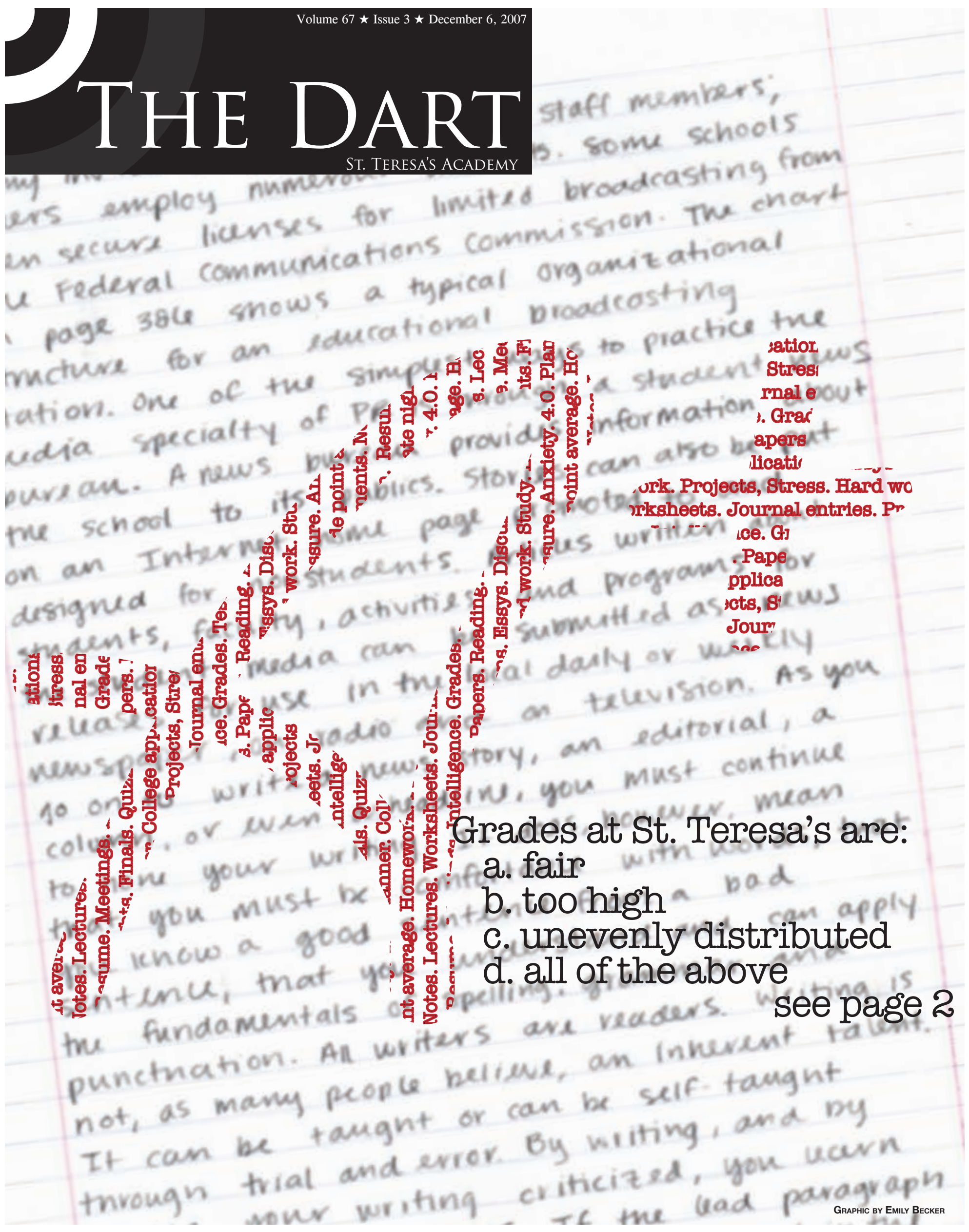


THE DART

ST. TERESA'S ACADEMY



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Grades at St. Teresa's are:

- a. fair
- b. too high
- c. unevenly distributed
- d. all of the above

see page 2

Stats reveal top-heavy grade distribution

Associate principal acknowledges unbalanced GPA, reflects on possible causes, solutions for community

by EMILY BECKER & SARAH COOPER
Co-Editor-in-Chief & Managing Editor

When the seniors in Ms. Megan Filipowicz's writing class break into peer editing groups, chances are one in each cluster of four has a grade point average (GPA) above a 4.0.

According to the STA school profile sent to colleges, 25 percent of the class of 2008 had a GPA above 4.0 at the end of its junior year. A 4.0 correlates to an unweighted A average.

"That's pretty high, but here at St. Teresa's, the bell curve is kind of lopsided," said principal of academic affairs Nancy Hand. "At St. Teresa's, there are not a lot of Fs. With weighted grades, this does not surprise me. It does not concern me because I go back to the fact that we are a college-prep school with a commitment to excellence in education."

Hand attributes the class's top-heavy grade distribution to STA's nature as a private school and the weight added to grades in honors classes. She still upholds the bell curve, where the most common grade in the course is a C and about equal numbers of students receive As and Fs, as the ideal model of grade distribution in a course.

However, she believes the perfect bell curve is impossible at a college-prep school, and noted STA students that flunk more than 1.5 credits are expelled.

"Here at St. Teresa's, I know we don't have as many students getting Fs because of the commitment from parents and faculty to see that a student succeeds," she said. "When your parents are paying a lot of money for you to go here, they don't want you flunking out of classes."

Hand also cited a shift in the attitude toward Cs as another possible cause of high grades.

"There's so much pressure from parents, teachers and other institutions that a C is a bad grade," Hand said. "In a college-prep school, a C is a great grade...I don't think teachers give into the pressure [to give good grades], but many think that pressure is there. They can feel the pressure that's on the students, because the students get very stressed. Students don't perform as well when they're stressed, and it's to get the A."

Junior Alexis Collins said she is dissatisfied with a C grade.

"I know a C is average, but I don't like getting one," Collins said. "You should shoot for As and Bs."

Hand credits this outlook to the rising cost of education.

"I have seen a trend, and it's no one's fault," she said. "As education becomes more costly at the private level, there are higher expectations of excellence and rigor. Are you getting a fine education here? Yes, but that doesn't mean you are always going to get As... Just because you work hard, it doesn't mean you are entitled to a really high grade."

But she also noted that grading is ultimately up to the teachers, who she trusts to make the right decisions.

