php?page_id=25552

WHAT'S GOIN' DOWN

Congratulations to Neshaminy's Students of the Month!

Stephanie Staub for Feasterville
Nick Strickler for Levittown

Dec. 24 - Jan. 5- Winter Recess

Dec. 22 - Beginning of Hannukah
Dec. 25 - Christmas Day
Dec. 26 - Kwanza
Dec. 31 - New Year's Eve

Jan. 9 - Video presentations due for Graduation Project (optional)

Jan. 19 - Martin Luther King Day. NO SCHOOL
Jan. 24 - SAT Testing
Jan. 28-31 - "Hide and Shriek" Drama show
Jan. 30 - End of Second Marking Period

Feb. 10 & 11 - PSSA Writing Exam for Juniors
Feb. 11-14 - School musical "Fame" performances
Feb. 13 - Report Cards sent home

Future Miss America may be among students



Chi Chi Do-Nguyen as she was crowned Miss American Junior Teen 2009 in November.
Photo/Courtesy of Chi Chi Do-Nguyen

By Ellen LoManto
Op-Ed Editor

Lights beat down upon the contestants, who stood in line hand in hand, while the audience of hundreds remained silent in anticipation.

“The announcer paused at every word. My heart was pounding out my chest but when they said Pennsylvania, I knew it was me,” recently crowned Miss American Junior Teen 2009, junior Chi Chi Do-Nguyen said. “I was very surprised and happy.”

Do-Nguyen is an expert of pageants, having taken titles such as Miss Pennsylvania Junior Teen 2007 and Miss Bucks County Junior Teen 2008, but this national win is by far her greatest accomplishment. She beat 55 girls for the crown. The pageant, which hosts competitions for many age groups, took place through Nov. 24 to Nov. 29 and was hosted in the Hilton Hotel in Orlando, Fla.

Her winnings include \$3,000 in cash, a John Robert Powers Scholarship of \$1,000 and a free trip back to Disney next year when it is time to give up her crown. Do-Nguyen also won most photogenic and she was second runner-up in modeling, separate competitions based off of the contestant’s photographs and modeling ability, earning her an extra \$400.

Do-Nguyen, who began pageants two

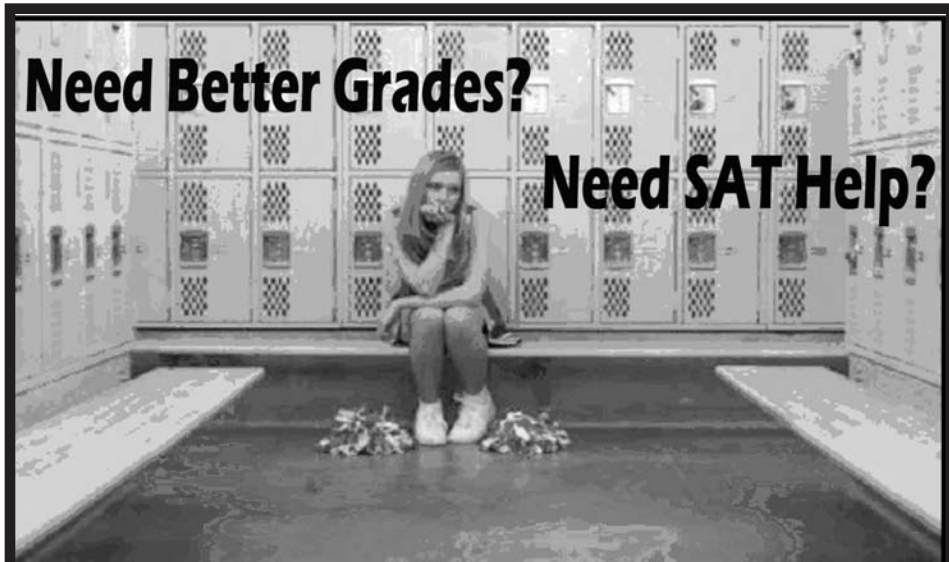
years ago after seeing an ad in seventeen magazine, is in Barbizon School for Modeling and Acting. Her teacher, former Miss Pennsylvania Co-ed 2006 trained Do-Nguyen for the pageant. Preparing for Miss American Junior Teen was not easy. Do-Nguyen had to buy a dress, buy clothes for interview and competition and had to work with two coaches.

Aside from being a beauty queen, she is on distinguished honor roll and voluntarily puts on fashion shows at nursing homes. “I do what any normal teenager does, hang out with my friends, go to football games,” Do-Nguyen said. Disproving many misconceptions of pageant girls, Do-Nguyen is down-to-earth. She chows down on school lunch, her favorite being beefy cheesy nachos and loves Big Macs.

Do-Nguyen is challenging the theory that pageants, or at least Miss America Junior Teen, are run on looks alone. “No one looks for the prettiest girl, it’s all about how you carry yourself and if you can do well in interview,” she said. In order to be eligible to be chosen, good academics and volunteer service are a must.

Although she is currently content with her title, expect much more from Do-Nguyen. “Since I can’t compete while I hold this title, my plan is to enter the Miss Teen USA in two years when I am 18,” Do-Nguyen said.

“The announcer paused at every word. My heart was pounding out my chest but when they said Pennsylvania, I knew it was me.”
~Chi Chi Do-Nguyen



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Jazz Band heads to national conference

By Kyle Reichert
Staff Writer

For years the Neshaminy Jazz Band has been rewarded with grand honors, and this year holds no exceptions. On March 15 the Neshaminy Jazz Band will be given the chance to play at the Music Education National Conference Eastern Division Conference in Providence, R.I.

There they will perform with over 1,800 music educators and students from throughout the east coast which includes college bands and even military bands. This is a bigger year for the Jazz band because they will be the only high school in attendance at the conference.

“It’s just a huge honor to be recognized as one of the elite in the country,” Jazz Band member Chris McLendon said.

The Jazz Band was given this opportunity due to the workings of Jazz Band Director, Dan Weiner. Weiner sent in a recording of the jazz band’s top competition songs of last year to be reviewed by a group of highly qualified music educators.

“It was a big surprise when he told us that we made it in, and after we heard what it was all about we knew it must have been really special,” McLendon said.

The Jazz Band has been hard at work practicing and finding the right music to best represent themselves at the event. “We’ve been primarily focusing on gathering repertoire to prepare for a 50 minute event, which we will perform at the conference. We’re looking into a variety of different genres surrounding the jazz idiom to make a nice variety of music, such as swing, Latin, rock, funk and a ballad,” said Weiner.

“This could help give us a national reputation of excellence for our music program as well as our school district in general,” Weiner said. This gives the band a lot to live up to this March.



Jazz Band rehearses under direction of Dan Weiner. Photo/Mariam Bazzi

Science Club experiments in fun for all students



By Maria Kelmansky
Managing Editor

From bake sales, to the Science Olympiads, to Middletown Earth Day, the Science Club enjoys all science has to offer, while putting it to use and learning and teaching how it can better our world.

The club incorporates various forms of science, with a focus on what the members are especially interested in. Members experience many scientific adventures, including trips and experiments. For example, this autumn, the club took a hike down The Delaware Water Gap and demonstrated an experiment involving diet coke and Mentos during the homecoming football game.

“I had a small number of Mentos in my mouth and drank a diet coke,” president of the club, Rob Beyer explained. “Explosions ensued.”

During meetings, members plan and discuss upcoming trips and events, and prepare for the Science Olympiads, a competition in which the scientific know-how and knowledge of participants is put the test.

The Science Olympiads, held at various colleges, are made up of over 20 events, each encompassing different branches of science, from ecology to physics. While some events are set up in the form of a written or spoken test, others require participants to design and set up their own experiment.

Although the events are challenging, the club hopes that their practice and efforts will grant them an award.

“Last year our valedictorian and his partner won a metal,” Beyer stated. “My partner was Mike Brewer and we still didn’t win a metal. We hope to win some type of award this year, be it a medal or a cookie.”

The Science Club also participates in Middletown Earth Day, held in Core Creek Park, which aims to raise environmental awareness.

“We do hands on experiments in little shows that last for about 15 minutes,” adviser Gale Donohue explained. “We do the experiments, set them back up again, and do them again and again and again to hold a number of shows.”



The Science Club during a nature hike last year with science teachers Jim Murray and Gale Donohue.
Photo/Courtesy of Science Club

The club allows the attendants of the event to observe and learn from the experiments. In past experiments, the club has added certain chemicals to water to show how erosion works and has demonstrated how acid rain affects the environment.

The Science Club’s members also look forward to trips to Long Wood Gardens and to a museum, which will be decided at a later date. In previous years, the club has ventured through the Franklin Institute, the aquarium and other museums.

“Science is fun and can better our lives—especially environmentally,” Donohue said. “Everyone is welcome to join the Science club. We do a lot of fun things and we encourage anyone who is interested in any form of science to stop by a meeting.”

Mr. Romance turns red



By Jenn Zaidman
Circulation Editor

“Rob & Big” fan, Jason Wilkins, not only wishes he was on the show, but he also hopes to become like his chemistry teacher, Eric Horchheimer, who is well-known for his never-ending energy, his cheerful personality, and being stopped in the hallway, getting asked for a hall pass.

What is your favorite thing about Christmas time?
Presents... and setting up traps to catch Santa.

If you could speak to one type of animal what would it be?
Snuffaluffagus.

If a genie gave you one wish what would you wish for?
To be like Mr. Horchheimer.



Science teacher Eric Horchheimer wrapping Jason Wilkins up in “Cha Cha Cha, Charmin.”
Photo/Jenn Zaidman

Where is the happiest place on earth?
Anywhere that I am.

What kind of toilet paper do you use?
“Cha Cha Cha, Charmin.”

What would you change your name to, if you had to?
Nosaj Snikliw.

What’s your favorite song to dance to?
“Stop... hammer time!”

What TV show do you wish you were on?
Rob & Big, because I do work.

Would you rather become a super hero or super villain?
Super hero. I have to save the ladies from their super villain boyfriends.

If you could be any color, what color would you be?
Red, because A) it’s my favorite color and B) it’s the color of romance, which is something I exceed in.

What’s your favorite slogan?
“Just Do It.”

What is the most upsetting child-hood news?
Finding out the tooth fairy was my mom. So, basically she’s robbing me of my teeth and paying me for it. I don’t know where she’s hiding those teeth, but...

In James and the Giant Peach, why is the peach so giant?
Because everything’s better bigger.

What is your favorite Neshaminy memory?
Last year, playing basketball in Gym 3... when there was a Code Blue.

Ninja Turtles or Power Rangers?
Power Turtles.

What do you think the title of this article should be?
Interview with Mr. Romance.

What is the hardest question you’ve ever been asked?
Anything in math or chemistry.

Puzzle Time

LUZZLES Luzzles are word puzzles evolved from the creative yet puzzling mind of English teacher Dan Luongo.

