

To Santa or not to Santa?

Rachel Sloan
Assistant Business Manager

"He wrote back!" I exclaimed, picking up a hand-written letter that was lying next to an empty glass of milk and a plate with only a few cookie crumbs. I looked over the letter, skimming down the page to see that it was signed by Mr. Santa Claus himself. As a Christmas-loving 7-year-old, this was one of the most exciting things I had experienced. I read through the letter several times, refusing to let my parents see it, as it felt like this was a private conversation between the big man and myself. I kept that letter for several years, eventually realizing that the private exchange with Santa was really not-so-private, as my own mother had written every word.

My disappointment sparked a heated discussion in our house about the lie my parents had perpetuated for years. In homes everywhere, the argument regarding whether or not children should be told that Santa Claus exists rages this holiday season. Some people believe that the disappointment that children feel after discovering the truth about "Santa" is enough to make the falsehood disappear completely. With the lie would go every happy moment that children all over the world have had with the man in red. I strongly disagree. Children should not always be confined to reality, but instead should be allowed to enjoy themselves and learn to use their imagination. Although finding out that Santa wasn't real may not have been my favorite discovery, I couldn't imagine growing up and celebrating Christmas without believing in him.

The "spirit" of the Christmas season has always been what makes this time of the year so special. Santa, real or not, brings joy to children's faces. I believe that he is one reason children love the holidays. Had my parents never encouraged me to believe in Santa, Christmas would most likely just be another dull holiday, and certainly, my childhood would have been completely different.

Although it was rough to find out that it wasn't a big man from the North Pole that ate my cookies and replied to my letter, I would never take back the happiness it gave me as a child, thinking I had been visited by someone magical every year.

Kelsey's Kvetch

Kelsey Smith
News Editor

Decade after decade, regardless of party affiliation, politicians continue to emphasize the importance of higher education. They cite studies that show college graduations earn more, possess a greater number of career options, and receive more benefits (such as health coverage) from their employers than individuals who do not earn a college degree. And while I understand the importance of higher education, while I'm eager to learn and experience, I do not understand why the most immediate result of attending college is inheriting debt.

The New York Times found the average annual cost of attending a public four-year university is \$15,213 (this is inclusive of room and board and textbook fees). At private schools, the cost is more than double that: \$35,636. College costs are rising and politicians are stressing the significance of something they are failing to make more accessible.

In many countries, university tuition is paid by the government, usually under the stipulation that the student pass an entrance exam. The government will pay for your tuition in France, in Brazil, in Egypt, Finland, Sweden, Greece, Argentina...It's no wonder that many of these nations have a higher percentage of citizens with college degrees or that US citizens are plagued with considerable amounts of debt in comparison.

So we go to college to prepare ourselves for careers, and then spend our careers paying for college. If my education has convinced me of anything, it's that this paradox is one that no one can afford to perpetuate.

Christmas Controversy Confusion

Seth Helton
Features Editor

Christmas is close, with the number of days separating us from sweet yuletide swag growing ever smaller. Christmas is the most wonderful time of the year, yet oddly enough one of the most controversial times of the year. As the culture wars escalate, the holiday season became another casualty.

The controversy was bound to happen, due to the increasing percent of Americans who define themselves as non-religious. Of the adult population in America, 15% define themselves as having no religious affiliation. This represents a large minority and the reason we are suddenly seeing Christmas challenged. There are several "battles" being fought in the war on Christmas (a phrase that is easily propaganda). The most common skirmishes occur over the appropriateness of Christmas displays in the public forum and the use of the actual word "Christmas" by businesses such as Walmart.

First, let's address the issue of religious holiday displays on government grounds from a Constitutional standpoint. The Constitution of the United States prohibits the creation of a law respecting an establishment of religion. In short, this means that there will never be a state-religion or a favored religion. So what does relevance does this hold in the context of the war on Christmas? It means that if a nativity scene is allowed on government land, a winter solstice display, or even a display of the Flying Spaghetti Monster decked in holiday attire, is allowed on government grounds as well. This also means that all displays can be barred if deemed necessary. Schools are especially sensitive places for religious holiday displays, and the only place I see any sort of non-secular, non-student display totally inappropriate. When a school-sponsored display shows favor to one particular faith over another, it does not cater well to diversity and is not inclusive or inviting to students who are not a part of that particular faith.

The word "Christmas" has become a point of discontent between believers and non-believers during the last few holiday seasons. Retailers such as Walmart, Target, Best Buy, and Lowes began using "holiday" in place of "Christmas" in advertisements and in-store displays. I assume this was a ploy to appeal to a wider and more diverse group of consumers during the holiday season. Under pressure from organizations such as The Alliance Defense Fund, many retailers switched back over to "Team Christmas" to avoid painful holiday boycotts. Best Buy has so far been able to resist the pressure and continues using "holiday," choosing to accommodate a broader portion of its market base. Legally, there are no regulations placed on businesses to use or not use either term, just as there are no laws placed on citizens using either term privately.

In the spirit of the holidays, the guns should be lowered in the war on Christmas. This time of year is about coming together, peace on earth and goodwill towards your fellow man. It doesn't matter if you say "Merry Christmas" or "Happy Holidays." What matters is the "merry" and the "happy," so enjoy this holiday season and be respectful of how others celebrate.

Lundberg Lays It on Ya

Rachel Lundberg
Editor-in-Chief

To paraphrase Jack Nicholson, "Christmas music needs an enema." The Yuletide season has come again, and brought with it the usual array of cheap holiday ditties. And honestly, how can anyone stand it? I don't mean to be a Buzz Killington here; I'm not saying getting into the holiday spirit is a bad thing--the time for Christmas carols comes once a year, and this is it. But are these aggravating little earworms really the best we've got?

The classic carols, in the same form we've been hearing them all our lives, though often nauseatingly cheesy, are the best of the bunch. Or at least, they're not quite so bad as the others. No doubt we can all sing along to them, and after all, they're not ridiculous, they're "vintage." We get a heavy dose of good ol' nostalgia, and we can brush off the cheery singing that makes most young people want to gag because, well, that's just the way Christmas songs were done back then. For a while, this music can be quite therapeutic. Who doesn't want to revel in the holiday spirit at least a little bit? However, like most over-the-counter drugs, these oldies but goodies can have ill effects in large amounts. When the supermarket starts playing these carols the day after Thanksgiving and you know it'll be a whole month before they go away, that can be more than a bit much.