"Grading is definitely an art," said Hand. "It's something [teachers] are always looking at, refining and redefining. All teachers go through four years or more at the university level. Those programs are very good at instructing teachers how to teach and how to grade... Teachers evaluate how they grade, and I encourage them to."

English teacher Pat Dunlay uses the bell curve in the unweighted classes she teaches, and said the average grade in those classes is usually a C.

"I have never thought of myself as an unreasonable grader," Dunlay said. "I think

I'm very fair. I have high standards, but it's not impossible to get an A in my class at all."

Dunlay said the bell curve, her philosophy of "tough love" and high expectations for students eliminate a top-heavy grade distribution in her classes.

"You should teach above the head of the smartest kid in the class," Dunlay said. "You should teach so that everybody has to reach. I strongly believe that everybody can reach."

Dunlay said she usually grades assignments with a rubric, but never grades them against each other. She said "excellent" work deserves an A, "very good" deserves a B, "average" deserves a C and "inadequate or less than average" work deserves a D.

"I set a standard of what I think is excellent work, and that's based on long experience and my own education," she said. "I believe that some people have standards that give As away."

Hand and Dunlay noted efforts to reduce the top-heavy grades at STA. Hand said high enrollment in weighted classes, which are graded on a 5.0 scale, is a cause of a shift in grade distribution. In the past four years, weight has been removed from the accelerated freshman and sophomore classes. Balancing grade distribution was not the main motivation for removing weight from freshman and sophomore classes, but it has been a result. Hand said the change did not make a huge impact, but it "brought things down to a normal level."

Dunlay called weighted grades for honors classes a "trend" that is on its way out of education. Many high schools are removing weight from their honors classes. Hand mentioned that some colleges ask students to report their unweighted GPAs on the 4.0 scale.

"Colleges are moving away from looking at GPAs to looking at what course [students] are taking," Hand said.

Hand monitors the grades in each teacher's classes using SASI, STA's electronic grade and attendance program. She holds meetings with teachers to evaluate the difficulty of the course if their grades are either top-heavy or bottom-heavy.

"If one half of the class is getting As or one half is getting Fs, there is absolutely a huge concern there," Hand said. "Teachers have to make their classes rigorous, but not too rigorous so that no one can attain an A or everyone flunks." ★

Just a side note

The Nation's Report Card

The National Assessment of Educational Progress released "The Nation's Report Card" study in 2005. The study uses standardized tests and the transcripts of graduating high school seniors to assess the academic achievement of students in the US. The following are results from the study:

- The average GPA of graduating high school seniors rose from 2.68 to 2.98 from 1990 to 2005. This is approximately a B average.
- Graduates earned lower GPAs in core classes, such as math and English, than in other academic courses.
- Graduates earn about three credits more than in 1990. This accounts for about 360 additional hours of instruction.
- The reading skills of graduates in 2005 were significantly worse than those in 1992.
- A majority of high school seniors have not mastered high school level math.

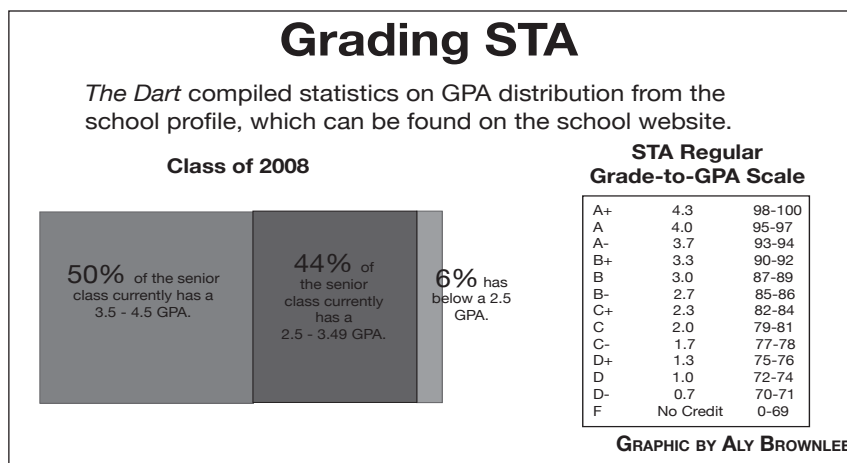


Photo Poll

Describe what A work looks like.



"A writing would be by someone who has paid close attention to detail, has gone through the writing process and has looked at the thesis from all angles."

- Megan Filipowicz, English teacher

Describe what C work looks like.



"C work answers the question, shows little effort or interest and is usually filled with fluff."

- Denise Rueschhoff, history teacher

compiled by Caroline Quinn and Haley Vondemkamp

How does it feel to get an

A?



"I feel fabulous because it's a big deal, and it makes my parents happy and it makes me happy."

- Phyllis Cole, junior

How does it feel to get an

C?



"It's discouraging and it feels like it's hard to get out of. It makes me feel like I'm not going to do well on the next test."

- Lauren Paszkiewicz, sophomore

compiled by Rachel Flattery and Carlie Campbell

inside out



Centerspread: Teachers, students, experts discuss effect of physical classroom environments on education, behavior. See Page 12-13

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Features: Junior Katya DiTirro reflects on life as an orphan in Ukraine before her adoption, journey to United States. See Pages 20-21

Students stress over grades, neglect health

KATE RAINEY



CAMPUS CRIER

I missed six days of school because I had pneumonia. Nine days of fever, nausea and constant cough made me realize how stressful school was. Staying up late, obsessing about my grades, worrying about college applications. The constant anxiety and pressure affected my health. It took a serious illness for me to realize I needed to adjust my priorities.

Stress should not be a given, something with which high school students must live. STA offers many tips for relieving stress, like the senior stress relief group, but no suggestions for how to cut stress out of one's life.