NESHAMINY
DICEDICE

TEN-good-SIONS

THE sANd

Answers: 1. Neshaminy
2. Good intentions
3. Head in the Sand.

Answers: 1. Neshaminy
2. Good intentions
3. Head in the Sand.

FIND THE DIFFERENCE

The elves are going nuts in the workshop! Seven things in the picture on the right are missing or different in the picture on the left. Can you find them all?

Photo/Courtesy of <http://familyfun.go.com>

Mazed™ "Santa Claus"

by Isaac Thayer

Answers to the November crossword puzzle

Photo/Courtesy of <http://britton.disted.camosun.bc.ca/>

Musicians eagerly welcome grand piano

By David Brock
Student Life Editor

Year after year the music department has been using a very poor quality piano that was not well suited for the high quality choirs at Neshaminy. Well that time has passed.

Since June 2006, vocal students at Neshaminy had fundraised vigorously with high hopes and expectations, dreaming that one day they would see a brand new grand piano to accompany the choir as they sing.

That moment had come at the end of the '07-'08 school year when the funds finally came in to purchase is a Steinway Model B Grand piano.

In June 2006, music students kicked off the fundraiser with a recital entitled "Neshaminy Classics."

The original plan for the fundraising was for the money to go towards the restoration of the old grand piano that the choir has not used in over a decade. However after the estimate came in at \$50,000, it was decided to purchase a new grand piano instead.

"We haven't had a functioning grand piano for 20 years," choir director Kristin Cloak stated. "It was finally time to just

do something with it."

The grand total of the piano came to a whopping \$65,500, all of which was fundraised.

The piano made its debut at Neshaminy's annual Orchestra and Choir Winter Concert earlier this month while accompanying the Concert Choir.

Along with the Winter Concert, the grand piano will be featured

"I'm really excited because it gives us an icon to be proud of," choir president Dan Feldman stated.

Other students are ecstatic with the arrival of the new piano as well

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Along with the Winter Concert, the grand piano will be featured in the school's upcoming musical titled "Fame."

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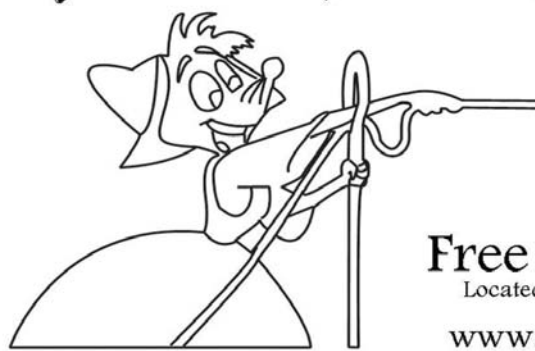
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Dan Feldman*



Choir Director Kristin Cloak playing one of the songs at rehearsal for the Orchestra and Choir Concert held earlier this month.
Photo/David Brock

Lynn Castle, seamstress

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Future Miss America may be among students



Chi Chi Do-Nguyen as she was crowned Miss American Junior Teen 2009 in November.
Photo/Courtesy of Chi Chi Do-Nguyen

By Ellen LoManto
Op-Ed Editor

Lights beat down upon the contestants, who stood in line hand in hand, while the audience of hundreds remained silent in anticipation.

“The announcer paused at every word. My heart was pounding out my chest but when they said Pennsylvania, I knew it was me,” recently crowned Miss American Junior Teen 2009, junior Chi Chi Do-Nguyen said. “I was very surprised and happy.”

Do-Nguyen is an expert of pageants, having taken titles such as Miss Pennsylvania Junior Teen 2007 and Miss Bucks County Junior Teen 2008, but this national win is by far her greatest accomplishment. She beat 55 girls for the crown. The pageant, which hosts competitions for many age groups, took place through Nov. 24 to Nov. 29 and was hosted in the Hilton Hotel in Orlando, Fla.

Her winnings include \$3,000 in cash, a John Robert Powers Scholarship of \$1,000 and a free trip back to Disney next year when it is time to give up her crown. Do-Nguyen also won most photogenic and she was second runner-up in modeling, separate competitions based off of the contestant’s photographs and modeling ability, earning her an extra \$400.

Do-Nguyen, who began pageants two

years ago after seeing an ad in seventeen magazine, is in Barbizon School for Modeling and Acting. Her teacher, former Miss Pennsylvania Co-ed 2006 trained Do-Nguyen for the pageant. Preparing for Miss American Junior Teen was not easy. Do-Nguyen had to buy a dress, buy clothes for interview and competition and had to work with two coaches.

Aside from being a beauty queen, she is on distinguished honor roll and voluntarily puts on fashion shows at nursing homes. “I do what any normal teenager does, hang out with my friends, go to football games,” Do-Nguyen said. Disproving many misconceptions of pageant girls, Do-Nguyen is down-to-earth. She chows down on school lunch, her favorite being beefy cheesy nachos and loves Big Macs.

Do-Nguyen is challenging the theory that pageants, or at least Miss America Junior Teen, are run on looks alone. “No one looks for the prettiest girl, it’s all about how you carry yourself and if you can do well in interview,” she said. In order to be eligible to be chosen, good academics and volunteer service are a must.

Although she is currently content with her title, expect much more from Do-Nguyen. “Since I can’t compete while I hold this title, my plan is to enter the Miss Teen USA in two years when I am 18,” Do-Nguyen said.

“The announcer paused at every word. My heart was pounding out my chest but when they said Pennsylvania, I knew it was me.”
~Chi Chi Do-Nguyen



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Jazz Band heads to national conference

By Kyle Reichert
Staff Writer

For years the Neshaminy Jazz Band has been rewarded with grand honors, and this year holds no exceptions. On March 15 the Neshaminy Jazz Band will be given the chance to play at the Music Education National Conference Eastern Division Conference in Providence, R.I.

There they will perform with over 1,800 music educators and students from throughout the east coast which includes college bands and even military bands. This is a bigger year for the Jazz band because they will be the only high school in attendance at the conference.

“It’s just a huge honor to be recognized as one of the elite in the country,” Jazz Band member Chris McLendon said.

The Jazz Band was given this opportunity due to the workings of Jazz Band Director, Dan Weiner. Weiner sent in a recording of the jazz band’s top competition songs of last year to be reviewed by a group of highly qualified music educators.

“It was a big surprise when he told us that we made it in, and after we heard what it was all about we knew it must have been really special,” McLendon said.

The Jazz Band has been hard at work practicing and finding the right music to best represent themselves at the event. “We’ve been primarily focusing on gathering repertoire to prepare for a 50 minute event, which we will perform at the conference. We’re looking into a variety of different genres surrounding the jazz idiom to make a nice variety of music, such as swing, Latin, rock, funk and a ballad,” said Weiner.

“This could help give us a national reputation of excellence for our music program as well as our school district in general,” Weiner said. This gives the band a lot to live up to this March.



Jazz Band rehearses under direction of Dan Weiner.

Photo/Mariam Bazzi

Science Club experiments in fun for all students



By Maria Kelmansky
Managing Editor

From bake sales, to the Science Olympiads, to Middletown Earth Day, the Science Club enjoys all science has to offer, while putting it to use and learning and teaching how it can better our world.

The club incorporates various forms of science, with a focus on what the members are especially interested in. Members experience many scientific adventures, including trips and experiments. For example, this autumn, the club took a hike down The Delaware Water Gap and demonstrated an experiment involving diet coke and Mentos during the homecoming football game.

“I had a small number of Mentos in my mouth and drank a diet coke,” president of the club, Rob Beyer explained. “Explosions ensued.”

During meetings, members plan and discuss upcoming trips and events, and prepare for the Science Olympiads, a competition in which the scientific know-how and knowledge of participants is put the test.

The Science Olympiads, held at various colleges, are made up of over 20 events, each encompassing different branches of science, from ecology to physics. While some events are set up in the form of a written or spoken test, others require participants to design and set up their own experiment.

Although the events are challenging, the club hopes that their practice and efforts will grant them an award.

“Last year our valedictorian and his partner won a metal,” Beyer stated. “My partner was Mike Brewer and we still didn’t win a metal. We hope to win some type of award this year, be it a medal or a cookie.”

The Science Club also participates in Middletown Earth Day, held in Core Creek Park, which aims to raise environmental awareness.

“We do hands on experiments in little shows that last for about 15 minutes,” adviser Gale Donohue explained. “We do the experiments, set them back up again, and do them again and again and again to hold a number of shows.”



The Science Club during a nature hike last year with science teachers Jim Murray and Gale Donohue.
Photo/Courtesy of Science Club

The club allows the attendants of the event to observe and learn from the experiments. In past experiments, the club has added certain chemicals to water to show how erosion works and has demonstrated how acid rain affects the environment.

The Science Club’s members also look forward to trips to Long Wood Gardens and to a museum, which will be decided at a later date. In previous years, the club has ventured through the Franklin Institute, the aquarium and other museums.

“Science is fun and can better our lives—especially environmentally,” Donohue said. “Everyone is welcome to join the Science club. We do a lot of fun things and we encourage anyone who is interested in any form of science to stop by a meeting.”

Mr. Romance turns red



By Jenn Zaidman
Circulation Editor

“Rob & Big” fan, Jason Wilkins, not only wishes he was on the show, but he also hopes to become like his chemistry teacher, Eric Horchheimer, who is well-known for his never-ending energy, his cheerful personality, and being stopped in the hallway, getting asked for a hall pass.

What is your favorite thing about Christmas time?
Presents... and setting up traps to catch Santa.

If you could speak to one type of animal what would it be?
Snuffaluffagus.

If a genie gave you one wish what would you wish for?
To be like Mr. Horchheimer.



Science teacher Eric Horchheimer wrapping Jason Wilkins up in “Cha Cha Cha, Charmin.”

Photo/Jenn Zaidman

Where is the happiest place on earth?
Anywhere that I am.

What kind of toilet paper do you use?
“Cha Cha Cha, Charmin.”

What would you change your name to, if you had to?
Nosaj Snikliw.

What’s your favorite song to dance to?
“Stop... hammer time!”

What TV show do you wish you were on?
Rob & Big, because I do work.

Would you rather become a super hero or super villain?
Super hero. I have to save the ladies from their super villain boyfriends.

If you could be any color, what color would you be?
Red, because A) it’s my favorite color and B) it’s the color of romance, which is something I exceed in.

What’s your favorite slogan?
“Just Do It.”

What is the most upsetting child-hood news?
Finding out the tooth fairy was my mom. So, basically she’s robbing me of my teeth and paying me for it. I don’t know where she’s hiding those teeth, but...

In James and the Giant Peach, why is the peach so giant?
Because everything’s better bigger.

What is your favorite Neshaminy memory?
Last year, playing basketball in Gym 3... when there was a Code Blue.

Ninja Turtles or Power Rangers?
Power Turtles.

What do you think the title of this article should be?
Interview with Mr. Romance.

What is the hardest question you’ve ever been asked?
Anything in math or chemistry.

