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Thanks for reading!

## They've Got ISSUES...

Haleigh Fellows  
Photographer

Twelve of our excellent peers recently traveled to the small, remote town of Jabez, KY. Why would they travel six, long hours to the middle of nowhere? So they could participate in none other than the 4-H Issues Conference, of course. 4-H Issues Conference is a three-day event that combines teens from all over the state that show significant leadership in their community. **Derek Operle (12), Richard Scelzi (12), Andrew Croft (11), Roberto Arreaza (11), Megan Sin (11), Katie Clayton (11), Morgan Jenny (11), Mandy Jackson (11), Seth Helton (11), Jordan Potter (10), and Ruth Wooten (10)** teamed up with their fellow leaders to tackle tough teen subjects such as drugs and alcohol, stress, and peer pressure.

The 4-H Issues Conference is always kicked off by a series of fun, quirky activities to break the ice and help the diverse group of leaders to make bonds and connections. The teens then meet in their assigned groups on the certain issue they are confronting to formulate their brilliant plans to solve common teen problems. However, the conference is not all serious work; there is plenty of fun and games to participate in. There is an annual themed, costume dance for the teens to boogie down and a talent show where they can show off their additional expertise. The 4-H Issues Conference is a guaranteed good time, and leaves many not wanting to leave after such a short three days. Derek Operle though, will get to make a third appearance at the 4-H Issues Conference, as he was elected to the planning committee last year and, this year, has been elected the teen Co-Chair of the conference.

This leadership conference has been bringing leaders together for years now in attempt to combine their great minds to conjure up effective plans to inform and help other teens. 4-H Issues Conference is a guaranteed way to meet new, interesting people with similar goals as you, but

who also hold a much different outlook and opinion in life. As Ruth Wooten said, "I was able to meet people with very different opinions but still have a common goal, to learn how to make a difference."

And making a difference is exactly what the conference is all about. Programs such as Backpack for Kids were invented at this very event. The humanitarian teens found at this conference are genuinely concerned about improving and aiding their communities and work as hard as possible in their spare time to do so.

4-H Issues Conference is jam-packed with outstanding people, wonderful opportunities, and one amazingly fun time. Our twelve fellow teens should be congratulated for their incredible accomplishments and talent, and hope that you are one of the lucky chosen ones to attend this awesome conference in the future.



Photo by Haleigh Fellows

## Dream Playground Becomes A Reality

Monica Spees  
Features Editor

Last September, the Oak "K" brought you exciting information of a new play area for special needs children that was to be erected in Bob Noble Park. The project was anticipated to be completed by the fall of this year. Now, fifteen months and \$100,000 after the previous story was placed before your eyes in black and white, the dream of a playground specifically designed for children with special needs has become a reality.

The project has certainly made significant progress since last September's issue. At that time, \$50,000 had been raised toward the \$150,000 goal that the group of high school students and young adults with disabilities who instigated the entire venture needed to reach in order to receive a matching grant from GameTime, an equipment vendor. After many donations and numerous fundraisers, the desired amount was achieved. Today, lo and behold, Noble Park has a new playground that can be enjoyed by everyone, regardless of any special need.

This playground is designed to open up outdoor opportunities and unique rehabilitation opportunities to disabled children, but that is not its sole purpose. The new play area is also perfectly suitable for children without any disabilities, thus encouraging acceptance and friendship between the two groups. Perhaps kids will learn at a young age that other children who may appear "different" from them in physical or mental capacity are not so peculiar after all when they see that the very playground equipment that they use is just as fitting for those "different" kids as it is for them.

Many of us take for granted the beautiful sunny days we spent on the playground because we had nothing to hinder us from enjoying the many activities the playground had to offer. Since a playground open to all kinds of children has been erected here in Paducah, we may see a change in young children's attitudes toward special needs kids. It is no secret that children often tend to be cruel and act irrationally toward anything that is unfamiliar to them. However, once these kids have the opportunity to swing on the same swings, slide down the same slides, and share the same space with kids who may seem slightly different from them, they will begin to see the playground through the other kids' eyes. A greater appreciation may emerge for the endless fun and joy that is possible on a playground. After realizing that others are not so fortunate, children could quite possibly refuse to take their opportunities for granted and even devote their time on the playground to playing with a child who is not physically like them. They both have something in common, though—they both just want to play.



Photo from iListPaducah.com

## Zounds! It's Zach!

Aaron Williams  
News Editor

Sitting wrapped with a red bow-tie under your tree until Christmas morning is December's Junior Rotarian, **Zach Hughes (12)**, just in time for the holidays. For those who have not had the pleasure of being personally acquainted with Zach, you can catch him in the halls between AP English and AP Calculus with a bounce in his stride and a smile on his face. And I do mean smile. Zach was voted Best Smile (or as the Yearbook Staff likes to call it: Most Likely Never to Be Caught Wearing a Facetious Frown, but that's a little wordy) by his senior classmates.

Throughout his time here at Lone Oak, Zach has balanced a difficult course load with plenty of extracurricular activities. Despite many difficult classes and grueling hours of homework, Zach has come out at the top of his class with an impressive 3.8 GPA. "I've known Zach since first grade," says fellow classmate and longtime friend **Nick Jacobs (12)**, "and he's always been better than me." Well said, Nick. What's the secret to Zach's success? Zach has mastered the art of pulling all-nighters without losing sleep. Through a process he dubs "power-napping," Zach studies for forty minutes and sleeps for twenty. The technique isn't for everyone. Potential risks include falling asleep and staying asleep. And not getting any work done at all.

Supplementing his strong academic foundation, Zach has been an active member of school functions and activities here at Lone Oak for the past four years. He was of a four year member of the drum line in the Kentucky Colonel Marching Band from his eighth grade year until his junior year. Zach also drummed for the widely popular Lone Oak Indoor Drumline for two years, before funding for it was cut because it was deemed "way too cool for Paducah."