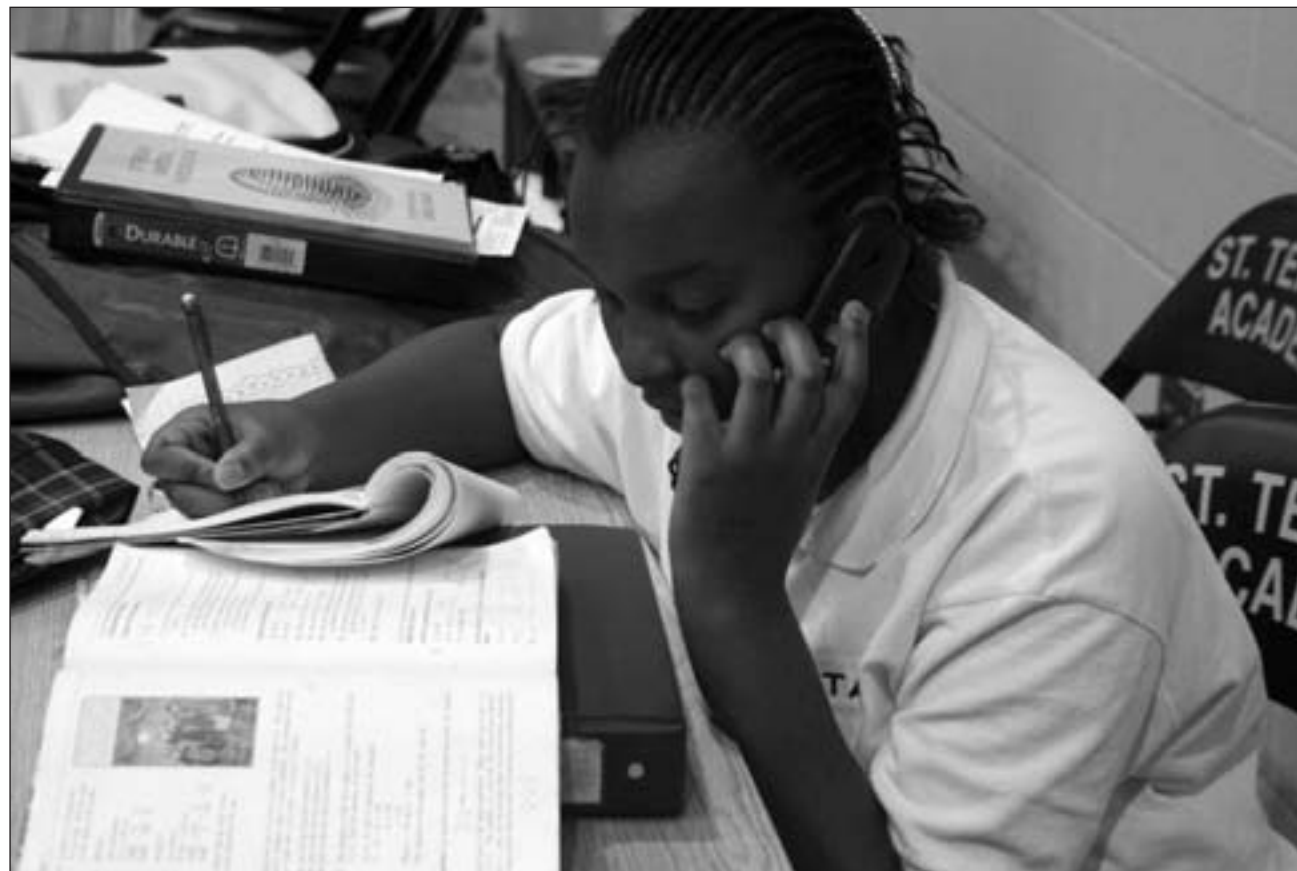
No blanket answer exists to fix the stress problem. Each student needs to think about how much stress she can stomach before snapping, and give herself permission to slow down. Your physical and mental health are important. You should not stay up until three a.m. doing homework if you will be a zombie the next morning. It feels like not finishing your homework means the end of the world. The SBR has an ominous aura; it means a pock on your permanent record, a scarlet letter sown to your uniform sweater. But it is only a slip of paper, maybe a 40-minute detention in Dr. Joe's room. Surviving on five hours of sleep to complete your homework and activities is not worth the damage to your health. That SBR pales in comparison to falling asleep at the wheel of your car or taking weeks to recover from an illness because of a suppressed immune system.

Either intentionally or unintentionally, teachers and parents put pressure on students to participate in a plethora of activities and take all the difficult classes to bulk up their resumes. Beginning freshman year, they are told they must think about college. They must write down their activities so they can create their resumes. They have to take the hardest classes, participate in as many activities as they can and maintain a healthy social life. This crammed schedule isn't healthy for most people. One should not have to sacrifice one's sanity and happiness to get into college.

High school can be challenging without being unbearable. Do not take five college-credit courses and play three sports if you easily succumb to anxiety or those classes are too difficult. AP Biology is a great class for people who enjoy science, but if you hate biology, don't enroll in this class just for the honors credit. If you stretch yourself too thin, you will end up performing poorly in all of your classes. This will look worse on a transcript than taking classes which are challenging, but doable.

I'm not suggesting students should stop challenging themselves or depart from the honors path. They can push themselves without sacrificing their health for their transcripts. Students should take the classes they can handle and choose activities they enjoy, not ones which will bulk up their resumes. They must learn to listen to their bodies. As high school students, they should start to figure out how they react to stress, illness, etc. Then, when they go to college and have to take care of themselves, they will know how. ★

STA grants full ride to freshman



Multi tasking ★ STA Freshman Sue Seemani works on her geometry homework as she manages basketball practices and talks on the phone to her uncle Tuesday. Seemani was the first recipient of 4-year scholarship at STA. PHOTO BY JAIME HENRY WHITE

Freshman Sue Seemani leaves her life in Africa to seek education, awarded four year full scholarship at STA

by KAYLA LOOSEN
Staff Writer

In 2005, STA former president, Faith Wilson, established a fundraising campaign called "Expanding Universes" through which the school's endowment is prospected to grow to 10 million by 2014. This campaign offers financial aid and scholarships to academically qualified students that cannot afford STA's approximate \$10,000 annual tuition. Through Expanding Universes, the school is now able to provide a full ride, termed as the STAR scholarship, every four years to one student beginning with Seemani.



Seemani

According to STA director of advancements Kevin Flattery, Wilson discovered Seemani through St. Elizabeth's grade school and learned of her immigration story from Lusaka, Zambia six years ago to Kansas City. From there, Wilson approached Seemani regarding

her eligibility for the scholarship.

"Selection for the scholarship was very private," said Flattery. "It wasn't like we put out a notice in the Kansas City Star and said this was available."

Flattery explained that it takes \$200,000 in the school's endowment fund to generate enough interest to give away this type of scholarship. Along with the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, STA alumna, Sheila Geddes, who graduated in 1956, donated this \$200,000.