Puzzle Time



Luzzles are word puzzles evolved from the creative yet puzzling mind of English teacher Dan Luongo.

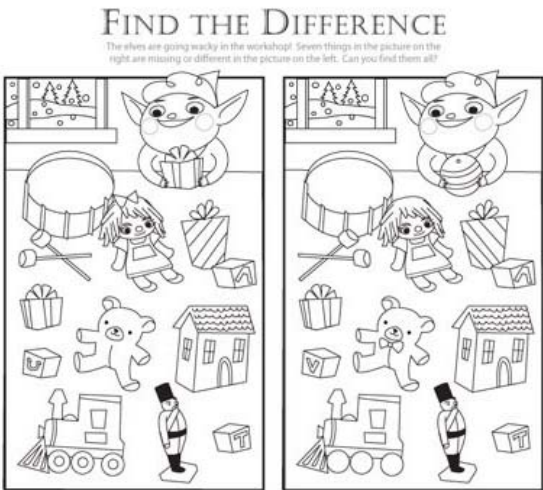
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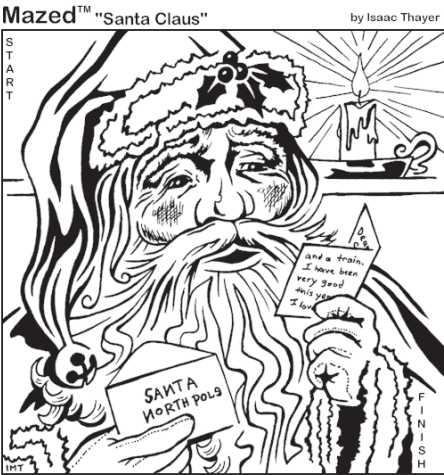
THE sANd

Answers: 1. Neshaminy
Paradise 2. Good intentions 3. Head in the Sand.

To suggest a puzzle, e-mail us at playwickian@yahoo.com

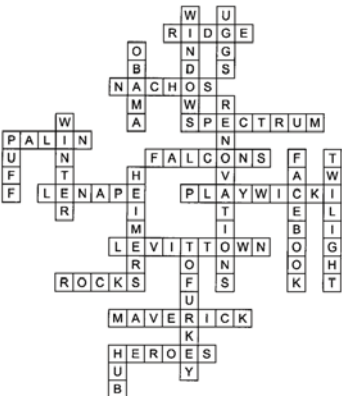


Photo/Courtesy of <http://familyfun.go.com>



Photo/Courtesy of <http://britton.disted.camosun.bc.ca/>

Answers to the November crossword puzzle



Doctor finds possible AIDS cure through bone-marrow transplant

By Stacey Mathew
Special Features Editor

Since the beginning of the AIDS epidemic, 1.5 million Americans have been infected with HIV, and more than five hundred twenty-four thousand have died of AIDS, according to www.youthaids.org. However, German hematologist Dr. Gero Huetter recently stated that he cured an HIV infection through a bone-marrow transplant.

HIV, human immunodeficiency virus, is a virus that attacks specific white blood cells. These cells are crucial to the human immune system, and when HIV weakens this system, the body will become much more vulnerable to a variety of illnesses, according to globalhealthreporting.org.

A person can be diagnosed with AIDS, acquired immunodeficiency syndrome, after they are diagnosed with HIV. AIDS is the phase in which the body's immune system is severely damaged, or when the victim has developed a serious disease that would most likely not affect someone with a normal immune system.

This virus has plagued the world for

years, but recently, a possible solution has been discovered. One percent of Europeans inherit a certain mutation in their cells that prevent HIV, as stated by The Wall Street Journal.

Huetter (who is not an AIDS specialist) deliberately replaced the bone-marrow cells of the 42-year-old American patient battling AIDS and advanced leukemia with that of a donor who had this mutation. Over six hundred days later, the virus has not been detected in the patient's blood.

"I was very surprised," Huetter said, according to the Wall Street Journal. However, this is not necessarily a dependable cure for the virus.

Huetter himself said that bone-marrow transplants are so hazardous that, "they can't be justified ethically" unless it is in an extreme case, such as a very late stage in leukemia, stated TIME magazine.

Also, it is not certain that the patient has won his fight against AIDS because it is quite plausible that HIV cells have not been detected in certain parts of the body,

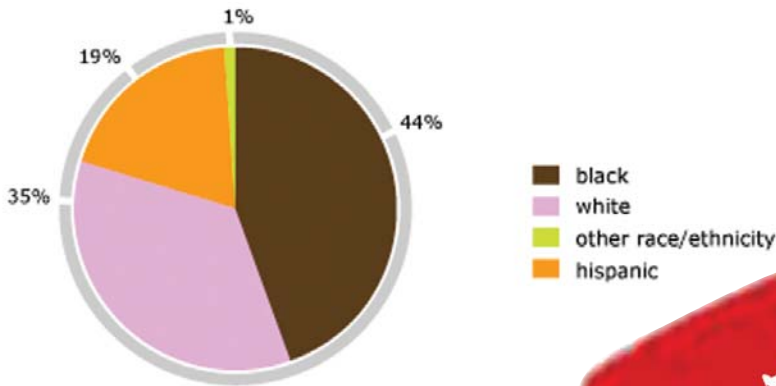
and many researchers suspect that the tests that have been taken so far by the patient might not be so thorough.

Dr. Andrew Badley, director of the HIV and immunology research lab at the Mayo Clinic, told the Associated Press, "A lot more scrutiny from a lot of different biological samples would be required to say it is not present," according to TIME magazine.

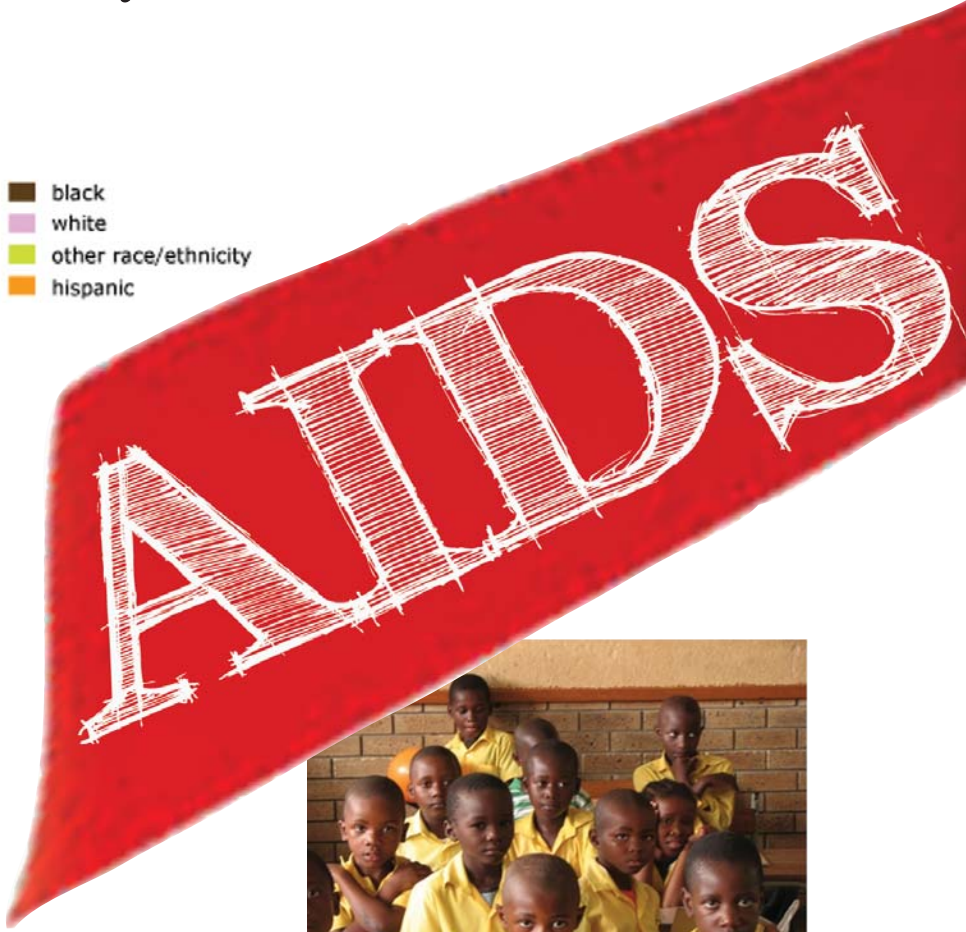
Nevertheless, this cure still shows that progress has been made in this research. "If we can find out exactly how this patient fought HIV, we might learn more about natural protective immunity," pointed out Dr. Catherine Hankin, chief scientific adviser at the UN AIDS agency in Geneva, as stated by abcnews.com.

Indeed, aside from all the risks, this possible cure shows results from all the research that has been done. This cure provides the world with more hope for an end to this epidemic.

The races most affected by AIDS

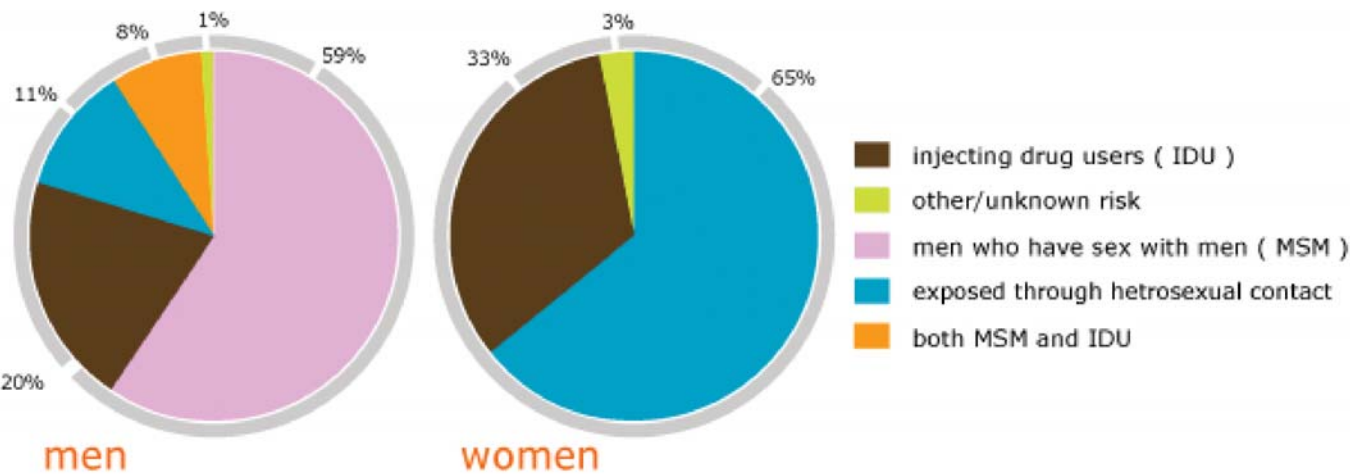


Orphan children living with AIDS bring their needs and questions to the XV International AIDS Conference in Bangkok, Thailand.
Photo/ Courtesy of www.avert.org



School children in Kwazulu Natal, South Africa suffering from AIDS.
Photo/ Courtesy of www.avert.org

How teens and adults most commonly get AIDS



Graphs/ Courtesy of www.avert.org

“You have so much power to bring awareness, prevention, and change.” ~ Ashley Judd, Actress and YouthAIDS Global Ambassador

Prevent AIDS everyday

By Ellen LoManto
Op-Ed Editor

AIDS does not have a cure, has no problem taking over your life, and even ending it. However by leading a risk-free lifestyle, AIDS becomes entirely preventable.