Outside of school, Zach is an exemplary member of the community. He has earned the honor of Eagle Scout and in addition to hours of volunteer service, has taken two trips with his scout troop to Philmont, New Mexico. For those of you who don't know what Philmont is, imagine a wilderness full of starving grizzly bears in New Mexico and you've pretty much got it. Philmont is not for the faint of heart. In fact, Mr. Hughes once had to survive out there off of raw deer meat and rattlesnake venom. Alright, the last part is exaggerated but the general consensus is if Zach did have to drink rattlesnake venom to survive, he would down it like skim milk.

As for this year, Zach is savoring every moment of his last days at Lone Oak. He participated in the Governor's Scholar Program at Centre College over the summer as a representative of the best our school has to offer. He is a proud member of our prestigious Academic Team. On the weekdays, you can find him at the PAC after school polishing up his guns. On the weekends, look no further than his favorite hangout, Books-A-Million, where he will be enjoying free brownie samples and a good magazine or graphic novel. "I have a great deal of respect for Zach Hughes," says Zach's AP Euro teacher **Mr. Neel**, "He is an excellent student, a good person, and a pleasure to work with." Zach will most likely be stepping onto the Big Blue Campus at UK next fall where he hopes to pursue a career in pharmacy. Best of luck Zach!



Photo by Haleigh Fellows



## NEWS

## Kentucky Ranks Only 37th Out of 50 Healthiest States

**Aaron Williams**  
News Editor

A recent study by the group known as America's Health Ranking has ranked our state of Kentucky the 37<sup>th</sup> healthiest state in the union. The Health Ranking system was run this year by America's Public Health Association and the Partnership for Prevention. It is the 19<sup>th</sup> annual state-to-state ranking.

The ranking each state receives is based on "scores" in several categories, which include health insurance coverage, air pollution, immunization records, crime levels, binge drinking, and infectious disease rates. Kentucky received a total score based on this system of a -3.6 to earn its 37<sup>th</sup> ranking. To be clear, this means that by being the 37<sup>th</sup> healthiest state, Kentucky is the *thirteenth unhealthiest*, which is disgusting. Just what did the Bluegrass state do to become so unhealthy?

According to the America's Health Ranking survey, Kentucky has several nasty challenges preventing it from breaking the Top 25. Number one is the Kentucky Fried Chicken franchise. Colonel Sanders may have had good intentions to start, but that old man is slowly killing us now and the Oak 'K' is on to him. Okay, KFC is not solely responsible for killing Kentuckians, but according to the survey, Kentucky has over 343 deaths for every 100,000 person population due to cardiovascular disease. Heart disease is still a major killer of Americans, people, and we need to watch it. Stuffing yourself with greasy kitchen fried chicken may seem like a good idea at the time, but it is not the way to go about making sure your heart doesn't fail on you. Imagine the fat clogging your arteries as you gobble down all those chicken legs, biscuits, thighs, and livers!

Number two is air pollution. Unbeknownst to us, Kentucky is 43<sup>rd</sup> in air quality according to America's Health Ranking system. Once again, disgusting. Apparently, our hardened smokers' lungs in Kentucky have adapted to being immune to all-around horrible air quality and we just don't notice. We are just a few steps away from becoming the next East Los Angeles. The only ways to fix this is to either blow up air polluting companies, or go all democratic and actually write in to state politicians and ask for tighter regulations on plants that have potential for causing pollution.

The final obstacle Kentucky has to hurdle to break into the ranks of the 25 healthiest states with the likes of New York and California is cancer. With 226 deaths per 100,000 person population, the Bluegrass needs to make sure to lather up the sunscreen, watch the smoking and the drinking, and attend yearly physicals to ensure health, since mankind has not yet learned the secret to knocking that arrogant smile off of cancer's face and throwing it out the back door.

Nailing these three points are sure to put Kentuckians on top of the Health Ranking System and making our state a healthy, happier place to live.

## LOHS Marching Band Ends On a Golden Note

**Kyle Fouse**  
Asst. Editor-in-Chief

You may have noticed the halftime entertainment present at all of the home football games that just happens to be our Lone Oak High School Marching Band. Lone Oak has always been notorious for producing an excellent quality marching band, and has frequently been to state competitions and other locations for prestigious occasions.

Under the supervision of **Mr. Kelly Ray**, band's efforts were greatly rewarded with many prestigious trophies and excellent performances. The LOHS band has participated in four major competitions this year (not including regionals) and did very well in all of them. They snagged first place in three of the competitions and second in the other, three best percussion awards, two best color guard trophies, and one best Field Commander honor.

Although they only finished 10<sup>th</sup> in the Regional competition (two places away from the sub-sectional qualifications) the season was much better than expected. Mr. Ray was "...very pleased with the season overall..." He also went on to explain that "...the small size of the band helped to add a sense of self importance of every member to the whole, making the sound a lot better..." The Field Commander/Drum Major **Jamie Wilson (12)** commented that the band "...may have been small, but they had an extremely good looking Drum Major, and he led them to be better than they ever could be!"

The efforts of the LOHS Marching Band has brought us many more trophies that the school can proudly display to all. It was a pleasure to see them do the best with what they had. Literally. Next year will hopefully bring greater participation from the great success they have had lately and even greater success from the already highly prestigious program.

## Anatomy Takes Hands On Approach



Seen Above: Mrs. Durbin's Anatomy Class Participates In Pig Dissection

Photos by Alyssa Warren

## From the Guidance Office...

**Wendy Watts**  
Guidance Counselor

### CLASS OF 2009 THINGS TO DO YOUR SENIOR YEAR OF HIGH SCHOOL

ACT: Go to [www.actstudent.org/regist/nextdates.htm](http://www.actstudent.org/regist/nextdates.htm) to check testing sites and to register.