After fulfilling the academic, financial and diversity requirements mandatory for the scholarship, a basic interview with the family finalized Seemani as the recipient of the scholarship. Still, the scholarship was a surprise to the family, said Flattery.

"We came into the house and played the message on the answering machine explaining the scholarship," said Seemani. "At first, we were really surprised. We thought [STA] had the wrong number, but then they said my name."

Freshman Grace Bisbee, a St. Elizabeth's alumna, believes Seemani's dedication to class work in grade school was

to insure herself a place at STA.

"I knew she would get a scholarship because she has always worked so hard," said Bisbee. "She's always Crazy Sue inside and outside of school, but you can tell she knows when to be serious. She knew what she needed to do."

Seemani understands that the school expects her to remain in good disciplinary and academic standings. Currently she is a JV basketball manager, a member in Science Club and a student ambassador for People to People, an organization that works to develop global understanding through educational and volunteer projects.

"In 10 years, I see her leading some kind of campaign for kids who have come from the bottom and worked their way to the top through education," said Bisbee. "She's worked hard to earn what she has today, and I think she admires others in that position."

According to Seemani, her grandmother, who runs a private primary school in Lusaka, is an inspiration and encouragement for her.

"My grandma used to tell me, 'reading is knowledge and knowledge is power,' said Seemani. "That's why I read a lot - because it motivates you."

Flattery explains how fortunate STA

See SCHOLAR, page 2

News ★ Briefs

Guest speaker presents look at climate change

On Dec. 10 Mr. Mark Dixon of Your Environmental Road Trip will present his findings on global warming to the STA population during activity.

Dixon and his colleagues embarked on a year long "eco-adventure" and visited every state in the US. Their mission is to accelerate environmental change.

The presentation will include an introduction about the organization, the slide show presentation featured in "An Inconvenient Truth" and questions from the audience. Dixon was trained by "Truth" director, Al Gore. ★

Prestigious award given to Teresian yearbook staff

The Teresian Yearbook staff was awarded the "All-American" ranking by the National Scholastic Press Association Nov. 20. This is the highest ranking awarded by the NSPA in the critique service.

The staff received four out of five marks of distinction for theme, writing, coverage and design. The critique was based on the yearbook from the 2006-2007 school year when the theme was "Echo." This is the highest award a publication from STA has ever received.

The staff also received the "All Missouri" distinction from the Missouri Interscholastic Press Association. ★

STA gets burrito bonanza from Chipotle Mexican Grill

Chipotle customers may have been confused Monday Nov. 12 as they pulled up to see a line of tartan plaid snaking around the Plaza location. The entire STA student body was treated to complementary burritos.

"We see so many of you girls come in," assistant manager Becky Cole said. "So, we just wanted to give you something back as a thank you for giving us so much business. Almost 300 burritos were given away."

Many students will enjoy free burritos again in the coming weeks as a reward for all members of their advisory selling auction raffle tickets. ★

Hannah Montana creates buzz

Teens express excitement, incredulity about sold-out Sprint Center concert

by ELIZABETH WILSON
Staff Writer

Sprint Center.com reads: Dec. 3, 2007 8 p.m. Hannah Montana SOLD OUT.

Miley Cyrus, singer, actress and song writer, performed as Hannah Montana at the Sprint Center in Kansas City Monday night. The setup for the Hannah Montana stage allowed for about 11,000 seats at the new downtown arena.

Cyrus, 14, is the daughter of country singer Billy Ray Cyrus and the star of Disney Channel's TV show "Hannah Montana." On TV, Cyrus plays high school student Miley Stewart, who lives a secret double life as famous pop star Hannah Montana. Her show reaches 5,000,000 viewers a week.

"[I watch her show] every time there is a new episode," sophomore Allie Scott said. "I've seen many of them more than once."

Scott and junior Cynthia Livingston are two of the lucky few able to purchase tickets to the concert.

Livingston purchased her tickets through Miley World, which she described as a typical fan club.

"[On Mileyworld.com.] Miley posts things and does online chats," Livingston said. "Being a fan club member allows you to get presale tickets. The fan club costs about \$30 a year."

Livingston paid face value of \$150 for her floor seat ticket. Her mom and sister's upper level tickets were \$46 each, plus a \$9 handling fee.

"I would have paid \$300 for a ticket...I really like Hannah Montana!" Livingston said.

The Emmy-nominated television show "Hannah Montana" has over 4,000,000 child viewers and only 650,000 to 700,000 seats available on the 54-concert arena tour.



Concert craze ★ Fans wait in line for concert merchandise outside the Sprint Center before the Hannah Montana concert, featuring the Jonas Brothers, Monday. The concert was sold out and had over 11,000 attendees of all ages. PHOTO BY JAIME HENRY-WHITE

For the Kansas City concert, 4,000 tickets went straight to "Hannah Montana" fan club members. The tickets that went on sale publicly through Ticketmaster Sept. 15 sold out within minutes.

"I think Hannah Montana is ridiculous," sophomore Madeline O'Rear said. "I'm really surprised at the number of older teens interested [in her]. But it is definitely impressive that [the tickets] sold out within minutes...props to Hannah!"

Fans throughout the country have started petitions against Ticketmaster and the Hannah Montana fan club because they

expected their fan club membership to grant them access to tickets.

"Have you ever heard the phrase 'the early bird gets the worm?'" asked Livingston. "It's no one's fault that there was a huge demand and not enough space. It would have been awesome for her to meet the demand like Garth Brooks but she'd be here for a month!"

O'Rear thinks the whole thing is crazy. "If those people have that kind of money to spend on Hannah Montana tickets, then I say go for it," O'Rear said. "But it is a little bit much, especially the \$30 fee for fan club

membership. How is some little kid that likes her show supposed to come up with that money?"

Scott said she does not think it is fair that some scalpers got the tickets before anyone else. She believes it's wrong for scalpers to sell them at a high price because there are so many kids who wanted to go to the "Hannah Montana" concert but couldn't because of the cost.

"I'm so excited to see her," Scott said. "It really hasn't hit me yet that I'm actually going, since so many people want tickets and just can't get them." ★

6 december 2007
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The Dart
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St. Teresa's Academy

Website redesign to better reflect STA

President, faculty anticipate more personal, interactive website improvements to be revealed in spring

by NICOLE GRAVINO
Staff writer

Just about every STA student has seen "St. Teresa's Academy: Excellence in Education" flash across a computer screen before the school website begins loading. Whether innocently wanting to use the internet at school or visiting the site for the links to teacher sites and Naviance, the STA lampost and school seal are familiar images. By next spring, this website will be gone and replaced by a new, state-of-the-art site.