The second-"best" Christmastime plague upon the airwaves is original songs. I wouldn't go so far as to say that they're all terrible, but I would presume to claim that most of them are. For most, the first modern original Christmas song that comes to mind is the unfortunately unforgettable "Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer." This song alone almost forced me bump this category down to the bottom of the list. Yes, it's about Santa Claus running over an old woman with his sleigh. I get that. How it's supposed to be funny, I do not understand. Any humor the topic may have gained itself is squandered through poor execution. That aside, I hear enough of heavy Southern accents just from listening to people around here speak without having them sung at me in the form of an obnoxious Christmas carol. I know that original songs are really the only way this holiday music situation can be rectified, but I see no indication of any likelihood that something decent will be produced, probably because all the bands with talent are busy making real music.

Still, all of these things I am willing to forgive. The true abominations here are, without a doubt, the remakes. They take what was, if not a great song, at least an acceptable classic carol, and turn it into a cheap, modernized "rock" facade. If I had been a fan of the carols in the first place, I would call this blasphemy. I do not worship at the altar of "Jingle Bells," but I was annoyed and a little saddened the other day when I was forced to lament the ability to hear due to its electric guitar descendant being played in the store. I don't know exactly what it is that causes a musician to decide to remake a Christmas song, but I pity them. It is a very low rung on the ladder of life, similar to *Celebrity Apprentice* for actors, and I hope they one day manage to climb above it.

Unfortunately, as no solution seems to be forthcoming, the chances are that the general public will continue to be consciously and unconsciously influenced by the repetition of inane holiday music for some time to come. Perhaps all that is left to us who do not enjoy these carols is to learn to like them, or at least try to immunize ourselves to them, however difficult the task may seem. Still, I can say with confidence that "Rockin' around the Christmas Tree" will not be showing up on my playlist any time soon.

Pitbulls: Monsters or Misunderstood?

Charis Gurrola
Entertainment Editor

"Beware the pit bull, my son, the jaws that bite, the claws that catch." Wait a second, that's the Jabberwock! Most people tend to see pit bulls in the same light as Louis Carroll's bloodthirsty monster. The pit bull breed is not the vicious beast people believe it to be.

The media bears most of the blame for the pit bull's misconstrued image. Because pit bulls already have the reputation for being blood thirsty beasts, whenever a dog attack is reported, newspapers quickly throw in the "fact" that the attacker was a pit bull. The funny thing about this is that most of the time that's not the actual breed of the attacking dog. I'm not angry at the reporters for this. Most of the time any medium-build, stocky dog is identified as a pit bull. What I blame the reporters for is that once it is discovered that it was not a pit bull attack at all, they only give a three sentence retraction in some obscure place on page 27. Understand-a-bull.com makes this point in their media misidentifications section. The media is supposed to do its homework and write the truth. Instead, it ends up giving people a false reason to condemn the breed.

Approximately twenty different breeds of dog are incorrectly identified as pit bulls. In one LGHS fourth hour class, students were presented with 25 pictures of dogs, one of which was a pit bull terrier. Each student was asked to identify it. Only one student got it on his first try and over half of the students who tried never got the correct answer. Most people can't identify a pit bull. A handful of students even said outrightly that they had no idea what a pit bull actually looked like. Shouldn't the media try to show its audience the truth, instead of ignoring it?

Even in online forums, public opinion regarding this breed is sharply divided. On one side were pit bull owners who adore the breed, and on the other were faceless strangers with black and white "facts" about how pit bulls are beastly, temperamental, vicious monsters that should be locked away for eating children. Ridiculous. In the 1920s, pit bulls were considered the ideal family pet. The breed was known to be good around people, and especially good with children because they can handle a child's rough love. It's unfair to judge an entire breed on misconstrued facts. Cesar Millan even says that you can't judge any animal's temperament by its breed, and who has the right to argue with the dog whisperer?

So why do pit bulls have this reputation? In a *Time Magazine* article, Humane Society investigator Tim Rickey says that it's because "of the type of people who own them." Pit bulls are one of the most common breeds to be exploited for dog fighting. They are forced to become aggressive through despicable conditions such as being starved and isolated. In some instances, bottle caps were sewn underneath the animals' skin to cause them pain so they will be aggressive.

To add to the pit bull's predicament, loving owners of pit bulls, the people that protect this abused breed, are being punished for choosing to love pit bulls. By owning a pit bull, your home insurance skyrockets because it's assumed that your dog is going to maul the mailman. Owner's can't move to certain cities because their dogs have been outlawed. This is a grotesque trampling of personal rights. It's not a constitutional right, but person should be allowed to come home to the animal he chooses to love. By outlawing and libeling this breed, pit bull abuse is encouraged and their last refuge is taken away. Like guns, the pit bull is only as dangerous as the human that owns it.

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Health Care Hype



Image Courtesy of Google

Kelsey Smith
News Editor

In recent months, health care has become the hottest debate subject, not only in Congress, but in classrooms, living rooms, and emergency rooms across the nation. While conflicting cries of "socialism" and "relief" may muddy the intention of the current reform effort, the effort is, without doubt, one of the most ambitious of the century.

The first proposed health care bill of President Obama's term came in July. It was called House Resolution 3200, or more commonly, America's Affordable Health Choices Act of 2009. The bill went through a series of revisions but was superseded by HR 3296 (Affordable Health Care for America Act). HR 3296 was introduced in the House on October 29th. Its purpose, as stated in the bill's text, is to "provide affordable, quality health care for all Americans and reduce growth in health care spending." The two major provisions in the bill aimed at accomplishing this are: insurance market reforms such as prohibiting refusal of coverage or increased premiums based on medical history, pre-existing conditions or gender, and a public insurance option alongside private plans. The bill was slated to cost \$1.1 trillion and provide an additional 36 million Americans with health insurance (the Senate version of the bill will cost \$848 billion and provide 31 million uninsured Americans with coverage). The bill passed the House on November 7th by a vote of 220-215, with only one amendment to the bill that restricted the use of federal funds for abortion in cases that did not involve rape, incest or pose danger to the mother's life.

The motion to open debate on the bill in the Senate was granted two weeks later, albeit narrowly- one more tally against the motion would have reversed the decision. With that motion, a Republican filibuster (an attempt to delay or even prevent a vote on a piece of legislation) was also thwarted. Many Republicans believe the bill is too big and too expensive. Additionally, Republicans are opposed to the planned cuts to Medicare (totaling around \$465 billion) and have vehemently spoken out against a public option. The Congressional Budget Office maintains, however, that the bill will reduce the federal deficit by \$130 billion over the next ten years and Democrats argue that health insurance premiums will not rise for those already insured, while costs will be reduced for low-income individuals through government subsidies.