#### January

- Apply for federal financial aid. Visit FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) on the web at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>. This is the first step to receiving federal aid at colleges and universities. While you can apply using a paper application, online applications are processed faster, and this method checks for many common errors.
- FAFSA applications can be filed after January 1<sup>st</sup>. Many schools have priority deadlines for some aid programs. Be sure to complete the FAFSA early in the year, and check with each school you are applying to.
- Encourage your parents to complete their federal income tax returns early this year. This information will be collected on the FAFSA to determine your financial aid eligibility.
- ACT: Go to [www.actstudent.org/regist/nextdates.htm](http://www.actstudent.org/regist/nextdates.htm) to check testing sites and to register.

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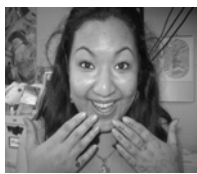
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## OPINIONS

## Yashaswee Yaks

**Yashaswee Malla**  
Business Manager



There is something very annoying about the way Times New Roman, the default font on Microsoft Word, looks . . . and when it is set to 12pt on double spacing, it looks simply obnoxious.

I think that Times New Roman looks extremely unattractive, and it has a knack of giving anything a snobby, antisocial quality. I despise getting papers assigned and having to submit them in good old Times New Roman, 12pt font, double spaced. I guess I can understand the reason behind this strict formatting rule, but still, I think we should be able to turn in papers that are in different fonts but the equivalent "length" of what Times New Roman would amount to be; it's not like we're going to pick some outrageous font that is impossible to read.

Whenever I sit down at a computer and open up Microsoft Word to begin typing, the first thing that I always do is quickly reset the font type and size. If I somehow forget, or the computer just decides not to cooperate, and little Times New Roman letters pop up and start forming words on the screen, an uncontrollable shudder runs down my spine. I can't help it, I see this font splayed before me on the monitor and I want to run the other way. I guess it's not so bad when it is set to a 10pt font, where the smallness of the font makes it look kind of cute and halfway bearable, but still . . .

Another thing that gets on my nerves is the double spacing bit. Am I the only one that finds the spaces that double spacing provides a little much? I mean, words need their space, but not *that* much space. Double spacing seems to create a huge gulf between the lines on the page. I don't see why 1.5 spacing isn't more widely acknowledged and put to use. This spacing is my personal favorite, and it makes almost any font type look adorable, even Times New Roman, when it is set to 10pt that is.

I don't know when I began to harbor such revolting feelings for what appears to be an innocent looking font, but my rejection of Times New Roman is like a gag reflex or an OCD type deal that I don't seem to have any control over. Whenever I tell people of my font-related pet peeves, they never fail to give me a strange look and call me weird, but I am quick to remind them that I am surely not the only one who feels this strongly about her typesets. . . right?

## Kelsey's Kvetch

**Kelsey Smith**  
Entertainment Editor



Gifts. What is associated most with the upcoming holiday? Gifts. And while I believe that commercial semblance has been over-emphasized and glorified, I will be giving gifts. But not *just* gifts. I want to give something sentimental, something thoughtful and unfeigned, something that stemmed not only from my mind but also, from my chest. When the wrapping paper's off, I want to be

asked not how much it cost or where I found it but how I knew this was something they wanted.

Buying is easy. Get in car, stand in line, lay money on counter, return home, throw in bag, and finally, present with a smile and trite phrase. To find something a person will appreciate takes time; it takes effort. You have to care enough about someone before you're willing to spend hours perfecting playlists or the wording of a particular sentence in a handwritten note. You have to know enough about someone to bake their favorite type of pie or knit a scarf that you know will match their favorite pair of jeans, their favorite t-shirts. You have to care. That is what makes me grateful. Not the name tucked away on the tag or the subtotal at the bottom of the receipt, but the fact that I have affected them enough to warrant a place on their list at all. Even if I am only written in the margins or as a footnote.

If anything, that is what this holiday should be most closely tied with: reminding the people around us that they aren't obligations. No, they are gifts within themselves. Maybe Christmas should be a second Thanksgiving, a half-birthday, or maybe, more than an annual occasion, giving should become a small part of the kindness we show *every* day.

Ask around; I hate the lights and ornaments wrapped around artificial trees. I hate Santa Claus and "Jingle Bells". I hate eggnog. I hate frankincense; I hate myrrh. But I could overlook all of that if it meant we could give more genuinely. People forget that others need to be reminded that they are appreciated, that they are worth something to us on more than material levels. People are more than grades or money or a reason to go out on Friday nights.

Oh, but that doesn't mean buying is *completely* heartless. We see things around us that remind us of the people we care about. We can't make every object we want to give, but I just want to know that more love was spent than money in the process.

## The Oak "K"

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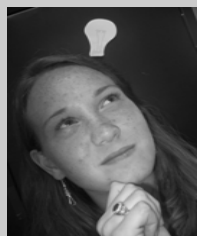
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## Monica Mutters

**Monica Spees**  
Features Editor



As that wonderfully festive holiday of Christmas draws nearer, and with the tasty Thanksgiving holiday behind us, we as adolescents seem to have one major qualm with this jovial time of year: it must be spent with family.

Please don't misunderstand me. There are, undoubtedly, many enjoyable things about seeing family members whom you may not have seen in some time. New stories and jokes can be heard, reminiscing can be done, and the simple pleasure of company can be had.