President Nan Bone and assistant to the president Diane Wilmot are currently working with iModules Software, Inc., the same company that designed Rockhurst High School's website, to create a site that better suits the STA community.

"One of our goals is to make it unique and very specific to STA," director of admissions and marketing Roseann Hudnall said. "We hope to update our website to give the real flavor of our campus."

The new site is scheduled to be complet-

ed by next February or March, but because teachers need time to get used to working with the new system it will not be up and running until April or May. The goal is to have everything worked out by fall of next year for the incoming class.

"With the new site, we will be able to put up pictures of Frosh Fest along with other big sister, little sister activities," Hudnall said. "Incoming students can see what

we do to make our freshmen feel welcome."

The new site will be more functional for both prospective and current students. The hope is to bring all teacher websites back into one place so everyone is running on the same system.

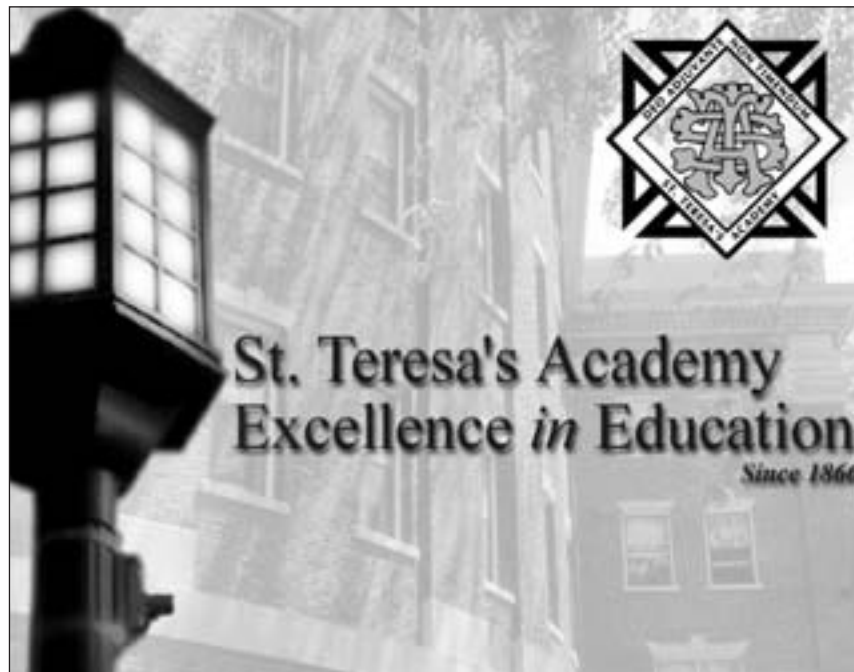
"Before there was always a need for teachers to have separate websites to keep things up

to date," Bone said. "Right now one person updates the current website about once a week. With the new [website], teachers will be able to make changes themselves."

Along with trying to meet the needs of the student body, Wilmot approaches this from a marketing perspective.

"We need to make [our website] more user friendly, easier to navigate and to keep up with the competition."

Nan Bone, President



Under construction ★ The front page of STA's current website reflects the school's philosophy. The new site's address will be www.stastars.org or www.stteresasacademy.com.

"We needed to improve our website," Wilmot said. "We needed to make it more user friendly, easier to navigate and to keep up with the competition."

One element missing from the current website, which Bone and Wilmot have included in the new layout, is pictures. Where on the current site is there a picture of the school's campus or of any students.

With the new format, pictures from Teresian could have been up by last Monday. An aerial picture of the campus is in the works. They plan to share what STA has to offer with those outside the school's community and bring renewed focus to the site.

"It was a culmination of a lot of people thinking the time is right," Bone said. "It's time for a change." ★

BY TRACY BURNS-YOCUM

Nov. 12: Nuclear shutdown

North Korea is making what is considered one of the biggest strides to date in reducing its atomic program. The communist country is anticipated to start dismantling its nuclear facilities in response to the North Korean government's agreement to shut the plants down by the end of the year in exchange for political concessions and energy aid. North Korea took the first step towards scaling back the nuclear program in July when the country shut down its main working nuclear reactor at Yongbyon. US assistant secretary of state Christopher Hill said with the denuclearization of Korea, people will see that the isolated country is opening up. This move will also help remove North Korea from a United States list of states supporting terrorism.

Nov. 18: MRSA panic

Although it has existed for several years, people around the globe are increasingly concerned about Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA). MRSA, a staph infection, is non-responsive to most antibiotics, and its effects can be fatal. A staph infection can be contracted, but have no noticeable impact until it enters the bloodstream through a cut or wound. Most reported cases of the resistant infection have been at schools, hospitals and nursing homes. Several students have died from contracting MRSA this year. This drug-resistant strain of staph infections kills close to 19,000 Americans every year, which is, more than those who died from AIDS or homicide in 2005.



Protecting patients ★ Jeanine Thomas, left, and Illinois Rep. Patricia Bellock look over paper work on the MRSA legislation at Bellock's office, April 16. The women are pushing legislation that would require all hospitals in Illinois to screen patients for MRSA. PHOTO COURTESY OF MCT CAMPUS

Nov. 26: Teddy bear teacher

British teacher Gillian Gibbons, 54, was arrested Nov. 26 in Sudan after allowing her class to name a teddy bear "Mohammed." Teachers at Unity High School in central Khartoum, the capital of Sudan, said Gibbons made an innocent mistake and simply let her 7-year-old students choose their favorite name for the stuffed animal as part of a school project, but authorities charged her with offending religion. A British Foreign Office spokeswoman said Gibbons was charged under Article 125 of Sudan's constitution, a law that relates to insulting religion and motivating hatred. The Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir pardoned Gibbons after she served 15 days in prison. ★

Fires rage through California



In the heat of the moment ★ Fire fighters with the Orange County Fire Authority keep an eye on the approaching fire from an area known as Mine Track at the end of Silverado Canyon Road, Oct. 26. PHOTO COURTESY OF MCT CAMPUS

Destructive fires fueled by arson, dry conditions leave residents homeless

by KYLIE HORNBECK
Staff Writer

As flames blazed across the Californian terrain in late October, destroying wildlife, vegetation and housing, Huntington Beach resident John Piekarski gazed in amazement.