Strict adherence to party lines will clearly be the biggest obstacle in getting the legislation through the Senate. And as the issue continues to be debated, it is also clear that a final vote on the measure will most likely take place after the New Year.

Road to Afghanistan

Ryan Steele
Staff Writer

As announced in President Obama's speech at the beginning of the month, the final decision on troop deployment has been made. 30,000 additional troops will be deployed to the country of Afghanistan to assist the already stationed 68,000 American troops and the 39,000 non-U.S. ISAF troops (Afghanistan troops).

Even with 30,000 troops being deployed, the original proposer of the plan is disappointed with the results. General McChrystal originally proposed a plan to the President for an additional 40,000 troops and even though he's receiving almost half of the soldiers already deployed, he believes that more would have been better insurance for the success of the American forces. With more Afghanistan civilians wanting to help, soldiers of the United States haven't been put in charge of the training of the local ISAF troops which according to the plan set forth by Obama, will begin replacing our troops in July of 2011. Withdrawal of U.S. forces will leave the ISAF, for the most part, to deal with the remaining threat of al Qaeda.

If all goes well Pres. Obama hopes to have the majority of U.S. forces out of Afghanistan midway through 2012, with the exception of several hundred to 2,000 troops expected to stay and help train the remaining ISAF volunteers. The consensus reaction to the plan among those around D.C. is that it was the right thing to do. Deployment begins this week and continues over the course of the next several months, soldiers will be arriving by the thousands to the war zone that is Afghanistan.

UFO Fiasco

Jordan Price
Editor-in-Chief

I am sorry to have to inform the LOHS student body of the termination of the British UFO Hotline. Now when the sky starts to fall, no one will be there to take your call. When you see small gray aliens rummaging through your corn fields, you will no longer have a shoulder to cry on. When foreign signs are cut into your crops, there won't be anyone to report it to. And sadly when you are abducted through the window and strange experiments are conducted on your brain... no one will care. Oh the horror! Well I don't know exactly how the world will carry on but I do know that after more than 50 years of service to the people of Britain, the UFO Hotline will no longer be taking or investigating calls.

The British Military closed the program due to budget cuts. Now the estimated 44,000 pounds or 73,000 dollars that was needed to run the hotline will be used to support the British Troops (divided among 9,500 soldiers) in Afghanistan.

Military officials are quoted as saying that "the UFO office has outlived its usefulness." Too bad because it seems that UFO research is quite vital. The hush-hush closing of the organization has angered quite a few Brits. Since the toll free number and the e-mail account have been closed, several Britons have spoken up. Roy Lake, the founder of London UFO Studies, says, "I think it's a stupid thing to do because this could create a threat to national security." He also believes his government is aware of extraterrestrial activities and is "covering it up." On the other side of the flying saucer debate, a Defense Ministry spokesman thinks that "there is no defense value in investigating UFO reports." Unfortunately for Mr. Lake, the evidence supports the latter; none of the reported UFO sightings over the years have provided proof of the existence of extraterrestrials. The numerous reports have not materialized into national security threats or any other form of contact.

The Military is not choosing sides in this case; neither do they confirm nor deny the existence of extraterrestrial beings. With that being said the Military also feels that across the 50 years of service, the UFO Hotline never took a report of a potential security threat.

Recently several files of the documentation were declassified and released by the National Archives. While some events seem credible such as an account from 1984 when two experienced air traffic control officers viewed an unknown aircraft land at a small airport and then take off at extreme speeds, others seem to be less probable. Some accounts include accounts of alien abduction and some callers even go so far as to provide detailed descriptions or pictures of their former captors.

So I hope everyone has time to dust off their tinfoil hats, although the danger of an alien invasion does not seem so eminent in the U.S. because the United States UFO Information And Research Center is still active and also supports paranormal activity, Bigfoot sightings, angelic visitation and much, much more.



Image courtesy of Google

A MORE PERFECT UNION

Kelsey Smith
News Editor

The Treaty of Lisbon has been in the making for nearly eight years. After a rejected constitution, endless amendments and revisions, member states of the European Union finally signed the supranational treaty on December 13th, 2007. And on the first day of this month, nearly two years later, the treaty officially entered into force.

While the EU has existed by name since 1993 (and its roots were laid 35 years earlier in the European Economic Community), the Treaty of Lisbon strengthens and centralizes the Union. In addition to having a European Council and Parliament, the EU will now appoint a president every two and a half years. Herman Van Rompuy, the prime minister of Belgium, was chosen to be the first European president. His main responsibilities are to chair council meetings and represent the EU internationally and across the continent.

The election of a president highlights one goal of the Treaty of Lisbon: to increase European influence and visibility worldwide. The other objectives of the treaty: to create a more democratic and transparent Europe, to secure basic freedoms for all EU citizens and to generate more efficiency in decision-making. The treaty introduced new measures like the Citizens' Initiative and the Charter of Fundamental Rights to aid in achieving these objectives. The Citizens' Initiative allows a group of one million EU citizens from a significant number of member states to submit an initiative directly to the Union. The Charter of Fundamental Rights- legally binding under the treaty- guarantees fundamental rights such as freedom of expression and equality before the law to all citizens in the EU. Furthermore, starting in 2014, majority rule will be defined as 55% of member states with at least 65% of the EU population- in other words, a majority that will represent the best interest of the entire continent.

Under the treaty, the EU also hopes to tackle climate change, sustainable energy sources and matters of security. The EU will be able to set transnational standards for medical products, give uniform protection to all nations in free trade and achieve greater solidarity in assisting populations suffering from natural or man-made disaster.

The treaty has many goals, many purposes and although working toward agreement among 27 Union members while maintaining national autonomy will be difficult, it will hopefully result in a fitter, happier and more connected Europe.