However, for the most part, teenagers tend to sulk at family gatherings. I, as perhaps some of you, have begun to wonder why we seem to lack as much enjoyment as the rest of the family during the few hours we are cramped together in one house to eat and talk. Although some family members may prove annoying at times, love for them really overshadows that irksome characteristic. After all, we all have little quirks that certainly are capable of nettling someone in the family; that feature is not only reserved for the elderly or the young and eccentric. What, then, is the reason that we teens dislike joining with family during the holidays so much?

As I addressed, some of you may have been wondering about this yourselves. Well, if you never figured it out, you will be pleased to know that I have found a feasible answer. The reason that we sit with our arms crossed and our eyes glazed is not because we are bratty or immature, although we surely can be. We brood at holiday gatherings because the adults, which make up the majority of the family present, begin to talk about things about which we know absolutely nothing. We have no idea who Marge and Harry were who lived down the street thirty-five years ago. We don't remember the neighborhood pizza joint that closed in 1979. Was the church rebuilt in '63 or '65? What the heck happened to the good old days? We have no idea. We weren't born yet.

If you are fortunate enough to have a cousin or other family member relatively close to your age, the two of you can alleviate the suffering by talking to each other about more current events. If the adults don't hog the baby the whole time, you could play with the little bundle of joy, if you like little kids, that is. In my family, there is no one close to my age. My cousins and sister are all in their twenties and starting their own lives. My niece and nephew are typically only at one of the meal locations—my dad's mom's house or my mom's parents' house—and are usually passed around the room, so I don't monopolize the time spent with them. So usually I sit there with my arms crossed and my eyes glazed listening to my parents and grandparents talk about the things of the past. The very distant past. Again, I love these people. It's just that I have nothing to contribute to the conversation. When I see that the topic does not call for my input because there is none to give, I simply stay out of it and wait for a mention of something with which I am familiar or slowly drift off to sleep. With nothing to which I can relate and, therefore, nothing to say, the purpose of my presence there is to look nice and to act mildly interested. I'm sure I'm not the only one who has felt like this.

Now, I know what you're thinking. You're probably thinking, "Look, Monica. I can't stand my cousins and babies spit up on my every time I get near them. You know, there is a reason that I only opt to see these people a few times a year." Okay, I understand. That means you can choose to adopt the glazed over look while you mold over on the couch. At least you have the opportunity to attempt to have some fun. Tell you what, just come over to my house on Christmas. I'd be thrilled to have you. Trust me.

Maybe we're missing the point of this time of year. It could be possible that teenagers are destined to be bored out of their minds, at least part of the time, at holiday gatherings. Perhaps this is our time to observe the adults and enjoy our time as young people without the cares and stresses that come with adulthood. As cliché as it sounds, maybe we really are supposed to enjoy our family members while they're still around and not take them for granted. So what if we have no idea what they're talking about most of the time? It's only for a few hours one time a year. Surely we can bear it that long.

## Lundberg Says It on Ya

**Rachel Lundberg**  
News Editor



As filmmaking evolves, there is bound to be a temptation to remake the less professional movies of the past. Unfortunately, many directors pull the remake card too often, or make a mess of things by making it "better." Or in many cases, it doesn't end up good enough to have warranted the remake in the first place.

The issue of whether or not to take a "new" spin on an old classic is brought to mind with the upcoming release of the new *The Day the Earth Stood Still*. I try not to judge movies before I see them, but I'm having trouble this time. There's nothing to make it particularly special as a sci-fi movie, and it won't have the endearing classic feel of the original, so what's it got to rely on? I don't think Keanu Reeves is going to be doing the movie any favors. It depends on how much actual acting the role requires, I guess. The whole situation presents the question of the worth of a remake with no substantial advantages over the original. For example, the recent *Psycho* movie. It doesn't even have the obvious technological superiority that draws directors to sci-fi remakes. More or less, it's the same movie. What's the point? If the movie can't or won't be improved, it shouldn't be remade.

I find it ironic that the Al Pacino *Scarface* is regarded as a classic when it itself is a remake. I mean, it's not as if Pacino really knocked the ball out of the park there, it's just somehow become a part of pop culture. Tim Burton is responsible for a few poor remake choices himself. *Planet of the Apes*, of course, was by all accounts a terrible movie in just about every aspect. *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* had nothing to offer over the Gene Wilder classic, and seemed to me to be just another "look, it's Johnny Depp taking an opportunity to be weird" movie. However, Tim Burton did not go amiss with *Ed Wood*, a truly original view of the wonderfully cheesy *Plan 9 From Outer Space*.

Lots of action movies, especially the "grand heist" type, have been remade over the last ten or fifteen years. *The Italian Job*, *Gone in 60 Seconds*, and *Ocean's Eleven* all come to mind. While the former of those is a decent movie "in its own right," if it can be said for a remake, none of these really had any improvements, or even significant differences, from the originals. The new *Gone in Sixty Seconds* actually manages to cut out the entire hour of car chases that made its predecessor a classic. And what did they fill it up with? Nicholas Cage.

Speaking of which, Nicholas Cage is the cause of what is quite possibly the worst remake, even the worst movie, of all time. I am referring, of course, to *The Wicker Man*. The original, though eventually doomed to an obscure existence, received critical acclaim as "the *Citizen Kane* of the horror genre." The version in which Cage stars, however, will no doubt become a classic simply for its value as a campy "it's so bad it's good" film. How anyone could have taken an already existing movie and made it so horribly, extremely, ridiculously terrible is beyond me. But then again, they did cast Nicholas Cage for the main role.

When considering a remake, a director should look to *Red Dragon*, which replaced *Manhunter* as the first in the Hannibal Lecter saga. While not hugely dissimilar from the original, it has a stellar cast, including Anthony Hopkins of the modern classic *Silence of the Lambs*, and brings a good plot up onto a new level. If all directors considered remakes in terms of what they could do better, maybe 90% of them wouldn't be C-grade movies.