HIV, which is a precursor to the fatal disease AIDS, is transmitted when someone affected by HIV passes on their body fluids (blood, seminal fluid, vaginal secretions) in to the body of another person. HIV invades the body through the bloodstream, the reproductive organs, glands, anus, eyes, nose, mouth, and damaged skin caused by rashes or eczema.

Sexual contact with an infected person is a surefire way to get HIV. Unprotected sex is never okay, no matter how your partner tries to convince you. Anyone can lie about their history. Condoms are the only contraceptive methods, other than abstinence, that reduce the risk of AIDS.

Although condoms reduce the chances of receiving the disease, it is still possible to contract HIV. And abstinence happens to be an unpopular trend among our generation. So if you are sexually active, it is best to have as few partners as possible, ones that you know and trust to be free of AIDS.

But it would be wise to keep in mind that no matter how genuine your significant other may appear to be, you don't know what they do behind your back or what really happened on their spring break vacation. Your partner could have had HIV for years and unknowingly passed it onto you. To be safe, go with your partner to Planned Parenthood to get tested for free before becoming sexually active. You have nothing to lose, but so much valuable information to gain.

Sharing needles, which often occurs while using drugs, is another common way to get infected. The best way to protect yourself is by, well, not doing drugs! But people do become chemically dependent, and while they should avoid using the method of injection to take drugs, healing their drug addiction is the only way to reduce risk.

Great measures have been taken to prevent AIDS from being passed along during blood transfusions or any injections at the doctor's office or hospital. Because of laws and regulations, it is becoming very rare to obtain the disease that way. AIDS can also be passed down from mother to child during birth and also during breastfeeding, but both are preventable due to medicine and are happening less and less often.

Alcohol and drugs affect judgment and may cause a loss of concern, which makes people more susceptible to using drugs through dangerous ways or having sex with without protection with many, unreliable partiers.

Companies raise money for research

By Danielle Olander
Special Features Editor

With the growing AIDS crisis, people often just stand back and watch. However, there are a select few who go above and beyond the call of duty to help those who have been affected by AIDS.

According to www.volunteersolution.org. ActionAIDS is the largest service provider in Philadelphia as well as the commonwealth of Pennsylvania. ActionAIDS was founded back in 1986 with eighty-seven volunteers.

In 2008, ActionAIDS has a 74 full-time and five part-time staff that helps approximately 4,000 people living with AIDS/HIV in the Philadelphia region.

Along with the full and part-time workers, ActionAIDS also has about 325 active volunteers. Most of them are a part of their Buddy programs, a program that gives emotional support to clients. Their program is the third largest in the nation and the only one existing in Philadelphia.

Another provider is the AIDS Fund located on Locust Street in Philadelphia. They are a non-profit organization that distributes funds to over forty organizations in the Philadelphia region and nine in the county regions.

The AIDS Fund has their annual AIDS walk in late October. The walk is a one day, 12-k event that starts and ends at the Philadelphia Museum of Art According to www.aidswalkphilly.org, the walk raised over \$425,000 this year. The AACO, AIDS Activities Coordinating Offices, has raised \$25,933,512 from the Ryan White Part A, Ryan White Part B (formerly Title I and Title II, respectively), Minority AIDS initiative and PA AIDS Personal Service, as recorded by www.phila.gov.

Another group that helps the Buck County region is called FACT, Fighting AIDS Continuously Together. According to www.factbuckscounty.org, this program goes out to schools, healthcare associations and special interest groups and gives special presentations. Maybe one day they will pop by Neshaminy High School.

Everyone's favorite New Yorkian theater Broadway now has their own AIDS Fund as well. Broadway Cares, according to broadwaycares.stores.yahoo.net, is the nation's leading industry-based, non-profit AIDS fundraising and grants making organization.

Classical Action is one of the oprograms that Broadway Cares is in charge of. This program depends on the kindness of the classical jazz and performing arts communities to raise funds.

Starbucks has also joined the race in raising money for AIDS research. According to www.starbucks.com, from Nov. 27 to Jan. 2, Starbucks will donate five cents for every purchase of a RED Exclusive beverage. Those beverages include a Peppermint Mocha Twist, Gingersnap Latte and Espresso Truffle.

There are many ways out there to raise money for the AIDS research, and the money is still very much needed. Across the nation, this is becoming known through the great effort that is put into these fundraisers. Now, all that is left is to recognize this need.

Photo/ Courtesy of www.starbucks.com

Where to get tested for HIV

Text your zip code to “KNOW-IT” (566948) to find the nearest HIV/AIDS testing site

Planned Parenthood of Bucks County/Bensalem
2185 Galloway Rd
Bensalem, Pennsylvania 19020
215-638-0629

Planned Parenthood Association of Bucks County
721 New Rodgers Rd
Bristol, Pennsylvania 19007
215-785-4591

Bucks County Health Department
7321 New Falls Rd
Levittown, Pennsylvania 19055
215-949-5805

Planned Parenthood of Bucks County/Warminster
610 Louis Dr
Warminster, Pennsylvania 18974
215-957-7981

Planned Parenthood Sountheast Philadelphia
8210 Castor Ave
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

-Simple blood test or mouth swab sample is all that's needed to be tested.

Musicians eagerly welcome grand piano

By David Brock
Student Life Editor

Year after year the music department has been using a very poor quality piano that was not well suited for the high quality choirs at Neshaminy. Well that time has passed.

Since June 2006, vocal students at Neshaminy had fundraised vigorously with high hopes and expectations, dreaming that one day they would see a brand new grand piano to accompany the choir as they sing.

That moment had come at the end of the '07-'08 school year when the funds finally came in to purchase is a Steinway Model B Grand piano.

In June 2006, music students kicked off the fundraiser with a recital entitled "Neshaminy Classics."

The original plan for the fundraising was for the money to go towards the restoration of the old grand piano that the choir has not used in over a decade. However after the estimate came in at \$50,000, it was decided to purchase a new grand piano instead.

"We haven't had a functioning grand piano for 20 years," choir director Kristin Cloak stated. "It was finally time to just

do something with it."

The grand total of the piano came to a whopping \$65,500, all of which was fundraised.

The piano made its debut at Neshaminy's annual Orchestra and Choir Winter Concert earlier this month while accompanying the Concert Choir.

Along with the Winter Concert, the grand piano will be featured

"I'm really excited because it gives us an icon to be proud of," choir president Dan Feldman stated.

Other students are ecstatic with the arrival of the new piano as well

"We were good before, but kind

of limited. Now we have a grand piano to improve our sound to the next level," Feldman said.

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Even though the piano has been paid in full, the fun filled "Neshaminy Classics" concert will still be here for all to hear later this school year.

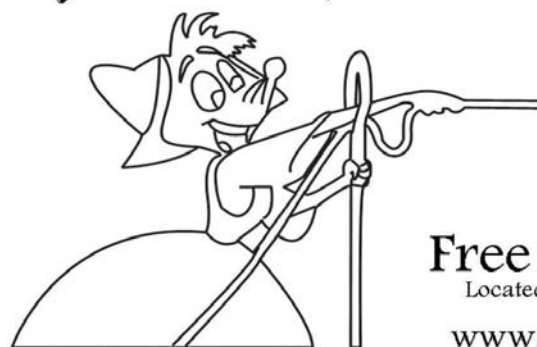
A concert dedicated to the arrival of the new piano will be held at a later date this year to show appreciation of the support that came from the many people who made the fundraising and purchase of the piano possible.

*"I'm really excited because it gives us an icon to be proud of."
~Choir President
Dan Feldman*



Choir Director Kristin Cloak playing one of the songs at rehearsal for the Orchestra and Choir Concert held earlier this month.
Photo/David Brock

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STUCK IN THE MIDDLE

This month we welcome work from the students of Poquessing Middle School.

Tri-M honors students in musical way

By Alexandria Escribano
Grade 9

Tri-M stands for Modern Music Masters. It is a world-wide honor society that recognizes secondary music students for their musical ability, academic excellence, school involvement and community service. Being newly brought to Poquessing Middle School, Tri-M is the newest honor organization Poquessing has to offer.

When asked why Tri-M was brought to this school, Jason Leigh, general music and vocal teacher at Poquessing, gave



many reasons. “Mrs. Lisa Bocutti and I wanted to further honor music students who are not only talented, but are hard workers in the classroom as well.”

Last year, the first group of members made up of 8th and 9th graders was admitted into Tri-M in a December ceremony.

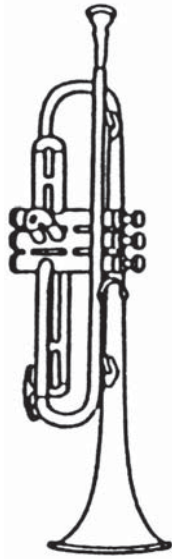
This year, another group will be admitted of 7, 8, and 9 graders, due to the current grades moving up to the high school next year.

The officers of Tri-M resemble any normal honor society and are as follows: a president, vice-president, secretary and a treasurer. Also included, is a historian, whose job it is to document and capture on film our community endeavors in the year.

Jason Leigh and Lisa Bocutti are the people who look for out of school opportunities to serve our community and organize performances. Other than those times the organization is completely student driven.

“We help brainstorm ideas, and contact businesses that students would otherwise not be able to contact, apart from those instances; we let the students decide on what they wish to do,” said Jason Leigh of the inner workings of the society.

Tri-M is international and is slowly making its way into our Neshaminy School District. Hopefully, Neshaminy High School will soon institute their own branch so that students can continue to participate once they leave Poquessing.



Music teacher follows own voice, inspires

By Charlotte Reese
Grade 9

Daniel Weiner is currently a music teacher at Poquessing Middle School and favored by many. He directs the high school jazz band as well as Poquessing’s jazz band and is a general music teacher at Poquessing. He was a music student himself in Pennsbury School District. He has also taught at Neshaminy Middle, Lower South Elementary and Schweitzer Elementary.



Weiner’s mother, being his favorite person in the world, made him who he is today. She has influenced him the most by showing him many types of different music and getting him involved in music. He also says that the death of his father really changed who he is as a person. It made him grow up and want to be more like his dad and live his life more like him, which was that of someone 8“selfless”. He has truly lived up to that too.