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A Killers Christmas

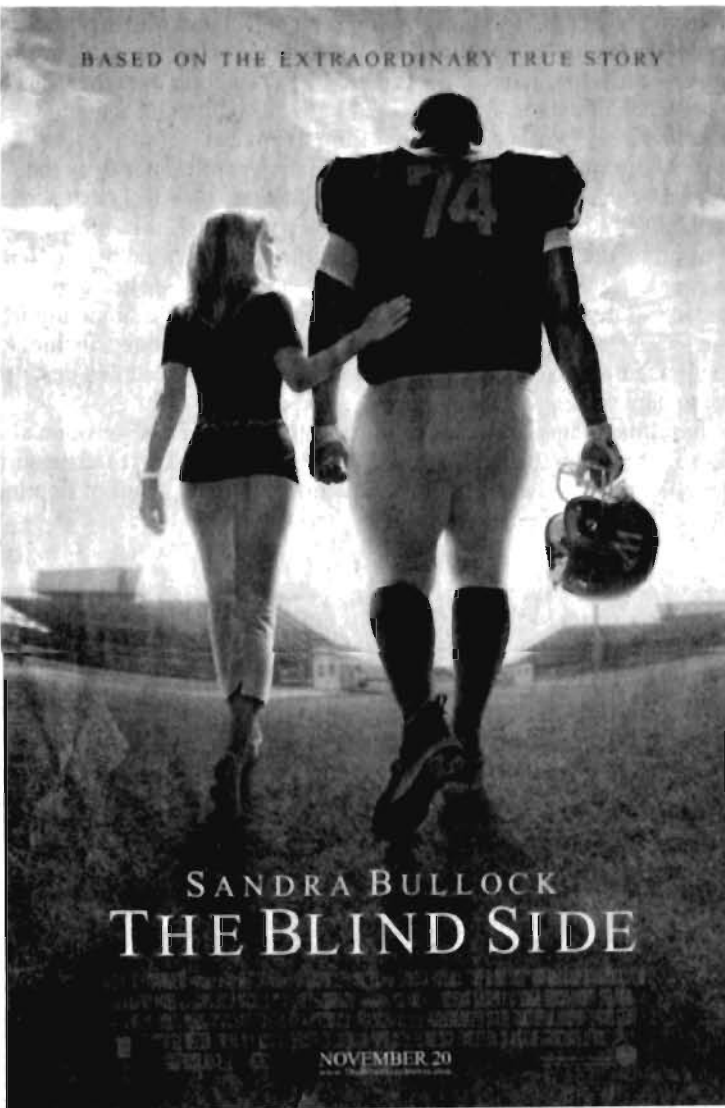
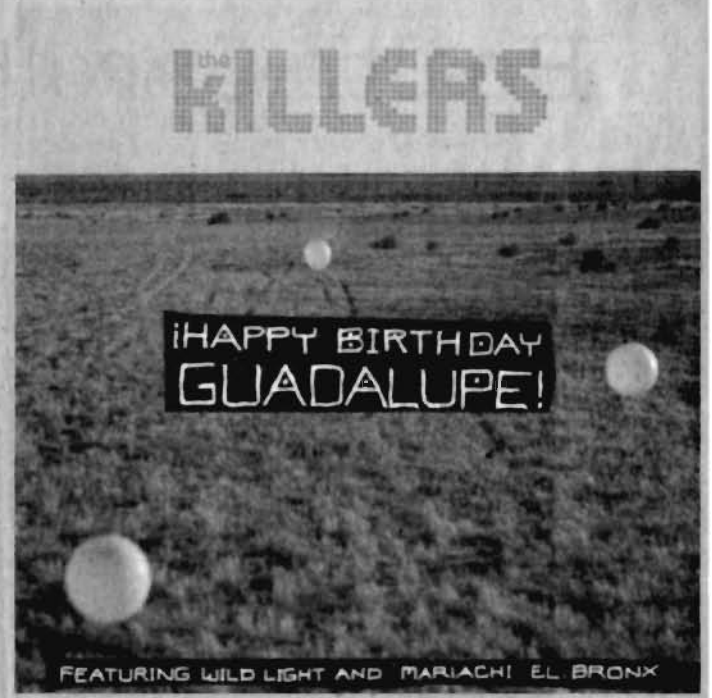
Kendra Sanders
Photographer

Are you up for a Killers' Christmas? In 2006, The Killers began their Christmas tradition to release a Christmas single and video every December 1. They called up Product(RED) saying they were going to do a Christmas single and asked exactly where the proceeds should be sent. Yes, that's right, Product(RED).

In case you are unaware, Product(RED) is a campaign, started by Bono, to help prevent and treat AIDS in Africa. The Killers are considered to be one of the first (RED) artists. On stage in 2005 at the Live 8 concert for AIDS in Africa, Brandon Flowers' (The Killers' frontman) opening words were "Hello everybody! Our brothers and sisters in Africa need our help, so let's change their world!"

The very first Christmas single released by The Killers was titled "A Great Big Sled" and featured Jools Holland. The song was an instant holiday classic with bells, childhood times, and a jolly "ho, ho, ho." The following year, "Don't Shoot Me, Santa" was released about a young boy who did wrong after all the kids on the street were teasing him and was afraid Santa would shoot him. "A bullet in your what!?" In 2008, The Killers teamed up with Elton John and Neil Tennant (Pet Shop Boys) to release the single "Joseph, Better Me Than You." This year's Christmas single, "Happy Birthday, Guadalupe," is a collaboration with their recent opening act and friends, Wild Light, and Mariachi El Bronx. The song tells "a spooky tale of lost love set in the desert, filled with otherworldly spirits, angels, skeletons and Luke Perry as a wandering cowboy."

Download any of these songs from iTunes or Amazon and all the proceeds go to Product(RED)! Have a Killers' Christmas!



THE BLINDSIDE

Kylie Tillet
Sports Editor

As I walked into the theater Thanksgiving Day to see *The Blindside*, I felt annoyed that the theater was already full and we had to endure the lovely 2nd row seats. Even before I got to the theater I was in a bad mood after listening to my family's doubts about the movie, the movie I've been so excited to see. As the movie begins, I wonder if this movie will be anything more than just the normal sports drama. But as the film rolled, I quickly realized that it will be one I remember and want to watch over and over again.

Leigh Anne Tuohy (Sandra Bullock) and Sean Tuohy (Tim McGraw) are living a perfect life in suburbia. They're wealthy and have two beautiful kids, Collins (Lily Collins) and SJ (Jae Head). One night they see Michael Oher (Quinton Aaron) walking the streets in the freezing rain. When they realize he's homeless, they invite him into their home for the night. One night turns into many because they just can't let him go. Not only does Michael fall in love with the Tuohy's, the Tuohy's fall in love with him. They get him a tutor for school and they have him go out for the football team, where he is readily welcomed due to his enormous stature. After initially struggling in both the classroom and the football field, he finally gets the hang of both. He has college offers from every college in the south, and the Tuohy's are thrilled. The movie ends with the tearful goodbye when his adoptive family drops him off at Ole' Miss.