Erin Conwell  
Features Editor

# MYSTERY STARS



This four-eyed senior boy enjoys paintin' it up for Flash games. When staying out of trouble, he serves up his mad skills on the tennis courts. Rarely can he be seen without a smile and enjoys trying to make everyone laugh, even at his own expense! You can't miss him at Hollister with his brown hair always flipping out by the ears. Who could this charismatic guy be?

This brutal junior girl can always be seen with her princess tote bag while wearing one of her two hooded-jackets she is known for. She has a self-professed love for Coach Poore but distracts herself by frequently rockin' it out at Cute Is What We Aim For concerts. She is also a monster on the tennis court dominating with her massive forehand. Who is this loud girl who always goes for the last laugh?

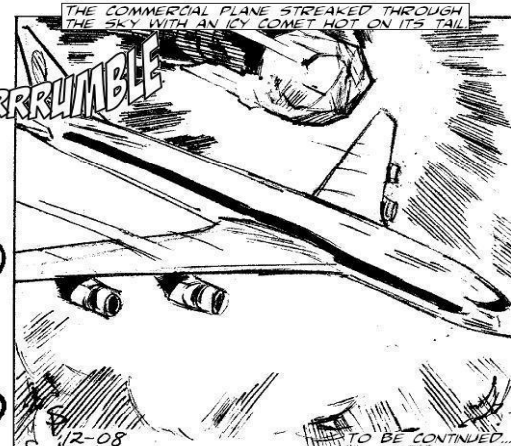
This blonde-haired blue-eyed sophomore boy is absurdly smart. He also excels in both piano and saxophone, making people weep at his amazing talent. In his free time he thoroughly enjoys watching a good episode or two of *Family Guy* or play8ing one of his favorite video games. Who could this brainiac be, anyway?

This bubbly blonde freshman is all about the color pink because it is "energizing"—even her braces are pink! She has many interesting quirks such as her love of green olives and her peculiar allergy to cockroaches. In her free time she enjoys scrapbooking or watching her favorite show, *Grey's Anatomy*, which she loves for its intensity. So, who is the freshman with not one, but two cars in her name?

Rachel Lundberg  
News Editor

## Free Association

Participants	Christmas Ornaments	Monopoly	Glow in the Dark	Traffic Cones
Haley Dallas (9)	Christmas tree	Little pieces	Glow sticks	Orange
Marco Arreaza (10)	Shiny	Money	Golf	Pointy
Charis Gurrola (11)	Big Red Ball	Uncle Moneybags	Neon	A dress
Gabby Fellows (12)	Shiny	Stupid	Amazing	Orange
Mrs. Sprunger	Sparkles	Numbers	Neat-O	Swerve



## People in the Halls

Yashaswee Malla  
Business Manager

**Question:** *What is your favorite Christmas tradition?*



Aymee Knight (9th)	Andrew Harlan (10th)	Mariah Willet (11th)	Landon Oliver (12th)	Mr. Nall
"Watching Mr. Magoo cartoons and singing Christmas carols while decorating the Christmas tree with my family."	"I like going to my grandparent's house; we shoot guns, ride four-wheelers, and eat a really big breakfast—the biscuits and gravy is the best part."	"I like playing Dirty Santa with my family."	"My mom and I put on Elvis records and we decorate the tree together."	"I enjoy waiting for Christmas morning in order to open presents with my entire family."



# Songs For Christmas

**Derek Operle**  
Entertainment Editor

Sufjan Stevens is, let's face it, a bit quirky. After all, he does have his mind set on making a concept album for each of the 50 states (he's already got Michigan and Illinois out of the way). His music is folksy, for those of you who have never listened to it, and tends fall in the same sonic spectrum as Iron & Wine, one of my favorite artists.

As it turns out, Sufjan Stevens loves Christmas, just like me, and he loves it so much that, two years ago, he released a Christmas "album,"

*Sufjan Stevens Presents: Songs For Christmas.* I say "album" because it isn't one in the traditional sense: it is a collection of 5 EPs, each recorded a different year.

On these EPs he covers such timeless Christmas classics as "Amazing Grace," "We Three Kings," and "The First Noel," among others. He makes the old favorites sound brand new, especially in songs like "Joy To The World," which he makes sound like a fresh folk-pop ballad, and "Away In A Manger," which he makes completely his own. The classics seem as fresh as ever when draped in the folk magic that is the sound of Sufjan's voice and guitar.

Also on these EPs are some of his original compositions, which are every bit as good as the classics. I love how he incor-

porated so much Christmas culture into his songs like in "Come On! Let's Boogie To The Elf Dance!," the chorus is "Santa Clause is coming to town," but it's not to the rhythm you would remember from the song of old. He does fresh new stuff like "Get Behind Me Santa," the title of which is eerily reminiscent of a White Stripes album, which is fast-paced and upbeat with horns and a keyboard, and actually feels like it could be done by Jack and Meg White.

Whether you're a fan of Sufjan's or you've never heard of him before, you should buy *Songs For Christmas*. This collection of EPs offers a fresh, new take on the Christmas classics you heard as

a kid and gives you new, awesome, folksy Christmas songs that you can listen to. I listened to this collection while I put up my Christmas decorations and found it to be more enjoyable than previous years, when I had listened to things like the Trans-Siberian Orchestra and Bing Crosby, for some reason.

*Songs For Christmas* is one of the most fun collections of Christmas music that you can own, especially from a modern artist. I strongly recommend you go out and buy it, listen to it on Christmas eve or, if you haven't done it already, when you're trimming the tree and decking the halls, it's sure to be a great time. It'll make Christmas, the most wonderful time of the year, even more so.



Picture from [asthmatickitty.com](http://asthmatickitty.com)

# Sing We Now of Christmas?

**Derek Operle**  
Entertainment Editor

The music that surrounds one of the world's most beloved holidays, Christmas, is changing, at an ever increasing pace.