When asked if he could be famous for one thing what would it be, he replied, “I don’t really want to be famous, I want my students to become famous and for me to know I had something to do with it, is all I need.”

Besides being a selfless guy, Weiner is also known as being the cool, friendly teacher around the halls. He knew he wanted to be a music teacher in tenth grade because it was his strongest talent. While he has earned the respect of his students, he tries to keep a friendly atmosphere. He said that when he was in school he had a couple of cool teachers and he knew that he wanted to be like them.

Weiner uses the phrase “Crush it” frequently and when asked why, he replied, “Because it means for you to work as hard as you can all the time.” Weiner, a true inspiration, continues to make a difference in the lives of his students.

Student Council embraces holiday spirit

By Josh Reznik
Grade 9

Poquessing’s student-based organizations always find ways to give back to the community during the holiday season. These groups have once again had a great response by the student body and the staff.

In November, the Poquessing Student Council continued their tradition to make Thanksgiving baskets for other Poquessing families.

Each grade was responsible for bringing in specific items that would be part of a Thanksgiving dinner; the staff provided the turkeys.

The Poquessing Student Council made a total of twenty-four Thanksgiving baskets, exceeding their goal of twenty-one baskets. “It is holiday cheer,” Finley stated, “It’s not necessarily about presents, just about giving back to the community.”

At the beginning of this month, Poquessing’s new chapter of the Tri-M Music Honor Society also got into the spirit of giving this holiday season. The honor society was collecting non-perishable food items to donate to a local food bank at their holiday concerts held on Dec. 2 and Dec. 3. Bins were placed in the lobby outside the auditorium both evenings and people supported the cause.

“People should give back this time of year because no one deserves to be hungry or lacking anything during the holidays,” Alexandria Escribano, 9 grader and Secretary of the Tri-M Music Honor Society about the collection said.

“Our goal was to make sure as many families as possible have a meal on the table for the holidays,” Escribano also said. Poquessing’s efforts in giving back to the community resulted in success. Families of Poquessing Middle School were able to have a festive meal on Nov. 27 with the help of the Student Council, and families in the local area are going to be able to have a festive meal this winter holiday season with contributions from the Tri-M Music Honor Society. The school has done a wonderful thing by giving back to the community during this holiday season.

Poquessing’s bad rep undeserved

By Jonathan Bell
Grade 9

For years, Neshaminy School District and other school districts have thought of Poquessing as nothing more than a poor and lacking school.

It’s been called “*Poorquessing*” and “*P.M.S.*,” along with many other discriminating and degrading nicknames.

As an elementary school student preparing for my move to Poquessing Middle School, I had originally thought that the read name of the school was “*Poorquessing*” because of how many times I had heard the term.

If all of this is true how is it that in the last 10 years the majority of the valedictorians have been from Poquessing?

How have Poquessing’s sports teams dominated, with a 5 and 1 record, and Poquessing’s

110 football team beat other middle schools?

Poquessing’s Music Department is also commendable.

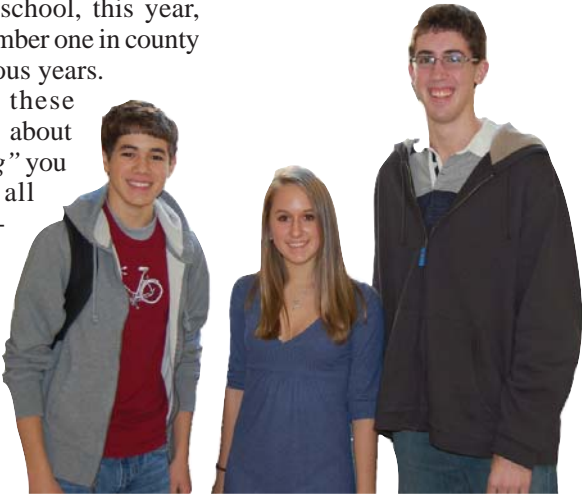
Vocally, Poquessing presented more soloists in Neshaminy’s District Choir than any other middle school, this year, and ranked number one in county choir in previous years.

If all of these facts are true about “*Poorquessing*” you would think all the other middle schools were even better, but the truth is Poquessing is no where near the stereotypes associated with it.

As matter of fact,

Poquessing is nothing like these stereotypes.

This school has continued to stray from its stereotypes in hopes that others would really see Poquessing as it is: a smart, strong, and talented school.



Seniors Stephen Moyer, Carinne Mettus and Bryce Kleeman, Poquessing alumni, are in the running to be class valedictorian.

Photo/Steph Catrambone

Attention:

One of Poquessing’s employees is in the fight of her life. She and her husband are hardworking people who are courageously fighting cancer and facing foreclosure on their modest home.

[See the related article that appeared in the Bucks County Courier Times at <http://www.phillyburbs.com/pb-dyn/news/219-120220081630786.html> for more details.]

Several Poquessing’s teachers have made a goal for 100 people to donate \$10 each month. If you are interested, please email teampoquessing@yahoo.com

They’d like to collect deposits by the 15th of each month. Thank you for considering this great cause!

-Kim May, Marge McCurdy, Margie Page, Maggie Veacock and Chris Warmingham

Poquessing Distributors:

Jonathon Bell, Alexandria Escribano, Charlotte Reese,

Josh Reznik

Adviser:

Joanne Clothier

Alumnus achieves fame as Circa Survive's bassist



By Amanda Kuehnle
Entertainment Editor

When I discovered I would be interviewing Thomas Lyons, a graduate from Neshaminy and current bass player for Circa Survive, I couldn't believe it. I sent my interview questions the day he agreed to talk to me and checked my e-mail nonstop for two days, waiting for his response.

Surprisingly, Circa Survive's members are a rare form of musicians. In spite of their vast talents and rightful fame, they are just like the rest of us.

Despite their lyrics being tattooed on hundreds of teenage bodies, their popular songs and their worldwide touring, you will be astonished to see they don't know the true impact of their pandemonium.

And with such respect, I feel it's only right for them to talk directly to the readers of the Playwickian.

1. What kind of subjects inspire you?
Anything and everything! Mundane things like interpersonal relationships, obscure abstract feelings/thoughts, world history, current events/politics, and all subjects related to the occult as well as religion, science, science fiction, sex, love, hate, alien life forms, celebrity culture.

2. How would you best describe the band?
A work in progress. But if you mean genre

wise... no matter what we do it all goes back to rock n' roll.

3. One thing you want your fans to know?
That they can do whatever they want.

4. Where does the band practice?
Well, for the last three years we've all lived in the same house in Doylestown, Pa. And we had a two story garage in the backyard that we soundproofed. So that's where we wrote the last album, and where we've rehearsed for tours. Since then we've rented a separate house to write our new album in that's 15 minutes away from the house we live in, we now practice there.

5. Are your songs about real events?
Some are and some are not. I suppose it depends how you define "real" and "event".

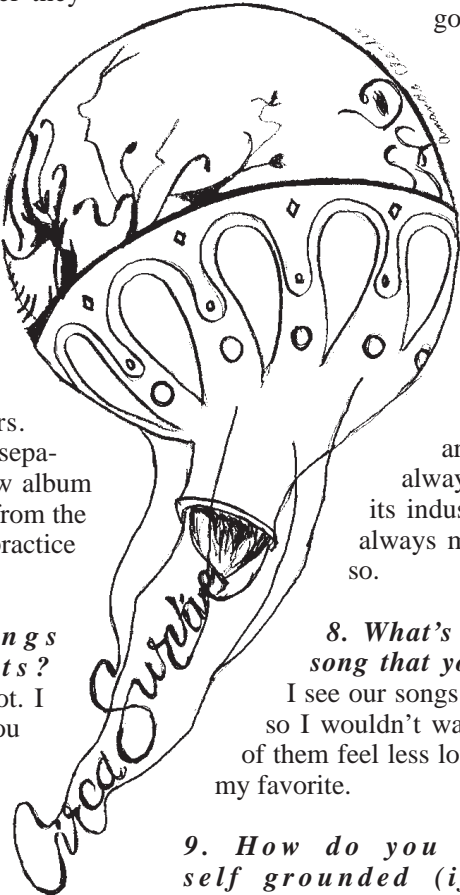
6. Where do you plan to take the band from here?
We're going to take it as far as we can go, an unknown destination currently. We never thought it would come as far as it has so it's all just surprising and amazing from this point on.

7. Do you feel the glimpse of

fame has changed your opinion on music and the music industry?
We don't feel famous. And we don't think of fame as being a goal. It's almost the antithesis of our goal. But we have many friends/peers who would fall in the category and nothing about fame seems appealing, nor does it seem even remotely related to being a respectable artist. Music will always be sacred and its industry will almost always make it feel less so.

8. What's your favorite song that you've written?
I see our songs as children and so I wouldn't want to make any of them feel less loved. They're all my favorite.

9. How do you keep yourself grounded (if you do)?
Keeping yourself grounded is a funny thing. I think the best thing you can do is just continue to do things as if nothing is different. We live abnormal lives but we are pretty normal people. If anything I



think we find it funny that anyone would see us as above them or even worth admiration. We are talented but so are so many other people that get no credit at all. We just got lucky. That's how I see it.

10. Favorite place to perform?
Anywhere my friends and family are watching. Regionally southern California, Philadelphia and New York City are pretty tough to beat.

11. What advice can you offer others trying to get involved in music?
Love what you do and who you do it with. Make sure your skin is thick. Prepare to be poor for a long time. Get used to sleeping on floors and van seats.

12. What do you miss most about Neshaminy?
I got through it with the help of a few good friends and a bunch of great teachers who encouraged me in my passions. I cried my eyes out on the last day, not so much because I was going to miss it but because of how scared I was of the future. For anyone feeling that.... do not worry, the universe is wise. Stay positive, give and receive love on a daily basis and your story will write itself.

13. What did Neshaminy help prepare you for?
On one side it prepared me for how cold the world can be. On the brighter side it showed me that self expression, art and love can offset that coldness. If not melt it completely.

Harry Potter fairytales

BOOK REVIEW

By Becca Stough
Entertainment Editor

"The Tales of Beedle the Bard," the latest book by Joanne Rowling, the renowned author of the "Harry Potter" series, was released on Dec. 4, 2008. "Beedle" is a collection of children's stories from the world of "Harry Potter." Essentially, these are the fairytales that the fairytale characters know and love. (HP SPOILER: it is also the book that Hermione Granger inherits from Professor Albus Dumbledore in the seventh HP book, "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows.")

Being a compilation of magical bedtime stories, the book isn't really geared toward an adolescent audience. However, the commentary by everyone's favorite Hogwarts Headmaster after each story, giving more insight into the world of Harry Potter, should be enough to amuse even the most avid Potterhead. Though the book is miniscule in comparison to the previous Rowling works, a mere 111 pages, it is meant as a kids' story.

The books are selling for \$12.99 in the United States and, as is usual for Rowling, the profit of the proceeds from the book sales goes toward the Children's High Level Group. The CHLG is a charity that Rowling cofounded in 2005 to help children who are marginalized and institutionalized all across Europe. For more information visit www.chlg.org.