During this movie, I felt a whirlwind of emotions. I couldn't tell if I needed to laugh or cry and usually ended up doing both. There was so much emotion shown by all of the actors, you felt like you could be right in the movie with them, feeling what they were feeling. Sandra Bullock is my favorite actress and I always love her work, but in this movie, she was spectacular. She portrayed the character in such a real-life manner that it was incredible to watch. I can definitely see her getting several awards for this performance. They could not have picked better actors for the family members. Every single one fit the character perfectly, and there was so much chemistry between them. Jae Head, who played SJ, had the whole theater erupting in laughter while Lily Collins, who played Collins, caught the boys' eyes. Sandra Bullock and Tim McGraw worked together as well as I've ever seen two people work together. And who knew Tim McGraw could act so well?

Remember my family- the whiners? They loved it. Every single one of them want to see it again. This movie teaches a lesson. It teaches many lessons. Love, respect, having goals, and being thankful...at all times, not matter what. Go see this movie, expecting the best. You won't be disappointed. It's fun, plus you might just learn something that changes your life.

Courtesy of Google images

FLASH COMIC: BEHIND THE CURTAIN

By:
Spenser Price
Illustrator



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Reality Check

Seth Helton
Features Editor

How much does reality TV affect reality? The antics of Michael and Tareq Salahi, the infamous couple who waltzed into a White House dinner uninvited, suggest that reality TV can have a major impact on reality. The party-crashing couple not only posed a threat to national security, but revealed how far the fame-crazed will go for their precious 15 minutes of fame. Reality TV has put fame, if only short-lived, at the fingertips of those willing enough to put any sense of decency aside or act outrageously. It has created a sort of "civilian" fame, a fame that does not include an actor's or writer's guilds, talent, or pay.

Reality TV first hit big with the original *Real World* and *Big Brother*. Both shows had a similar premise: take a cast of strangers, put them in a house full of booze and short of clothing, remove sleep, throw in a few cameras, then watch the drama unfold. Since then, the formula has been revised and added to a bit, but the drama has stayed. Does anyone remember "Puck", the nose-

picking homophobe from the original *Real World* cast? Probably not, yet his antics (which eventually led to his eviction from the show) showed how shocking, rude behavior could put nobodies on the fast track for publicity.

A similar philosophy of poor manners and shock value stands behind *The Jerry Springer Show*, where the craziest and most outlandish individuals receive the privilege of basking in the limelight. In the surreal landscape of reality TV, the most outlandish individuals are often rewarded with their own spinoffs. A kingdom for the biggest drama queen (or king), if you will. New York, aka Tiffany Pollard, fought and cursed her way through two seasons of *Flavor of Love*, and was rewarded with her own show, *I Love New York*. On top of that, "Chance" and "Real," from season one of *I Love New York*, got their own show in early 2009. The transfer of D-list celebrityhood from a has-been rapper, to a contestant on his show, followed by two wannabe



Courtesy of Google.com

rappers (*Real Chance of Love*) who were contestants on the contestant's show illustrate how fame can sometimes only be a memorable meltdown or melodrama away.

The "balloon boy" hoax from earlier in October is where we reach the conclusion that small screen dreams of reality TV stardom can impact reality. Richard Heene, the "balloon boy's" father, is now facing felony charges for attempting to influence a public servant. Richard Heene had pitched a reality TV series to TLC, but was turned down. The story of his son, Falcon Heene, floating at altitudes of 7,000 ft in a helium balloon turned out to be a publicity stunt. Several National Guard helicopters were dispatched, along with local police to find the "balloon boy" and insure his safety. The Denver International Airport was even shut down as a result, delaying flights. Money and precious man-hours were lost as the result of one starry-eyed man's quest for reality

TV fame and the lengths he was willing to go to to achieve it. Copy-cat publicity stunts could arise in the future if the line between reality and TV is not redrawn. Richard Heene's story should be viewed as a warning to all fame seekers; that a little airtime goes hand-in-hand with a lot of jail-time.

Smurfs on Steroids

Cody Waggoner
Sports Editor

Director James Cameron of *Titanic* and *Spiderman* fame is once again at the center of a highly anticipated movie. This time Cameron has written and is directing his own movie, *Avatar*, which appears to be computer animated Smurfs on steroids, is a highly anticipated winter blockbuster.

Cameron had to postpone production of this movie since the 1990's because he felt he did not have the proper technology and the movie's story has now taken the back seat to the technology used in creating the movie. Motion capture was used in making the movie, but unlike motion capture of the past, which had the digital environment added after filming, the camera used in this film allowed Cameron to see how the characters interacted with their digital environment in real time. This allows Cameron to make changes in the scene just as if shooting live action.

The movie's technology brings great hype to the movie as it seems to be the future of computer animated film making. The movie is also going to be released in 2D and 3D, as well IMAX 3D in certain theaters, bringing the promise of a great movie experience.

Avatar is set to open December 18th, 2009.



courtesy of google.com

A Very Carrey Christmas

Spenser Price
Illustrator

Once again, an adaption of Charles Dickens' classic story, *A Christmas Carol*, which has depicted its own meaning of Christmas since 1843, has hit the big screen. Not only has it returned to theaters, but in 3D; a sensational mode of entertainment that has become an increasingly popular experience for moviegoers. Actor Jim Carrey (*Horton Hears a Who!*) is voice casted as Ebenezer Scrooge, a well-known character of stern business who is appallingly greedy and cold-hearted. Scrooge eventually discovers the true meaning of Christmas and learns to show compassion and sympathy for those less fortunate, whilst realizing how he must change his ways as a whole. Carrey also stars as the ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Future. Gary Oldman (*Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*) plays the voice of Bob Cratchet, Scrooge's assistant, and of the ghost of Jacob Marley, Scrooge's deceased business partner.

A Christmas Carol has taken on many visual aspects through the years. Director Robert Zemeckis (*Forrest Gump*, *The Polar Express*) brings a wonderfully aesthetic depiction of the tale to his audience. Similar to *The Polar Express* and their work with *Beowulf*, makers of the 2009 *Carol* utilize state of the art "performance capture." This form of computer generated imaging can be used to animate a character with the slightest of expressions or to accurately depict the actor himself or herself. The viewer can clearly see how strongly the mannerisms and facial expressions of both Jim Carrey and Gary Oldman are embodied in this film, making it familiar and mesmerizingly realistic.