The Christmas music of years past was usually the same stuff year after year, but now, it's evolving. Gone are the days when Bing Crosby and Elvis Presley dominated the radio during the holidays. It seems as if the older artists are being replaced by newer ones. Katy Perry has covered Crosby's "White Christmas," Hannah Montana has covered Brenda Lee's "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree," Smash Mouth has covered Louis Armstrong's "Zat You, Santa Claus?"...the list goes on and on.

Though the older artists are losing popularity, they aren't fading away entirely. There are certain Christmas "classics" that will never go away, songs like Elvis's "Blue Christmas," the Beach Boys' "Little Saint Nick," Jose Feliciano's "Feliz Navidad," Dean Martin's "Let It Snow, Let It Snow, Let It Snow," and Judy Garland's "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" won't ever go out of circulation. These are the songs that have made Christmas magical to kids through the generations.

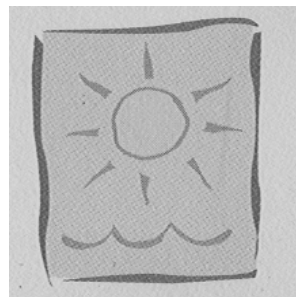
While Christmas music normally has lyrics and voices, the number of instrumental Christmas songs is on the rise. Artists like The Trans-Siberian Orchestra and Mannheim Steamroller are on the forefront of this new trend, making hits with songs old and new, like "A Mad Russian's Christmas" and "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear." The emergence of these artists has prompted the resurgence of classical music to a prominent place in Christmas culture, bringing back the compositions that were essentially the foundation of all Christmas music, things like "Dance of the Sugar Plum Faeries" from *The Nutcracker* and, of course, Handel's masterpiece, *The Messiah* ("Hallelujah").

Another growing trend is Christmas albums, in general. Regardless of genre, most artists have a Christmas album, or, at least, a single. Las Vegas rockers The Killers have two singles ("A Great Big Sled" and "Don't Shoot Me, Santa"), Christian punk stars Relient K, have an entire album (*Let It Snow Baby...Let It Reindeer*), country starlet Taylor Swift recently released a collection of Christmas songs (*The Taylor Swift Holiday Collection - EP*), as you can see there really isn't a genre that hasn't been covered - even the likes of Danity Kane ("Home For Christmas") and Chris Brown ("This Christmas") have released holiday-oriented songs.

Christmas music is changing, whether or not you hear it happening. The music industry is changing it, making it about the new music, pushing the older stuff out of rotation. The music of today, however, will never *replace* the music of the past; it will always hold a special place in our hearts as the music that started it all, the music that made Christmas the most wonderful time of the year.



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# Over the Moon

**Erin Conwell**  
Features Editor

Hopefully many of you took Haleigh's advice and have discovered *Twilight*, the amazing novel by Stephanie Meyers that has started a mass craze. For those of you who have become captivated by the love of Edward and Bella, don't worry because there is plenty more to come. If you have only seen the recently released blockbuster film adaptation of *Twilight* you may not realize that there is actually an entire *Twilight* saga! There are, in fact, four books currently in the series, but it has been said that there may be a fifth addition coming that will be from Edward's perspective rather than Bella's.

I, like so many others, have fallen in love with the *Twilight* saga and am completely entranced by the intricate romance it outlines. I recently finished the second book of the series, entitled *New Moon*. I was definitely not disappointed, even though I originally thought the story couldn't get any better than the first book. Man, was I ever wrong; *New Moon* was just as emotionally gripping as the first book but with even more action-packed twists and turns.

When Edward leaves unexpectedly after Bella's life is once again put in danger due to his *nature*, life turns into an emotional downward spiral for Bella. She becomes hollow and nearly catatonic as she struggles to live without Edward. She

finally finds some relief when we are reintroduced to Jacob Black, who shows her she can still find happiness in friendship. Bella struggles with Jacob to keep it "just friends" but he rarely gives up trying to make them something more. Unfortunately, this relationship doesn't seem like it is going to be any safer than the one with Edward, as a whole new can of worms is opened up. *New Moon* is anything but boring with one action-filled moment after another, involving motorcycles, cliff-diving, blood-thirsty vampires, and now... werewolves. But don't let me give it all away; you will just have to read *New Moon* to find out more.

This story seems to just get more and more intense, and I recommend that everyone join the wild ride. I think anyone could thoroughly enjoy this book, even all you silly boys out there that have the misconception that the books are only for girls. *New Moon* is sure to captivate you as you try to keep pace with Bella in her tumultuous life. I personally finished the book in a short two days, unable to put it down for a second. If you have already read *Twilight*, then you should definitely check out *New Moon*, even if it has become very difficult to find in our local bookstores and libraries, its popularity growing by the day. I guarantee that the book leaves nothing to be desired, but I guess you will just have to see for yourself.



Picture from StephanieMeyer.com

# TENNESSEE PUSHER

**Andrew Croft**  
Sports Editor

If you listen closely as you stroll through the crowded halls of the fine educational institute known as Lone Oak High School, you can often hear the folk lyrics of the infamous "Wagon Wheel" by Old Crow Medicine Show being sung by students on their way to class. Though not everyone has heard of the bluegrass/folk band, a lot of people have heard and love that song. All of O.C.M.S.'s other songs seem to go unnoticed, even though several of them are just as catchy as "Wagon Wheel." However, with their new album out, they will certainly make a bigger name for themselves.

O.C.M.S. is notorious for being an old time string band, using guitars, a fiddle, a harmonica, an upright bass, and a banjo. The members include Willie Watson, Ketch Secor, Critter Fuego, Kevin Hayes, Morgan Jahnig, and Gill Landry. All of their old albums have blended American roots, folk, blues, gospel, bluegrass and a little bit of gritty rock, and have even featured covers of Woody Guthrie and The Rolling Stones.