This fall, a number of fires, caused by both nature and by arsonists, raged throughout vast areas of southern California.

"Whole hillsides were destroyed by the fire here," Piekarski said. "It looked like lava coming down the hillside."

Piekarski, who lived about 18 miles from a fire in the Silverado Canyon area, witnessed it near its beginning while driving home from a friend's house. His neighborhood experienced great amounts of falling ash and thick smoke, so much that all outdoor activities were cancelled for several days.

"The smoke and ash and smell were probably the worst," Deena Piekarski, John's wife, said. "Trees had burned to the ground and looked like twigs out of the earth."

Wildfires have prompted discussion among the local, state and federal governments of the affected areas. The 2007 wildfires are some of the worst known in the area, and they impacted many, including neighbor and sister to John, Sally Piekarski.

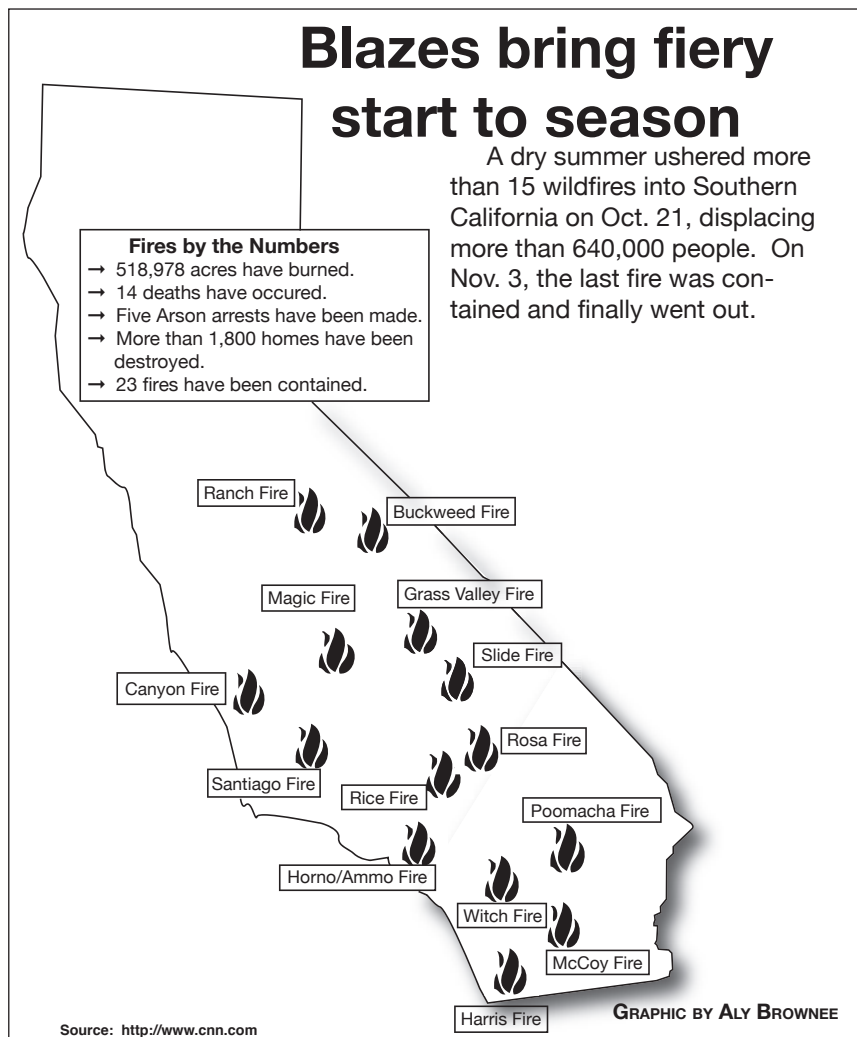
"It's just terrible," Sally said. "People will be out of their homes for several years, even. Their whole lives are disrupted. What do you do? It's devastating; it really made me look at the bigger picture."

It was hard for the Piekarskis to comprehend all the destruction that had taken place so close to their home. However, wildfires in the southern California area are not out of the ordinary, they said.

"Every year there's a fire," John said. "We all know the fire season is coming; you just have to know how to prepare for it."

Area residents are advised to take precautions, such as removing foliage within 150 feet of a home, using tile roofs and installing an effective smoke alarm.

According to Kansas City Fire Department Deputy Chief Paul Berardi, the smoke alarm is very important because it



saves lives.

"There needs to always be an awareness of potential dangers...and to prevent fires, you need to be well equipped," Berardi said.

Although the Kansas City Fire Department was not requested by California departments to assist, many fire departments from California's neighboring states sent aid. According to Berardi, if Kansas City was to experience a major fire anytime soon, it would be ready; the city has one of the best fire department systems in the country.

"Our fire department here is very well staffed, equipped and trained," Berardi said.

John feels the California government was able to handle the wildfire situation

well. Victims received temporary shelter, in which gourmet meals, yoga classes and daycare were provided.

"The funny thing is that after the fires, people kept looking for flaws in the way Arnold Schwarzenegger and the government took care of the situation and of the victims, but no one could find any," John said.

Although much devastation occurred, John believes the destruction will end up helping the economy.

"So many people's homes were devastated that I think it will actually be a good thing for the local economy," John said. "Things will be rebuilt, the state is receiving a lot of money from the government and there will be a lot of job opportunities produced, especially in construction." ★

High school dating

Most high schoolers experience dating in some form or another. Some choose hooking up as their method of choice (see page 10 for more information) while other choose a steady relationship. What do you feel is best? The three managing editors and one of the co-editors-in chief of *The Dart* discuss high school relationships. The following should help you decide where you stand.



Sarah Cooper

My age group's label as the hook-up generation is worrying, because it means that we rarely form meaningful relationships. They seem to be the exception these days, instead of the rule. Relationships in high school are supposed to prepare us for relationships later in life; for many of us, that ultimately means marriage. That might sound pretentious, but it's true.

Hooking up doesn't teach us anything about real love. If anything, it is detrimental to the image of a relationship. Hooking up is done out of selfish motivations, without regard to the feelings of the other person. Hooking up is connecting with someone only on a physical level, and without any commitment.

If we never create relationships built on more than lust, we won't figure out for ourselves what qualities and values make the foundation of a successful couple. We can't expect to suddenly gain the values of compromise, trust and fidelity when we're ready for a serious relationship if we don't practice them.