The 3D effect takes it a step further. Once those glasses are on, one can't help but smile as flakes of snow fly past the front seats of the theater or cringe as the blackened, bony finger of the Ghost of Christmas Future demands the attention and directs the focus.

This version of *A Christmas Carol* could arguably be just out of range for the younger audiences. However, other interpretations of the original story have captivated audiences with extreme moods and emotions before. Other films, like *A Muppet Christmas Carol* starring Michael Caine, have catered more toward the youth with a musical appeal and the Muppet's trademark comedy. The film did follow the original story, comparable to *A Christmas Carol* with George C. Scott, and shares the same very quality, especially to the ghost of Christmas Yet to Come. With the Ghost of Christmas Present, Carrey did elaborate on the character's hearty laughter and jolly countenance, but made a hair-raising scene while the figure wore away as Big Ben stroke menacingly for midnight, transitioning to Scrooge's third and final visitor emerging from the shadows.

Disney's *A Christmas Carol*, starring Jim Carrey and Gary Oldman, directed by Robert Zemeckis is a heartfelt addition to the traditions of the holiday. Zemeckis has, once again, conveyed a visually exciting seasonal treasure. Anyone familiar with the story or wishing for some impressive animation would be greatly satisfied by this film.

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Top 10 Christmas Movies

Sanjana Pampati
Asst. Editor

- ▲ **Elf**
Recommended by **Codie Franklin (9)**
A human, who thinks he's an elf, travels far from his home in the North Pole--to New York City. In New York, Buddy tries to reunite with his long lost father. Instead, Buddy finds himself in a rather humorous predicament. **Codie** says that you should watch *Elf* simply because, "Will Ferrel is hilarious!" If "smiling's your favorite," watch this Will Ferrel classic.
- ▲ **How the Grinch Stole Christmas**
Recommended by **Jordan Potter (11)**
This Dr. Seuss classic is even better on film. We're all familiar with the basic plot line: a crabby hermit tries to steal Christmas from the town of Whoville. The animated film sends a simple message about the true meaning of Christmas. **Jordan** says that everyone should watch *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* because "it's the perfect Christmas cartoon."
- ▲ **It's A Wonderful Life**
Recommended by **Rebecca Walter (12)**
The altruistic George Bailey has been giving to others his entire life and has forgotten all about himself. He must take care of the small bank in his town to prevent the diabolical Mr. Potter from taking over the town. One day George finds himself in murky situation involving the bank and ends up wishing he was never alive. As a result, an angel allows George to see what his family's, town's, and friend's lives would be without him. After watching this 40s classic, you'll remember what makes life and the holidays so pleasant. **Rebecca** says you should watch the movie, "Because it has a good message and puts you in the Christmas spirit!"
- ▲ **Jack Frost**
Recommended by **Rashmitha Edem (10)**
An incompetent father named Jack, who dies in a car wreck, has a second chance to become a good father to his son Charlie. Jack returns to his son as a snowman. Will Jack be able to be good father this time? Watch this 90s classic to find out! **Rashmitha** says, "The movie has a great message and is very interesting!"
- ▲ **Jingle All the Way**
Recommended by **Lauren Stone (12)**
A forgetful father promises his son a Turbo Man doll for Christmas. When all

the stores sell out of the popular toy, he doesn't give up. Watch this Schwarzenegger classic to see the incredible heights a father would go to bring his child a gift. **Lauren** says you should watch the movie because, "It has Arnold Schwarzenegger!"

- ▲ **National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation**
Recommended by **Mrs. Helmich**
The all-about-Christmas Griswold family, has decided to invite family over to their house for the holidays. One unfortunate event after another, things don't seem to occur as planned. Will the family still be able to have a decent Christmas? **Mrs. Helmich** says, "It is the funniest movie ever!" Make sure to watch this 80s adventure, "yule crack up!"
- ▲ **Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer**
Recommended by **David Ray (10)**
We all know the story of Rudolph, but have we witnessed Rudolph's troubles as an animated film? The film is different from the usual with new twists and characters. If anything, it will bring out the true Christmas spirit in us all. **David** says he loves the movie, "because I like to think that there really is a reindeer out there with a red nose."
- ▲ **The Santa Clause**
Recommended by **Andrew Stricklin (11)**
Scott Calvin finds himself in a rather insane situation: he must take over and be Santa after an unfortunate accident. He finds himself in a big mess involving his son, rescue elves, and sudden weight gain. **Andrew** says, "You and your whole family will have a fit when you see the whacky mess Tim Allen gets himself into!"
- ▲ **The Polar Express**
Recommended by **Teddy Kollenberg (9)**
This animated classic will take you on a "journey beyond your imagination." A skeptical boy, who questions the existence of Santa, finds himself on a magical train heading to the North Pole. He finds himself in an adventure like no other along with interesting characters, five of which are voiced by Tom Hanks. Possibly one of the greatest feats for computer animation, *The Polar Express* has been nominated for three Oscars. **Teddy** says, "The train in the movie was so cool!"
- ▲ **We're no Angels**
Recommended by **Mr. Whitley**
Joseph, Albert, and Jules escape from Devil's Island to a French town. They plan to rob a family so they can have money to move onto their next scheme. Instead they find themselves with a loving family who have their own money-troubles. Will they be angels or thieves? Watch the 1950s classic starring Humphrey Bogart to find out. **Mr. Whitley** says, "It's not exactly your normal Christmas movie."

People in the Halls Kylie Tillett Sports Editor	What's the best gift you've ever gotten for Christmas?	If you could ask Santa one question, what would it be?	If you could choose to be Santa, an elf, or a reindeer... which would you be and why?
 Katie Cartwright (9)	Uhhh... my dog.	How do you get around the whole world?	An elf because I like to make things.
 Lance DeRezza (10)	A bike.	Uhm..I don't know. Do you get cold?	Reindeer because you have antlers.
 MaKenzye Rouse (11)	Alright, when I was little I got this um..this BabyBorn ..and it like pooped and stuff. Yeah, it was really cool.	How do you get around being so hefty?...like why can't he just shed a few pounds? You know what I mean?	I would be Santa so I could control the situation.
 Ray Guthrie (12)	A dog. Oh yeah!	Who's your daddy?	Reindeer because I could fly.
 Mr. Gagnon	G.I. Joe Space Shuttle. (Yeah, that's right.)	Are you real?	I'd want to be an elf because I want to meet Will Ferrell.