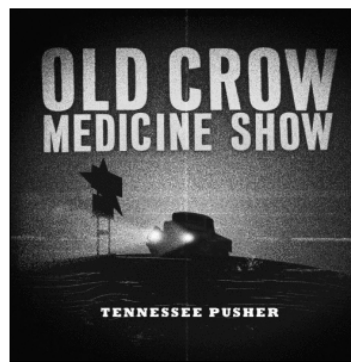
O.C.M.S. recently released their 4<sup>th</sup> studio album entitled *Tennessee Pusher*, on September 22. While keeping their string band style in tact, O.C.M.S. definitely branches off from their traditional thick bluegrass sound with *Tennessee Pusher*. The still use penetrating fiddle riffs, drowning harmonica lines, swift banjo

runs, and their signature voice-cracking vocal style, but they bring a much mellower, folk oriented tone to the table. As far as lyrics go, Secor has kept the same style heard on previous albums, containing songs about southern living, folk tales, love, religion, and drug abuse.

*Tennessee Pusher* kicks off with "Alabama High-Test," an upbeat, folksy, hillbilly song that was clearly influenced by Bob Dylan's "Subterranean Homesick Blues," and is full of up-front drug references. The album also includes a song called "Methamphetamine," which sheds light onto the bad meth epidemic taking place in the American South. But don't think this album is only about drugs.

"Mary's Kitchen" is a very upbeat song clearly about a restaurant called Mary's Kitchen with good southern food. "Highway Halo" is a much more contemporary folk song that could easily be compared to an acoustic Tom Petty. The song "Tennessee Pusher," for which the album is named, is the most well known song on the CD. It happens to be a very emotional, serious song, and greatly resembles the darker side of Johnny Cash.

So, if you have "Wagon Wheel" on your iPod, and nothing else by Old Crow Medicine Show, you should pick up *Tennessee Pusher*. Out of their four, this is by far my favorite O.C.M.S. album so far. If you have never heard O.C.M.S., this would be a great CD to buy that would give you a taste of their better work.



Picture from pastemagazine.com

# A SLIGHT SOLACE FOR BOND

**Monica Spees**  
Features Editor



Photo from imdb.com



Due to his presence over approximately four decades, James Bond has given his fans standards of what to expect from him. Daniel Craig, the newest face of 007, met those expectations and even exceeded them in the last Bond installment, *Casino Royale*. However, in the latest film starring everyone's favorite MI6 agent, the feel is somewhat different. Some of the classic Bond action is still there, but there is just something a little off about *Quantum of Solace*.

Seething with a desire for revenge after the death of his love, Vesper, whose twisted background causes him great distress, James Bond is sent to South America to investigate a highly secretive organization. His mission soon leads him to Dominique Greene, who heads the environmental company "Greene Enterprises." Greene's save-the-planet organization is, of course, somewhat underhanded, and it's up to Bond—James Bond—to find out what Greene's motivation is. Unfortunately, Bond is getting out of hand, killing every possible lead (literally) and ignoring direct orders from MI6. His credit cards and, therefore, his travel are restricted. He must save the day again, only this time with his own agency hunting him.

Let me just say that my opinion of the newest 007 flick has nothing to do with a negative opinion of Daniel Craig. I was a little wary going into *Casino Royale* because I was thinking, "How in the world are they going to pull this off? We all know who James Bond is, and we all know that he achieves his '00' status. Taking us back to the beginning is pointless." Like I said earlier, though, I was pleasantly surprised at how exciting and entertaining the movie was and how flawless Craig's first crack at Bond was. In *Quantum of Solace*, I continue to applaud his performance, but the movie just didn't compare to *Casino Royale*.

I should stop comparing them, though. Aside from not being better overall than *Casino Royale*, *Quantum of Solace* simply did not have such a "Bond-ish" feel to it. Even though the movie opens with a vintage 007 car chase, there were several moments when the beloved British secret agent just didn't show himself for who we all know him to be. Was he a womanizer? Most definitely, but not to the extent we are used to seeing him. Was he ruthless? Quite often, but, somehow, even his fight/kill scenes weren't him. The story was the traditional bad-guy-with-sinister-plot deal that Bond fans relish, but the goal of the sinister plot, which is discovered near the end of the movie, was rather pointless for the bad guy and his cronies. Was the scheme diabolical? Yes, but there seemed to be no broader picture to the scheme, and, in my opinion, it was kind of insulting to Bond's intelligence. There also seemed to be a much too strong connection between *Quantum of Solace* and its predecessor. Yeah, I understand that he's all torn up about Vesper and everything and that her boyfriend had a lot to do with the secret organization previously mentioned, but was all that really necessary? Sure, they're trying to mold James Bond into a more emotional killing machine, but, as a 007 fan, I really don't want that much of the plot from one Bond movie seeping over into another. It created a sort of second story within the main story, and Bond just doesn't need that—not the Bond we've all grown to know, anyway.

As a stand-alone action movie, I think *Quantum of Solace* would satiate an action movie lover's cinematic hunger; and I'll admit, I did enjoy this movie. The special effects and stunts were particularly impressive. The movie was fun to watch and held my interest, but it wasn't the Bond I was hoping to find when I paid my money, sat in an overused seat, and pigged out on greasy popcorn. Maybe if he had just once told someone his name as only "Bond, James Bond" can, I would have respected this more as a 007 film.

So, if you're looking for a good action film to keep you entertained, *Quantum of Solace* is absolutely worth seeing. As for you diehard Bond fans out there, see it anyway. It's not the best, but I guess it's worth it. Chances are, though, you won't be shaken or stirred by what you see.