The tales themselves are, as most children's stories go, adorable, and as always, have a heartwarming moral (in most cases).

The first story, "The Wizard and the Hopping Pot," carries the message of how helping one's neighbor benefits everyone in the community.

Next comes "The Fountain of Fair Fortune," a story about overcoming one's own demons and fighting one's bad luck on one's own, very self help.

"The Warlock's Hairy Heart," is a much darker yarn pertaining to how shirking emotions is a dangerous thing to do, for feelings are what separates man from beast and to lose them would be a great loss to a person's humanity.

The fourth fairy-tale of "Babbitty Rabbitty and Her Cackling Stump," tells the reader that magic can't solve every problem a person will ever face; sometimes you simply have to let things be.

The final and most famous fable of the book "The Tale of Three Brothers," makes a point that arrogance and aggression can pull a person to an early grave but humility and wisdom allow someone a long and prosperous life.

"We hope that Professor Dumbledore's insights, which include observations on Wizarding history, personal reminiscences, and enlightening information on key elements of each story, will help a new generation of both Wizarding and Muggle readers appreciate 'The Tales of Beedle the Bard,'" Rowling said in the introduction to the book.

Said commentary is hilarious for the older reader, though some may find it slightly less appropriate for children, as much of the notes are meant to be a satire on the history of banned books.

Though probably not for the general population, the avid "Potter" fans, as well as both the young and the young at heart will most likely adore "the Tales of Beedle the Bard," for its witty humor, sharp commentary, and (almost) always heartwarming fluff.

Turkey Rating (out of five):



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Too early to push Obama girls into spotlight?

POPtorial

By Jenna Overton
Entertainment Editor

As President-elect Barack Obama and his family prepare to move into the White House, they're constantly being bombarded with guest-star proposals from various television networks. It's surprising to most, however, that one of those networks was Disney Channel and that its proposal wasn't toward the president, but to his daughters. Billy Ray Cyrus, father and co-star of Disney sensation Miley Cyrus, was recently quoted inviting the Obama girls to guest star on his daughter's hit kids' show, "Hannah Montana."



Malia, 10, and Sasha, 7, may not yet know how difficult it is to be first daughters of the United States.
Photo/Courtesy of www.newsday.com

"We're pleased that Malia and Sasha are fans and, as long as their parents say it's OK, they are invited to the set of 'Hannah Montana' and all Disney Channel shows, for a guest role or a visit, anytime," Cyrus said, according to www.cbsnews.com.

This invitation is quite an honor, as "Hannah Montana" is possibly Disney's most successful craze in history, not to mention Malia and Sasha's favorite show. But in such a controversial time, the Obamas' safety is at a much higher risk than that of most elected candidates' families because of their race. Should Barack and Michelle push their daughters, ages 10 and 7, into the spotlight of the media so soon?

With such young girls living at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue for the first time in decades, what's the chance that either one of them—pressured by their worldly positions or the media or both—

will become the next Lindsay Lohan or Paris Hilton?

"They are kind of like me before I started my own career," Miley Cyrus said, according to www.dailystar.co.uk with regard to Malia and Sasha Obama. Though the teen-superstar was probably referring to the girls' youth and sudden thrust into the limelight, she also (maybe accidentally) hits home on the fact that the Obama girls, like a young Miley, are blissfully ignorant to the horrors of the media. Because of the status and obligations that come with daddy's job, they will quickly discover how difficult it is to grow up under the watchful eyes of not only the citizens of this country, but of every person in the world.

On Nov. 12, Cyrus was quoted revoking his offer to Malia and Sasha at the CMA awards, according to www.usmagazine.com. He stated that the reason was because the entire situation snowballed out of control before anyone really knew what was going on, which is a feeling that Barack and Michelle—who

never commented on the invitation or its revocation—should probably become acquainted with if they plan to raise young girls in the White House.

"As a daddy, I'll say to him what I say to any daddy, you may not want your daughter to get into show business," Cyrus warned in an article on www.bud-dytv.com. "But if the girls want to be on the show, and him and his wife think it's a good idea, I always say, everything in life, what's meant to be will happen."

It's probably in the best interest of everyone that Barack and Michelle Obama wait a few years before allowing their daughters into the often cruel world of the entertainment industry. Though their appearance in the media is completely inevitable as first daughters of the United States, Malia and Sasha should attempt to be normal kids for as long as possible before they're swept up in the pandemonium that has already begun to infiltrate their lives. Hopefully, their innocence can be preserved until the end of Obama's first term, at the very least.

Spears' new album tops charts



Nicole Onisick
News Editor

The wannabe-innocent blonde we all know and love is finally back, and hopefully not just for one more time. Britney Spears has topped the charts once again with her sixth studio album, "Circus," a title that seems perfect for both Spears' life and new collection of songs. With the whole world rooting for her, and her hair intact, she is finally back.

After a very public head shaving, a few stunts in rehab, the psych ward and a brutal custody battle, it seemed as though Spears would never turn herself around. Although the pop star's life seemed to be spiraling downward, her career certainly never had that problem. Spears' last album, "Blackout," topped charts for weeks, and her newest album seems to be following the trend. In October, Spears' first single off of "Circus," "Womanizer," made pop music history by jumping from number 96 to number one on the Billboard Hot 100 in just one week.

Keeping it fresh and avoiding the tabloids, Spears' album includes exactly what was expected. From up-tempo dance hits to cheesy love ballads, it's all you can hope for from the pop princess. Opening the album up with her most popular single, "Womanizer," the album goes through its highs and lows. Her second track "Circus," is already topping charts.

The lyrics are lacking, but the songs are begging to make the top of billboards and land a spot on iPods everywhere. But the loopy, top-charting dance songs only come so far, and then come the poorly written love ballads. She might want to leave the cheesy, heartfelt songs that require serious vocal talent to Beyoncé, and settle for crowd pleasing dance hits. Considering one of her bonus tracks, "Radar," was originally from Spears' last album, it leaves us wonder-

ing if she were better off postponing her album a bit longer rather than just a mere 13 months after her last.

After snagging three of MTV's VMA awards in September, the standards had been set for her next album. With such high expectations, "Circus" only made it half way. If fans were expecting a "Blackout" part two, only a few limited songs resemble the techno, chart-topping songs off her last album. Her hits such as "Mmm Papi," and "Kill the Lights," beg to be number one.

"You want your crazy, I got your crazy," Spears sings on her number one single "Womanizer," this comes as proof that this CD was aimed at a comeback. Considering the 27-year-old is in her own bubble and under the care of her father, she keeps her tracks original and for the most part unlike anything on the radio.

Spears and her crew could have spent a few more months coming up with a stellar album. "Circus" isn't Spears' best work, but it isn't her worst either. She takes on this album with confidence and uses her lyrics to get back at all her haters.



Turkey Rating (out of five):



MTV-hosted inauguration ball

By Jocelyn Joseph
Copy Editor

The nation's youth is coming together to celebrate a new era of administration under President-elect Barack Obama during the MTV-hosted inaugural ball on Jan. 20 at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center, Washington D.C.

The "Be the Change Ball" will celebrate the vast attendance of young American voters during the 2008 presidential election. According to the Nov. 25 article published on futuremajority.com, 18 percent of the 133.3 million voters ranged from 18 to 29-years-old, exceeding the number of voters older than 65 for the first time in 20 years.

MTV, along with ServiceNation, a broad coalition of youth service organizations, will encourage America's youth to be active in their communities by including live broadcasts and stories of young people serving local and international problems.

*"We have seen a groundswell of engagement and a refreshed spirit of activism for young people."
~ MTV General Manager Stephen Friedman*

"Over the last year and culminating in the election, we have seen a groundswell of engagement and a refreshed spirit of activism for young people," general manager of MTV Stephen Friedman said. "We want to celebrate young people across the nation who are answering the call and working to make changes in their communities and beyond."

The inaugural ball will emphasize the power of America's youth. It will encourage those who have aided their communities and promoted change with a new generation of leadership.

MTV programming will broadcast live across its many platforms and channels featuring lead artists, govern-

ment officials and celebrities. Hundreds of young people were selected to attend the event based upon their commitment to volunteering at events worldwide. More than a million people are expected to arrive at the nation's capital.

The 1993 "Rock n' Roll Ball" for the election of Bill Clinton attracted the elite of Hollywood. While the 2005 inauguration of President George W. Bush was covered by MTV, no ball or party was held. Jeannie Kedas, an MTV spokesperson, said that no bias was involved in the decision but that it was a mere result of youth participation.

"It's not about the candidate as much as it is about youth involvement," she said. "This was clearly an election that was driven by youth activism, and it felt appropriate to celebrate that and do what we can to keep that spirit of activism going."

The inaugural ball faces controversy as some believe holding a ball this time is a reflection of political parties. Natalie Tocatlian, sophomore at NHS, feels that the decision to hold the ball was based upon young people and their opinions about President-elect Obama.

"If you're not happy with your president, you're not going to throw him a ball," she said. "I think a lot of people like Obama because he is young. It makes sense because it depends on the choices of young people."

With a new president, different leadership, and enhanced youth participation, the main goal of the ball is to convey social change through volunteer service.

MTV is hoping the "Be the Change Ball" will inspire Americans across the nation to solve problems and take initiative as its youth has to be the change they wish to see in the nation.

FILM PREVIEW

Seven Pounds

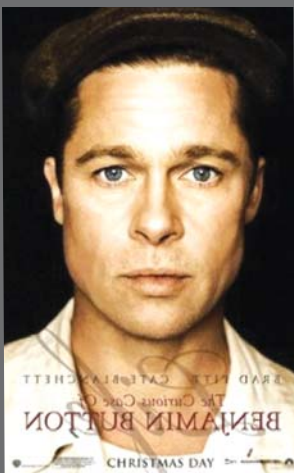


Premieres: Dec. 19, 2008

MPAA Rating: PG-13

After tragedy befalls him, IRS agent Ben falls into a deep depression and decides to commit suicide. Before he dies however, Ben chooses to help seven people who are facing hard times. What Ben doesn't plan on is falling for one of his charity cases. With Will Smith, Rosario Dawson, and Woody Harrelson leading the cast, "Seven Pounds" promises to be packed with drama.

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button



Premieres Dec. 25, 2008

MPAA Rating: PG-13

This story follows the life of a man who is born in his eighties and ages backwards, averaging out in the middle. Brad Pitt plays the title character supported by a star studded cast including Cate Blanchett, Taraji P. Henson, and Tilda Swinton. Based on the book by F. Scott Fitzgerald, this movie "is a grand tale of a not-so-ordinary man and the people and places he discovers along the way, the loves he finds, the joys of life and the sadness of death, and what lasts beyond time," according to imdb.com.