Brelsford Knows Best

Charis Gurrola
Entertainment Editor


The name Natalie means Christmas child, so it's only suitable that **Natalie Brelsford (12)** be December's Junior Rotarian. Natalie Brelsford has a heart that goes out to her peers. She is the sort of girl who will worry about the one person sitting at a lunch table by himself until she goes over and makes sure he's okay and invites them to sit at her table with her friends. She has the patience and grace to talk to even the most temperamental of people (proof of this is that she's friends with the writer.) She is also highly involved in our school, making her a well chosen representative of Lone Oak High School.

Brelsford's school life is centered around her love for art and science. She has taken five science classes (AP Biology being her favorite) and three years of symphonic band. **Charles Fountain** describes her as a "wonderful student." She is also involved in Friends of Rachel, track, and Biology Club. Brelsford makes school life a fully cultured experience.

Outside of school, Natalie's hobbies revolve around gaming and the ocean. She loves action games and is a devoted fan of the Zelda series. Since Paducah has no coastline, she goes flowboarding (a form of in-door surfing) when ever possible and has recently started an aquarium of tropical fish. These two passions show Natalie's venturesome side and how they fit into her quiet presence. She loves a good adventure, explores the deep sea within her bedroom, and fights monsters on her TV.

At graduation, Brelsford is preparing to obtain the Commonwealth Diploma. Next year, Natalie plans on either joining her brother at Murray State or attending the College of Charleston to study marine biology and later on possibly move to med school. Brelsford says, "Marine biology and medicine are two incredible careers that I would love to explore. Choosing one over the other will be extremely difficult!" Whatever she ends up doing, we know Natalie Brelsford will make an incredible contribution to her field and will be a blessing to the people around her.



Free Association Sanjana Pampati Asst. Editor	Mr. Pitman	Rodney Spillane (9)	Dana Wilson (10)	Haley West (11)	Molly Green (12)
					
Kwanzaa	Hanukkah	Jews	Christmas	Hanukkah	Kwanzaa?
You'll shoot your eye out, kid.	the leg lamp	BB gun	Jamie	A Christmas Story	Isn't that from A Christmas Story?
Scrooge	Bill Murray	Christmas	Greg	the Grinch	Mr. Jarvis
Dreidel	Top	I don't even know what that is.	Mammy	Jews	Ladle?

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LOHS GIRLS BASKETBALL SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Place	Team(s)	Time
12/01	Hickman	Home	JVB-JVG-VG	4:30
12/05	Murray Freshman Tournament	Away	FG	TBA
12/08	St. Mary	Away	JVB-VG-VB	4:30
12/10	Reidland	Away	FG-JVG	6:00
12/11	Reidland	Home	VG-VB	6:00
12/12	Lone Oak JV Tournament	Home	JVG	(All Day)
12/18	Ballard	Away	JVG-VG	6:00
12/29	Henry Co. TN	Away	VG	10:00 am
12/29	Fulton Co. Murray Tourn.	Away	VG	4:00
12/30	CCA	Away	VG	3:00
12/31	TBA	Away	VG	TBA
1/02	Paducah	Home	VG-VB	6:00
1/05	Marshall	Home	VG-VB	6:00
1/07	Reidland	Home	FG-JVG	6:00
1/08	Reidland	Away	VG-VB	6:00
1/09	Murray JV Tournament	Away	JVG	TBA
1/11	Carlisle	Home	JVG-VG	6:00
1/12	CCA	Home	JVG-VG	6:00
1/14	Heath	Home	FG-JVG	6:00
1/15	Heath	Away	VG-VB	6:00
1/16	Marshall Freshman Tournament	Away	FG	TBA
1/22	Graves	Home	VG-VB	6:00
1/25	Calloway	Home	FG-JVG	6:00
1/28	Paducah	Away	FG-JVG	6:00
1/29	Fulton Co.	Home	JVG-VG	6:00
1/30	Livingston/Lyon Round Robin	Away	FG	TBA
2/01	Mayfield	Away	JVG-VG	6:00
2/02	Calloway	Away	VG-VB	6:00
2/04	Heath	Away	FG-JVG	6:00
2/05	Heath	Home	VG-VB	6:00
2/08	Graves	Home	FG-JVG	6:00
2/09	St. Mary	Home	JVG-VG	6:00
2/11	Paducah	Home	FG-JVG	6:00
2/12	Paducah	Away	JVB-VG-VB	4:30
2/13	Murray	Home	VG-VB	6:00
2/15	Livingston	Away	JVG-VG	6:00
2/16	Lyon	Away	JVG-VG	6:00
2/18	Graves	Away	VG-VB	6:00

LOHS BOYS BASKETBALL SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Place	Team(s)	Time
11/30	Webster Co.	Away	JVB/VB	6:00
12/01	Hickman Co.	Home	JVB/JVG/VG	4:30
12/08	St. Mary	Away	JVB/VG/VB	4:30
12/10	Reidland	Home	JVB/FB	6:00
12/11	Reidland	Home	VG/VB	6:00
12/14	Tilghman	Home	FB/JVB	6:00
12/17	Mayfield	Home	FB/JVB/VB	4:30
12/18-12/21	Hopkins County Cent. Christmas Tourney	Away	VB	TBA
12/28-12/30	Jefferson City, MO Christmas Tourney	Away	VB	TBA
1/02	Tilghman	Home	VG/VB	6:00
1/04	Marshall Co.	Away	FB/JVB	6:00
1/05	Marshall Co.	Home	VG/VB	6:00
1/07	Reidland	Away	FB/JVB	6:00
1/08	Reidland	Away	VG/VB	6:00
1/09	Carlisle Co.	Away	FB/JVB/VB	4:00
1/12	Calloway Co.	Away	FB/JVB/VB	5:00
1/14	Heath	Away	FB/JVB	6:00
1/15	Heath	Away	VG/VB	6:00
1/18	Graves Co.	Home	FB/JVB	6:00
1/22	Graves Co.	Home	VG/VB	6:00
1/23	Graves Tourney	Away	FB	TBA
1/26	Murray	Home	JVB/VB	6:00
1/28	Graves Co.	Away	FB/JVB	6:00
1/30	Corbin	Away	VB	4:00
2/01	Murray	Home	FB/JVB	6:00
2/02	Calloway Co.	Away	VG/VB	6:00
2/04	Heath	Home	FB/JVB	6:00
2/05	Heath	Home	VG/VB	6:00
2/06	St. Mary/Lyon Co.	Home	FB/JVB	TBA
2/09	Lyon Co.	Away	JVB/VB	6:00
2/11	Tilghman	Away	FB	6:00
2/12	Tilghman	Away	JVB/VG/VB	4:30
2/13	Murray	Home	VG/VB	6:00
2/18	Graves Co.	Away	VG/VB	4:30

SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

Kyle Fouse

Staff Writer

As we are all very well aware, this year our very own Lone Oak Purple Flash Football team had a wonderful season. We finished 10-0 in the regular season (again) and unfortunately, 14-1 overall. While the result of the final game was not what we wished, the boys had a magnificent season leading up to it.