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SPORTS

# Swim Team Makes A Splash

**Jordan Price**  
Assistant Business Manager

Although most winter water sports involve ice, some are still hitting the liquid version at the pool. Our swim team has recently competed at the Nofsinger Meet in Madisonville on Monday December eighth and did extremely well. This was their first meet this year and they placed second overall. Before I elaborate further on their success let me introduce the team: **Pierre Colles (12), Erin Conwell (12), Cameron Farley (12), Kayla Purnell (12), Natalie Brelsford (11), Mandy Jackson (11), Sydney Spalding (9), Eileen Doan (8), Oliver Fell (7), and Coaches Stacy McKinney, and Andy Farris.**

Unfortunately we do not have a pool to call our own but the team does have access to The P.A.C. where their intense practices are held. Many of these athletes seem to spend more time in the water than on land. "I'm bad at any sports involving land" said jokingly of Erin Conwell as to why she swims. These perceived aquatics will again be representing our school this coming Monday, December 15, at The P.A.C. for a sure tsunami of purple flash power.

Natalie Brelsford, who long ago left behind the water wings and inner tube for the sleek black and purple swimsuit of the Lone Oak Swim Team, said "What's not to enjoy about swimming" when asked about her favorite part of the ritual.

As for the latest competition, here are the scores of the talented swimmers: Kayla Purnell placed first in the Breast stroke with a time of 1:17.01 and second in the 200 meter IM (all four divisions) with a

time of 2:30.58, Mandy Jackson placed second in the 100 meter Butterfly with a time of 1:10.70 and third in the 100 meter Back stroke with a time of 1:10.79, Sydney Spalding placed third in the 200 meter IM with a time of 2:35.70 and third in the 100 meter Free style with a time of 1:06.96, Natalie Brelsford placed fourth in the 100 meter Free style with a time of 1:09.52 and sixth in the Back stroke with a time of 1:23.08, Erin Conwell placed fourth in the 50 meter Free style with a time of 33.22, Oliver Fell placed fourth in the 100 meter Breast stroke with a time of 1:30.05, Cameron Farley placed first in the 100 meter Butterfly with a time of 58.85 and first in the Back stroke with a time of 1:00.32, Eileen Doan laced fourth in the 200 meter IM with a time of 2:36.05, Pierre Colles placed ninth in the 100 meter Breast stroke with a time of 1:32.65, and lastly the girls relay placed first in the 200 meter medley, third in the 500 meter Free style, and second in the 400 meter relay. Congratulations Lone Oak swim team on a great start to a new season.



Photo by Pierre-Olivier Colles

# Rock. Paper. Scissors.

**Jon Freeman**  
Sports Editor

It's been a while since we have talked about some obscure sports. This month's obscure sport is Rock, Paper, Scissors. I know what you are thinking: how can you call Rock, Paper, Scissors a sport? Well, it has its own league, which is featured on ESPN and Fox Sports. It's called United States of America Rock Paper Scissors League or the USARPS League. Some people may take the simple game of Rock, Paper, Scissors way too seriously. The members of this not so famous league have a certain nicknames for their main game: they give it the obvious acronym of RPS and they also like to call their hobby Roshambo.

Here is all you need to play this simple game played between two players of all ages. You do not need any equipment to play although some competitors like to use throwing gloves with the finger cut of the ends. The USARPS league recommends that you stretch and a get a manicure before a three game bout with another player of the game. They also recommend that you wear loose fitting clothing so that your clothes don't hinder your arms range of motion.

After you have everything you need, you can now dive into the sport of Rock, Paper, Scissors. But not just yet. I haven't explained the rules. There are three throws that are permitted in the game. One is

Rock, shown by throwing a clinched fist. Another is Paper, formed by extending your fingers out and keeping them together. If you deliver the Paper with your palm up it is considered arrogant. The last one is of course Scissors, formed by extending just your index and your ring finger in the shape of a "V." You can deliver the Scissors either vertically or horizontally.

By the rules of RPS, you have to pound your fist three times as you say Rock Paper Scissors, in unison with your opponent, and then, when you say shoot, you both have to deliver your throw. The rock crushes scissors, scissors cuts paper, and paper covers rock. If you tie then you go at it again. Three games is called a bout. Best of three games wins the bout and the best of three bouts wins the match. According to USARPS there is no instant replay yet for the sport. All calls by the referee are considered final.

Every year they have the USARPS League Championship on TV. The Irish won the 2008 IRPS League (International Rock Paper Scissors League) Championship in Beijing. You may say that there is no way that this simple game is a sport. Well the athletes that play this game consider it one. So have fun playing the sport of Rock, Paper, Scissors whether it be at the USARPS Championship or with your best friend over the last piece of pizza.



Photo from USARPS.com



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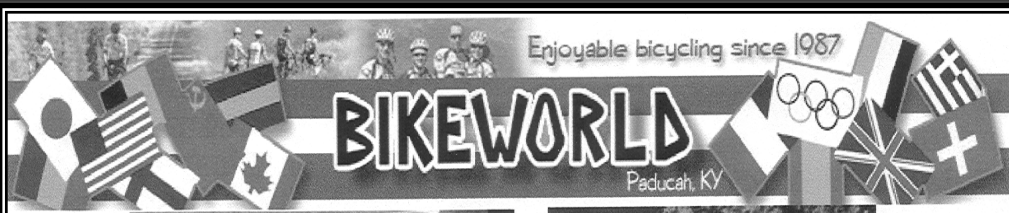


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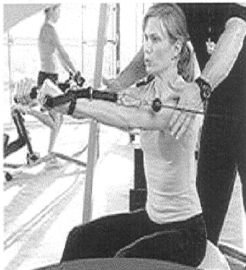


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