Junior Tyler has unique style



By Christina Diletto and
Tori Styner
Staff Writer and Expressions
Editor

Down in the art center, working just about four days a week, junior Mike Tyler has been creating unique artwork which falls in the category of "surrealism". "The stuff that could never actually happen," as he had put it. Although, he is known to take his Mondays off for some necessary relaxation time, Tyler continues to show hard work throughout the rest of the week down in the art rooms, art teacher Kate Storck commented.

Tyler has been involved in the art program here at Neshaminy for the past three years and is currently enrolled in Advanced Art two classes. Interested in mainly surrealistic art, it is artists' like Tyler who can transform vivid images, perhaps, dream sequences, futuristic innovations, or abstract ideas, into art.

Surrealistic art is known for its elements of surprise and non sequitur. Meaning, like Tyler had mentioned,

"stuff that could never actually happen." This leaves Tyler with the freedom to create just about whatever he would like.

"Mike definitely has a unique approach to all of his projects and never compromises his creative vision," Storck said. This creative vision and inspiration comes in part from Tyler's own dreams, and he noted that "reality frustrates him." Aside from that, he is also inspired by artists he admires. A few to note are H.R. Giger, Salvador Dali, and Michael Godard, each with their own distinct style or art.

Tyler knew he would be involved in art at a very young age. "I knew I was talented in art, probably when I was in first grade," Tyler said. And his interest in art is not going away anytime soon. Tyler hopes to continue in the arts, with aspirations to attend the University



Tyler thrives on surrealistic art styles.

Photo/Mariam Bazzi

of the Arts in downtown Philadelphia. Hoping someday to be an artist and a sculpture, Tyler continues to expand his portfolio throughout his remaining two years here at Neshaminy.

The Playwickian's Five Favorite Holiday Movies

1. Elf
2. A Christmas Story
3. How the Grinch Stole Christmas
4. The Santa Claus
5. The Polar Express

Fey's scar secrets revealed

By Adrienne Gervasio
Staff Writer

Writer and actress Tina Fey is best known for her hilarious skits on the NBC show "Saturday Night Live" in which she has been acting since 2000. But something Fey has always been hesitant to talk about is the scar on her left side of her face, running from her chin to her cheek that fans having been questioning since she started.

Fey would avoid questions about the scar when she was confronted about it in the past. "It's impossible to talk about it without somehow seemingly exploiting it and glorifying it," Fey said in an interview with Vanity Fair. In that same interview, Jeff Richmond, Fey's husband, tells that a stranger slashed Tina's face when she was 5-years-old and playing in the front yard of her home in Upper Darby, Pa.



Fey's scar may not be noticeable, but it symbolizes a traumatic experience from her childhood.

Photo/Courtesy of www.keminications.com

Fey claims that she was actually very confident as a child and didn't really notice the scar. In her Vanity Fair interview, Fey says she has never felt unattractive because of it. On her show "30 Rock," which she created, writes for, and produces, her character favors her right side. "It's really almost like I'm kind of able to forget about it, until I was on-camera, and it became a thing of 'Oh, I guess we should use this side' or whatever," Fey said.

In Vanity Fair, husband Richmond mostly spoke about the scar. "That scar was fascinating to me ... This is somebody who, no matter what it was, has gone through something. And I think it really informs the way she thinks about her life," Richmond said. "When you have that kind of thing happen to you, that makes you scared of certain things, that makes you frightened of different things, your comedy comes out in a different kind of way, and it also makes you feel for people."

One of the few times Fey has ever briefly spoken of the scar was for a New York Times interview in 2001. Apparently, she kept quiet about the scar to spare her parents the memory of the incident. "It's a childhood injury that was kind of grim," Fey said. "And it kind of bums my parents out for me to talk about it."

It could be possible that Fey would really rather had not her husband comment on the scar that she has kept quiet about for so long. The barely noticeable scar hasn't held Fey back from a very successful career in entertainment, with her five Emmy awards won in the short amount of time that she has been in entertainment.

CD REVIEW

808s and Heartbreak Kanye West



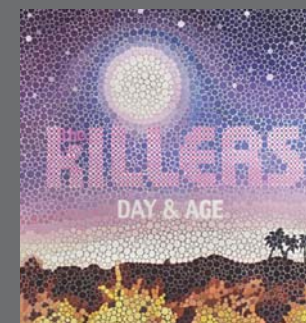
Released Nov. 24, 2008

Rap & HipHop

Roc-A-Fella Records

Kanye West's new album features several coalition songs with fellow hip-hop artists Lil Wayne and Young Jeezy, and the entire thing is co-signed by music artist and producer T-pain, according to www.mtv.com/news. Including top-charting hits that the radio has already forced listeners to fall in love with, such as "Love Lock Down" and "Robocop," this album is nothing but a successful continuation of West's already-legendary work.

Day and Age The Killers



Released Nov. 24, 2008

Alternative Rock/New Wave

Island Records

If the top single "Human" is any indication, this album is a revival of the dance-y, synthesized, pulsating beats that the Killers' audience knew and loved with "Hot Fuss." Though this album isn't as brilliant as their first, the Killers' third album is sure to be a smash, but it may take a few listens before the genius of "Day & Age" really hits the listener. An album worth your patience.



What will end first?

by Brittany Hoffman

Destruction
A pressing matter that leads to an ultimate obliteration
If I could hide myself from the absolute devastation
that encases this ruined world
I'd construct my mind a fortified fortress
If only reality's annihilation wasn't so imminent
My heart would not be so damaged with despair
Like a gloom that wreaks over a joyous flower
This depression is endless
Instead of this misery I'd prefer to be snuggled
into a blanket woven without the world's despondency
an alternate reality with a technicolor coating
no more black and white desolation!
The confrontations between arrays of hostilities
Which world will crash first?
A world of conflict?
Or the fiction of a fake peace?

A Snowflake Story

by Jocelyn Joseph

Crystalline patterns,
were melting upon my touch,
entwined stories fading.

Winter

by Rebecca Yacker

I knew you had been here
I could tell from the snow
Your foot prints were scattered
To where I do not know
The wind was strong with cold
The frost had already set in
But your foot prints still reside
Where others have not been
I want to stay to see if you'll return
the probability is small
But I guess I'll never learn
To completely stop looking
For a person who doesn't burn
Your fire has gone out
Extinguished with no concern
I came to say goodbye
To tell you that you were wrong
That the feeling that once thrived
was now just dead and gone but you had
already left
Another web you've weaved out of what we had
Although you say you don't deceive
Your truths are not false but they are not true
But I should have guessed that it was apart we
grew
Long before you left
long before we sank low
For the secrets I'll never find are
Buried in the snow

A Restrained Cold

by Inna Rokhvarg
Teased by the layers
It whines, hungers at the surface,
still a small nuisance.



by Erin Lux

Worth the Brutal Exterior

by Katey Olivia Smyth

He may be unbreakable
But the surface is scratched to smithereens
He can be so motionless
But he blends into any beautiful scene
Nobody see's him for his potential
Just the beat up outside
Deep down he holds such value
With each of his varied sides
He grows life on his exterior
And he's the first to support the weak
He doesn't crack, snap, scar
Or even crimson bleed
One after another build on him
And he never falters support
He hides away feeling
And his reasons come up short
He's dull in color to ones iris
And so simple at first glance
His thoughts are isolated
And he never gets the chance
He doesn't appear smart
And yet he's wise beyond his years
He's out of place but never does he fear
He flows with the stream
And obstacle of himself he stands
He's pushed along by others
Or still he quietly stands
His beauty resembles nature
His body just a blockage in the river
Stopping the tears from flowing
And he doesn't ever shiver
He's as icy as a stone
And he skips through life with ease
He's jagged and he's worn
And his touch is instant freeze
If you're ever patient enough
To crack him open slow
His limbs are filled with crystals
And his heart can make you glow

★ MY ♥ & SOUL! ★

I close my eyes, COUNT TO TEN.
BREATHE IN SLOWLY, EXHALE AGAIN.
CLEAR MY THOUGHTS, ONLY DISTRACTION.
FOCUS ON ONE, SHEAR SATISFACTION.
VISUALIZE THE MOMENT, SEIZE IT, HOLD IT.
CAPTURE YOUR FINISH, VICTORY HAS IT.

by Martina Drew

Expressions is an organization that seeks the creative prose, poetry, art and photography of Neshaminy's students. Pen names are accepted and will be used at the authors request. Please include actual name so Expressions can contact you for permission to publish. Work can be submitted to the Playwickian Office in G202, to Dennis Howie in Room G213, or to Tori Styner, Expressions Editor. Submissions can also be taken via email to Expressionsmag@gmail.com or to toristyner@yahoo.com.



Winter wrestles for boys’ best

By Matti Curran
Sports Editor

Former Neshaminy wrestler and current instructor Dan Winter is all about progress this season. His one percent-better-per-day objective will be put to the test for the first time as he was just named head coach.

Winter graduated from NHS in 1999 and continued his education at Lycoming College where he earned his Bachelors in Biology, then onto Temple for is Masters in Curriculum, Instruction and Technology. He has been teaching in the district for six years.

He began wrestling when he was six years old. “I am the youngest of four and have two older brothers. I thought this might help me get one over on them,” he admitted. Let down that it was nothing like WWF, he wanted to quit. Thankfully, his dad made him stick it out.

“I attribute a lot of my character traits from my parents not letting me give in so easy,” he said.

This year, the team is fairly young, but Winter has confidence that Neshaminy could finish in the top three in the SOL. With a slight lack of experience in a lot of the wrestlers, he is putting the msot emphasis on technique, balance and strength.

“He knows it’s a hard task, especially as his first year as head coach, but he’ll give it his all for us to become very successful. He’s determined to make sure we improve every day,” senior wrestler Tom Burke commented.

His philosophy is much like that of other coaches; that hard work, discipline and commitment bring rewards. “The hardest obstacle to overcome is yourself,” he believes. His unique aspect of training is the plan to improve one percent everyday, as a team and individual.

As a coach, he is focused on his wrestlers’ full development. “Everyday these athletes prepare themselves for the upcoming season, but what they don’t realize is that they are preparing themselves for their life ahead. The choices they make now will dictate the life they lead later,” Winter said.



Coach Dan Winter looks to improve the program as new head coach
Photo/Mariam Bazzi

Dashing through the snow... Boys’ and girls’ track teams compete against weather, opposing teams

By Matti Curran
Sports Editor

With a rearranged coaching staff and plenty of eager athletes, the girls’ and boys’ indoor track teams are two meets into a fresh season. Both will be competing this weekend at Lehigh University.

The girls had their first meet on Dec. 5 at Kutztown University. Led by senior captains Kelly Dean, Staci Speece and Meshael Jones, the girls had a promising start to their season.

The highlight of the meet, for Neshaminy, was the 4 by 800 meter relay. Seniors Moriah Allen, Christine Esposito and Lindsay Taylor, along with junior Martina Drew, earned second place with a time of 9:55; the state qualifying time is 9:58. They also earned a spot at the Meet of the Champs which will take place on Saturday, Feb. 2 at Lehigh University.