And by practicing them, I mean forming substantial relationships. While others might not share my sentiment, I appreciate the way it worked when my parents were my age, with couples "going steady." That should be a natural part of growing up and maturing during high school. ★



Elizabeth Nelson

Many teenagers see high school as a time to experiment and find all sorts of people to form relationships with, while others hope to "settle down" and look for that one person they can be closer to than anyone else. Anyone can have healthy, romantic relationships during high school; it's when we take these two scenarios to the extreme that trouble starts.

If a girl decides she wants to date many guys throughout her high school years, she is doing herself a favor. She won't have to worry about becoming too attached to any one particular guy, worrying if he feels the same way she does. She also is setting herself up to learn healthy dating habits, to understand what she values in a relationship and what she hopes to find in a mate. It's when she takes it too far, becoming sexually active with many guys or getting attached to a guy who is not looking for a relationship, that it will hurt her.

On the other hand, the girl with the serious relationship is at a good place. If the couple feels the same way about one another, they are creating a safe environment that not only leads to dates and romance, but also a strong bond of friendship. They have someone to turn to who will always be available and they are also able to plan for the future.

Whatever a girl decides to do, it's safe to say that high school students should experience dating. This is a time in life for growth, and there is no reason to place limits on dating when it is healthy and creating happiness. ★



Kate Rainey

I don't have much firsthand experience with high school dating, but I have spent enough lunch periods eavesdropping to develop an idea of what it is like. It doesn't make me want more firsthand experience.

I watch old movies and reruns of "Happy Days" and long for the days of true dating. I wish high school students still "went steady" and found holding hands thrilling. That has been replaced by hooking up. Now the majority of high school students have participated in some kind of physical activity with someone whom they have no expectation of a relationship. Dating has been replaced by instant, physical gratification. There is no future in a relationship based on the physical; eventually, both parties involved get bored and move on.

I realize I'm generalizing; there are exceptions to the aforementioned "relationship." Some STA students have boyfriends, not just one-night stands. Some even wish to marry their high school boyfriends. But in general, people don't take dating seriously until they reach their thirties. If ever. Dating should be about finding the person with whom you want to spend the rest of your life. What is the point of dating if the relationship won't lead somewhere? And that "somewhere" is marriage, which, of course, is its own journey. ★



Breanne Sigler

One are the days when your date would sit sweating and nervously making small talk with your dad while you finished primping in front of the mirror. Gone are the days when you were forced to plaster a cheery smile on your face as you pose for uncomfortable pictures that your mother insists on taking. Gone are the silent car rides and nausea-inducing trips to the front porch as you wait for a possible goodnight kiss.

Welcome to the 21st century, home to group trips to the movies, parties and large gatherings at Muddy's. This "new age" of dating may seem strange to our parents and frankly outlandish to our grandparents, but this new way of socializing is fine with me.

Traditional dinner-and-a-movie dates seem like a foreign form of torture, filled with awkward silences, embarrassing moments and tons of pressure to make the night enjoyable. It makes me start to sweat just thinking about having to solve the "who pays" issue or worrying about if I have a piece of food stuck in my teeth.

Who needs the stress of a traditional date? It takes so much of the pressure off yourself and your prospective date if you just make plans to hang out with your friends.

My advice to you is to avoid the traditional date and just have a casual, fun time hanging out with the person you've had your eye on. After all, you'll still have the hour before to stress out about what you're going to wear. ★

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The Dart
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Involvement in drama creates friendships, fun

RACHEL FLATTERY



STAFF WRITER

STA offers many positive activities. Fine Arts productions are one of them. They allow students to represent their school, have fun and meet a lot of new people.

Anyone can be involved in the productions. Some people audition for an acting role while others sing or dance their own way.

After seeing STA's production "Sues-sical," all I could think about was auditioning for this year's show. The lights, the music, the acting and singing were phenomenal.

Auditions can be nerve wracking at first, but when you're up on stage, all you can do is shake it off and show them what you've got.

Not only is this production a great way to meet new people but it is also a way to meet boys. Many of the boys come from Rockhurst High School and they continue to be in STA shows because "it's so much fun."

Many people sign up for crew to work backstage to provide technical support and help others out. Just because these people aren't on stage doesn't mean they are forgotten. These people are just as important as the leads and the chorus in the show.

A musical is nothing without its crew. Students on crew can do lighting, costumes, hair, makeup, sound or set construction. Anyone can join crew. Freshmen learn how to apply theater makeup while the upperclassmen who have done crew for years can help them out and look over their work.

Other important positions are stage manager and assistant stage manager. Both stage managers help with errands and play the music when the chorus reviews a dance number. They are helpful when someone forgets a line and the managers feeds them a line.

In the weeks before the production, cast and crew begin to bond and learn more about each other. STA has cast bonding days when the cast, directors and managers gather together and play games. There are so many smiles and laughter during these weeks.

Before each show, the cast and crew get ready and circle up together, holding hands. Hearts racing and hands sweating, each person squeezes the hand of the person next to them all around the circle. Then they would do some cheers to get pumped and excited for the show.

When the curtain rises, you don't think about the audience or about anything else. You think about the people who have been with you for the past two or three months and how happy you are to be with them to put on a great show at STA.

After the last show, everyone gets teary and emotional. Seniors are looked up to as role models and the directors are praised.

Even though the musical is over, those involved become good friends. Sometimes a smile or laugh is all it takes to remember the days in the auditorium. The winter play is coming up and auditions occurred not long ago. Another show means another opportunity to showcase the talents of students and faculty at our great school. ★

Women attempt to gain equality in homeland

RACHEL SCHWARTZ



SECTION EDITOR

Here in America, there is admittedly injustice. Gender equality may be on the list of injustices.

But compared to that of other countries, like Iraq, we're doing pretty well.

In Iraq, women are subservient to men. Men are seen as the bread winners, while women are supposed to serve them and be housewives. But now some strong women are stepping up and joining the men in the work force.

The US troops are trying to help the Iraqi police forces, boosting them and making them more self-sufficient. At the police station in Ramadi, there were less than 200 officers. Now, thanks to the help of the US, there are many more officers.

Out of the 8,000 police officers at the police station in Ramadi, Iraq, 14 are women. While this is an improvement to the previous number of zero, it must be considered that 14 is still not that big of a number, only less than two-tenths of one percent. This is only a small step on the long journey toward equality. But, it is a step. And, as these women persist, equality will come.