Ballard Memorial - Home (58-6) (W)
 Reidland - Away (63-20) (W)
 Marshall County - Home (55-0) (W)
 Lexington Catholic - Home (52-49) (W)
 Caldwell County - Home (56-19) (W)
 Graves County - Away (17-7) (W)
 Green County - Home (52-20) (W)
 Calloway County - Away (25-0) (W)
 Hopkins County Central - Away (24-0) (W)
 Heath - Away (34-0) (W)
 Russel County - Home (59-27) (W)
 Franklin Simpson - Home (49-7) (W)
 Allen County-Scottsville - Home (34-6) (W)
 Marion County - Home (45-28) (W)
 Boyle County - Western KY U (42-39) (L) :(

After such an exciting run, I had to ask some of the more outstanding Senior football players how they felt about the last high school season of their lives. Here are the questions asked, followed by the responses of three LO Football seniors.

1. What do you feel was your best game?
2. What do you feel was the game that summarized the season?
3. How do you feel about the season as a whole?

Cameron Looper: 1. Definitely Lexington Catholic.
 2. Marion County.
 3. Surprised at another 10-0 season. Just inches from being perfect. Literally.

Jacob Porter: 1. Lexington Catholic
 2. Boyle County
 3. We did so well and went so far and still failed to bring it home.

Matt Starks: 1. Russel County
 2. Boyle County
 3. The regular season was great, but I feel like we were playing to not lose as opposed to winning against Boyle. We weren't playing Lone Oak football in the only game we lost.

A great season indeed. Few teams can boast two 10-0 seasons in 3 years, much less two 14-1 seasons for that matter. There is still a lot of hope among the youngsters in the football program, all of which will be eager to prove themselves once again on a state level. But for me, and for many other seniors graduating this year, it was truly a season to remember.



Name	Most Memorable Moment	Thing Gained From Football	After High School Plans
Chayton Thacker	Beating Lexington Catholic.	How to be a better person off the field.	Go to college and hopefully play football.
Chandler Thacker	Going to state.	Learned to be tough.	Go to college.
Clayton Isenberg	The free food.	Better work ethics and determination.	Go to college, play basketball, and become a pharmacist.
Austin Clark	Making it to state twice.	How to work as a team.	Go to Louisville and major in mechanical engineering.
Cody Cavanaugh	Playing with all of friends.	How to be a part of a team.	Play college football.
Cameron Looper	Coach Jezik.	Leadership.	Play college football.
Alex Lambert	Going to state.	The importance of good work ethics and character.	To go to college. Undecided on playing football.
T.K. Kemper	Going to state.	How to be a part of a team and to never give up.	Go to college and try to major in engineering.
Jacob Kames	Listening to "All the Way Turn't Up" before games.	Teamwork.	I plan to go to college but not pursue playing football.
Michael Edwards	Beating Lexington Catholic.	Friends that I never would have made without football.	To go to college and play baseball.
Carson Beyer	Going to state.	I learned sometimes no matter how hard you try things don't always go your way.	Go to college.
Jacob Porter	Watching Jack's knuckle ball kick go through against Lexington Catholic.	Work ethics and how to be a man.	Play college football.
Matt Starks	Beating Lexington Catholic.	How to be a man.	Play college football.

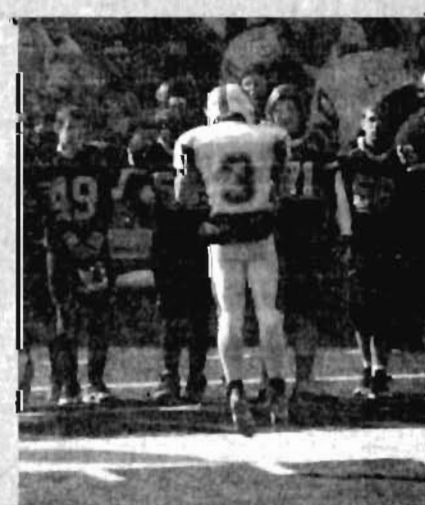
PURPLE FLASH'S ALMOST PERFECT FINISH

Ruth Wooten

Business Manager

On December 4th, the Flash faced Boyle County in the 4A State Championship game at L.T. Stadium on the campus of Western Kentucky University. The Flash were the first to score with a field goal by Jack Courts(11). Boyle scored a touchdown and extra point to end the first quarter, 7-3. Lone Oak scored at the beginning of second quarter with an extra point, and then had two more touchdowns to end the second quarter 7-22. In the third quarter, Boyle scored again but had a failed attempt at a two-point conversion. Matt Starks had his third touchdown of the game bringing the Flash to 29 with Boyle trailing at 13. Boyle came back in the fourth quarter with two touchdowns, an extra point, and in the last five seconds, a field goal to tie the Flash at 29-29. The two teams battled into double overtime, Lone Oak was on offense first and executed a field goal which Boyle County matched. Boyle County ended the game with a touchdown.

The successful season of the Flash has not gone unnoticed. Several college representatives were present at many of the Flash's games this season and are arriving at the high school daily to speak with many senior players. These interested colleges include Georgetown, Lindsey Wilson College, Eastern Kentucky University, Southern Illinois University, and Campbellsville University. "Whenever you have good, talented players and good students, which is what this school provides, colleges want to see that," states Coach Jack Haskins. Many of the senior players including Carson Beyer(12), Matt Starks(12), and Cameron Looper(12) have been approached by these colleges. Looper was recently awarded a one thousand dollar scholarship as the Pepsi Player of Year. Congratulations to all seniors on your season. May your success carry on in whatever you do!





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