The boys traveled there on Saturday, Dec. 6. Seniors Ryan Gallagher and Christian Radzinski had notable performances. Gallagher took second in the mile with a time of 4:46, while Radzinski earned fifth place in the 800 meter run with a 2:08.

On Dec. 15 the girls competed at Ursinus college, where senior Erica Finsen took first place in the 55 meter hurdles.

There are smaller numbers this year, but no lack in performance. “We have such a talented group of girls who have shown nothing but determination throughout the first few weeks of practice,” Speece said. “And that’s hard to do when you’re outside working against the wind and the freezing cold weather,” she added.

Brooke Deacon, sprinting and jumping coach, and Steve Harnish, distance coach, are familiar with a great majority of the runners.

With three seasons of running a year; cross country, winter and spring track, the family-like atmosphere fosters group improvement and individualized attention at the same time.

“Our coaches have high hopes for us, and I’m confident this team will not let them down,” Speece predicted.

The boys, led by senior distance and sprinting captains, Christian Radzinski

and Casey Cappello, respectively, have recently undergone a significant adjustment to their team. Their former head coach, Chuck Lumio, resigned in order to keep his family and teaching career his top priorities. Long time assistant, Russ Horrocks, has taken this position.

“Horrocks is experienced with running and has been with this team for years. Not to mention, he definitely helped coach Lumio last year with organizing the team, so his becoming the head coach seems fitting,” Senior Ryan Gallagher said.

Coach Josh Cardin, who specializes in sprinting and jumping, was also always involved. Combined with Horrocks’s expertise in distance, “They will make it a successful season for all of us,” Gallagher said confidently.

As for the team of runners itself, “This is a rebuilding year,” junior Tim Haines offered.

“We lost a lot of the more experienced guys on the team last year, but there are a few veterans and we are looking forward to seeing how the season turns out,” he said.

Key Runners:

BOYS: T.J. Beddesem, Matt McMaster, Fatorna Greene, CaseyCappello, Christian Radzinski, Ryan Gallagher, Timothy Haines, Jason Caporale, Ryan Matzke
GIRLS: Martina Drew, Christine Esposito, Moriah Allen, Kelly Dean, Staci Speece, Jordan Bernhard, Kate Marlington

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Jan. 1-Noon

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Jan. 4- 9:30 a.m.

BCRR WS Predict your time 5.3M

Jan. 11- 9:30 a.m.

Polar Bear 8 Miler

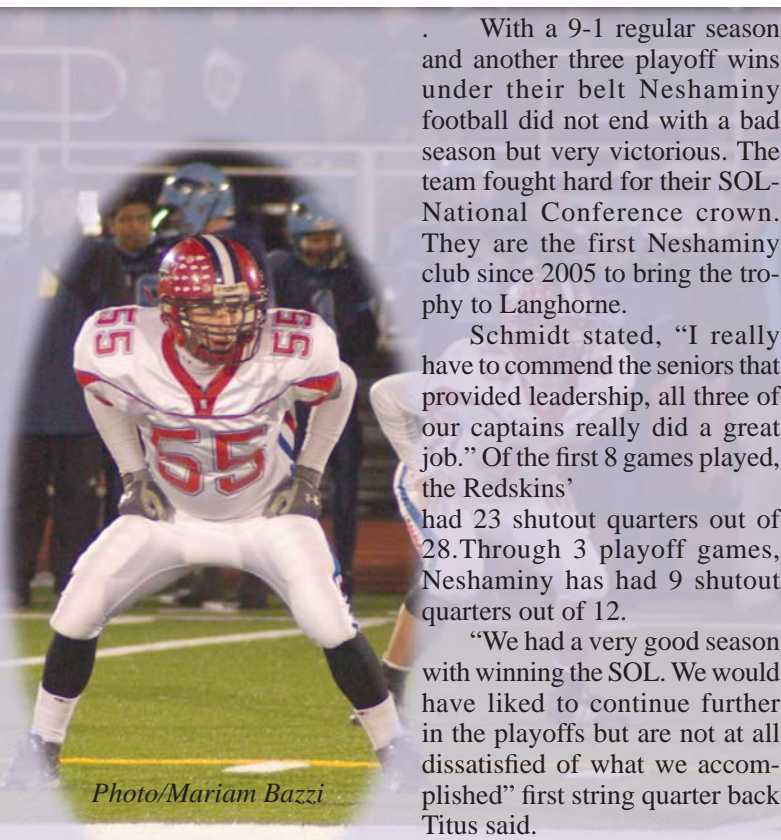
Feb. 8- 9:30

Eeney-Meanie 1/2 Marathon

Football finishes playoff run against rival North Penn

By Victoria Mazzeo
Sports Editor

After a long season of long winning streaks and hard work Neshaminy's football team lost to North Penn 28-0 on Nov. 28 in the District One final. This years team was first 'Skins squad to earn a ticket to the District One title game since the 2004. North Penn scored once in the first quarter, twice in the third and once in the fourth. Completing the season Bryan Dean finished by rushing 595 yards with 6 touchdowns Quilian Arnold followed closely with 595 yards and 5 touchdowns. Brian Titus passed 600 yards completing over 50 percent of his passes, Titus had 8 touchdowns, he averaged 85.7 yards a game. On the receiving end Ricky Brebner caught 24 passes accomplishing 320 yards and 3 touchdowns.



Photo/Mariam Bazzi

With a 9-1 regular season and another three playoff wins under their belt Neshaminy football did not end with a bad season but very victorious. The team fought hard for their SOL-National Conference crown. They are the first Neshaminy club since 2005 to bring the trophy to Langhorne. Schmidt stated, "I really have to commend the seniors that provided leadership, all three of our captains really did a great job." Of the first 8 games played, the Redskins' had 23 shutout quarters out of 28. Through 3 playoff games, Neshaminy has had 9 shutout quarters out of 12. "We had a very good season with winning the SOL. We would have liked to continue further in the playoffs but are not at all dissatisfied of what we accomplished" first string quarter back Titus said.

Attention Faculty:
The girls' and boys' bowling teams are challenging you to a faculty/student bowling match on Monday, Dec. 22 at Penndel lanes from 3-5 p.m. contact Joan Wargo in G102 if interested.

Bowling strikes it big



By Danielle Olander
Special Features Editor

Throwing strikes, double strikes and turkeys, the girls' bowling team is headed for another great season. The girls' bowling team practices two to three times a week at Penndel Bowling Lanes. When there are meets, the team practices less. When we don't have practice," coach Joan Wargo, teacher at Neshaminy High School, said, "They are down at the bowling alley practicing on their own." At the meets, each bowler bowls individually, but their scores are all added up in the end. Then it's compared to the opposing team and the team with the highest score is declared the winner. Their first match was on Dec. 5 against North Penn. The team won 4-0. They also won their second match against Plymouth Whitmarsh. Also, the girls' and boys' bowling teams invite faculty and to Penndel Lanes on Monday, Dec. 22 from 3-5 p.m. for an afternoon of competition.

Basketball fights to hold their own

Girls'

By Jenn Zaidman
Circulation Editor

The Neshaminy girls' Varsity Basketball team has been practicing to prepare for this upcoming season. The girls expect to do well and to come out with a good record this approaching season. The team coaches are Head Coach Joanne McVey, Assistant Coaches Rich Harbison. McVey has been coaching the girls' varsity basketball for eight years. Coach McVey and the basketball staff expect the team to work hard and improve during the course of the season. "When we play as a team, we are as good as any other team in our league," Coach Harbison said. The girls beat Concil Rock South Dec.12 taking victory over past assisntnt varsity coach, coach Young who is now with South. They won by 9 points. "The most important things during a game are defense, working hard, and team play," McVey said. "During practice the same things are important. How you practice is how you play in games." Top players on this year's team are senior Avery Wunder, senior Chelsea Rota, and junior Kelsey Ryan. The team Captains are Wunder and Ryan. "We're really coming together as a team on and off of the court," senior Jenn Slivka said. The team's strongest points this year are their athleticism and their chemistry between one another. The current skin recor is 2-1. "We have good competition this year, but if we play like I know we can, we'll go far," Ryan said. The team goals this year are to fare well in their league and to make the District playoffs.



Chelsea Rota and Jenn Slivka hustle for the ball against Abington.
Photo/ Megan Alexander

Boys'

By Victoria Mazzeo
Sports Editor

With a new season at foot the boys' basketball team will strive for improvement. Last season, Neshaminy's boy's basketball team went 3-21 after a series of injuries. As their season gets underway, they recently maintain anSenior Justin Deeter was amongst those injured, he was out with a knee injury and looks forward to being able to play this season. "I'm happy to be able to get back on the floor to help are team have a successful season. Deeter stated. With Starting Freshman, 6-3 Ryan Arcidiacomo and 6-2 Tyler Katz added to the starting line up Neshaminy is for an interesting season. How these two freshmen mix with the other starters could influence the boys' season tremendously. Besides the freshmen, starters will include Deeter, Steve Warhola, and Tristan Emig. Paul Carrezola is also expected to be a key player once he is able to make the transition between football season and basketball season. On Friday he boys played Whitmarsh who beat them 74-54. Freshman Starter Arcidiacomo was high scorer with 15 points Senior starter Deeter followed with 12. Saturday the boys lost to CB south 47-56 Arcidiacano earned the high score of 24 points with 3 three point shots, 4 other field goals and he shot 7 for 9 at the line. Following him was Deeter, who scored 7 points, was 5 for 6 in free throws. Close behind him Emig scored 5 points. Dwight Williams and Katz both had scored four points each. Warhola scored 2 and Steve Mendola had 1 point. "We are very excited about this season. We feel that all the hard work we put in during the summer will finally pay off," point guard Warhola commented.

Athlete of the Issue

Justin Deeter



2008-2009

FAVORITE...

College basketball team: Maryland

Song to get you pumped: Raw-T.I.

Food before a game: PB&J

Sports Movie: Coach Carter

Justin Deeter has become a superior athlete over the 13 years he has played basketball. He has been voted MVP and is a strong asset to the Basketball team. Unfortunately, a serious knee injury in mid-December put a halt to his '08 season. "He's a powerful force on the boards, which will be big in a division in which a team needs a rebounding threat. He could carry the Redskin's to the District One playoffs," Courier times Kevin Cooney wrote. Deeter looks forward to a turn around season for his senior year. Steve Warhola commented, "He's a ridiculous athlete. I've never met anyone with his drive and work ethic."

~ Victoria Mazzeo

Top five 2008 sporting events

1. Olympic swimmer Michael Phelps won eight gold medals and set various records.
2. Phillies won the World Series for the first time since 1980.
3. Neshaminy's football team won SOL National Conference crown
4. Neshaminy's Field Hockey recorded an undefeated season.
5. Tiger Woods played in six events in 2008; he won four of them. His fourth win came in the U.S. Open.