These women do the same work as the men and receive the same paycheck. So, a woman could essentially

be the provider in her family. For some, this is seen as the step toward equality, but it is also posing many problems.

The mind-set of these 14 women and some of their husbands have been changed and they are all for gender equality. However, that is a small number out of the whole country of Iraq. The rest of the Iraqis have different feelings. Some of the women are too shy to speak up for fear of being embarrassed, harassed or even divorced. Many men in Iraq are not for equality. They enjoy being superior.

Not every women police officer's husband is fully supportive. One

lady's husband threatened her with divorce if she did not quit her new, high-status job. She chose her job.

Regardless of the threats, the women still stand strong. And some are even slowly gaining the support of their husbands. One woman, a mother of three, said her husband, a part time construction worker, is happy for her and her opportunity. He does not care because, unlike many others, he is happy about this step toward equality and does not like how women feel inferior.

These women could be the start to a big change. The change might be slow, yes, but, nevertheless, a change will happen.

Over time, more women will start working for

fairness and men will begin to jump on the equal opportunity

bandwagon. And, over time, men will step down or, at least, be more accepting of this idea of fairness.

Iraq is just behind the times, at least to our standards. At one time, women in America were seen as inferior to men. And then, with the hard work and persistence of women, equality came. Although it has taken longer, the Iraqi women are getting there. ★



Bad decisions lead to stained hair

CLAIRE McINERNEY



PHOTO EDITOR

Hello, my name is Claire and I have a bad dye job. Below is the tragic tale of the death of my beloved blonde.

It all started on the way home from my college visits. I wanted to dye my hair in order to cover up the color change between my summer sun bleached hair to my natural hair color. Naturally, I am dishwasher blonde with a dash of red tossed in. I planned to just dye my hair to a pretty blonde color. From this point on, all decisions can be deemed bad.

I returned home and called my best friend. She told me she wanted to help me

pick the color. So I arrived at Rachel and Anne Schwartz's house and they jumped in my car, shuffling the crutches around a little. We pulled into the handicapped parking spot at Target and got a wheelchair for Rachel. Anne and I ran while Rachel rolled as fast as I could push. We found the aisle with hair dye. I looked at the blondes, but Rachel and Anne talked me into "Paint the Town," a pretty reddish-auburn color. I bought the \$9.79 hair dye and we went back to Rachel's house. Mistake number one. At this point, the thought that it was permanent didn't even come close to crossing my mind.

Another friend, Leah Hogan, came over and we started the process. I studied the instructions and then scrutinized Leah's every move. The alarm went off and we washed and blew out my hair. Yes, the color was beautiful on the box, but terrible flowing from my once normal head. Mistake number two.

So the next day, I trekked to Raytown to see if it could be bleached. My hairdresser refused to try, and after a long mocking from her, she dyed it purple.

Yes, I went from red hair to purple hair. An improvement? Have you met the topic of this column? Mistake number three. Oh, and did I mention this was the day before the Teresian dance?

Finally the following Wednesday, I forked over the money and went to a professional. After two bleach jobs, the color refused to leave. True, the purple came out, but I was still bright red. She attempted to transform it to a brown, only the red would not leave and I was stuck with an odd auburn color. I guess the box lied; it wasn't a dye, it was a stain. Dyes can be removed while stains last until the hair grows out. Just my luck. But still, good decision number one.

In a matter of one week, my hair was bleached twice, dyed three times and mocked more times than I even wanted to count. So possibly for the remainder of my senior year, I will be a red head, waiting for my roots to grow out, hoping it will be before I have to take senior pictures. I decided to take a leap. Only I completely missed the cliff I was aiming for. ★

Gardasil turns one more into one less

ELIZABETH WILSON



STAFF WRITER

We've all seen the "One Less" commercials on TV: the Gardasil commercials. You know the ones that come on while you're watching your favorite show and bring about that moment of awkward silence...like the calm before a storm. And before you can grab the remote to change the channel, your mom starts talking about that three letter word...sex.

That is exactly what happened to me. Only, instead of talking about sex, my mom suggested that I actually get the Gardasil vaccine. Of course, I immediately threw a fit because I knew that my mom's little suggestion was not merely a suggestion, but rather something she would insist upon.

My argument consisted of frequent, "Mom, I'm not going to have sex right now" and "If God plans for me to have cancer in my lifetime, then I'm going to get it no matter how many shots I get!"

After stomping off to my room and slamming the door, my mom slipped a printout underneath my door.

Are you kidding me, a note?

It read:

"Each year in the US, thousands of women learn they have cervical cancer. Cervical cancer is caused by certain types of Human Papilloma virus (HPV). When infected with HPV, abnormal cells can develop in the lining of the cervix. These ab-

normal cells can become cervical precancers and then cancer.

Gardasil is the only vaccine that may help guard against diseases caused by HPV types 16 and 18, which cause 70 percent of cervical cancer cases, and HPV types 6 and 11, which cause 90 percent of genital warts cases.

Gardasil is given as three injections over six months and can cause pain, swelling, itching and redness at the injection site, fever, nausea and dizziness."

Aha! I didn't have to read anymore. There was no way she could trick me into this. Just look at what could happen to me!

I quickly ran downstairs to let my mom down easily with the news.

After showing her the evidence, she looked at me and said, "Do you remember Aunt Mary?"

"Yes, Mom."

"Do you know how she died?"

I immediately looked down and could feel my face burning because I knew this story had a connection to the note she had given me.

"She died of cervical cancer," she said, with a tear rolling down her cheek.

She walked away, leaving me standing at the bottom of the steps, still holding the Gardasil papers in my clammy hands.

I knew there was no way out of this one. I was going to have to get those shots no matter what.

I've had two out of the three shots so far and let me tell you, they're no walk in the park. But, then I remember my sweet, great aunt Mary and that Gardasil reduces the deaths from cervical cancer by two-thirds. All of a sudden, it doesn't seem so bad.

I am becoming "one less." Yes, just like the women on those awkward commercials. I want to be one less woman who will battle cervical cancer and I encourage all girls at STA to do so too. ★



CARTOON BY SUSIE ANCONA

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Voice Off

compiled by Kylie Hornbeck

95 students, 5 faculty polled
margin of error 8.81 percent

What will be the most enjoyable part of the holiday season?

Shopping: 11 percent



Holiday music and festivities: 18 percent



Spending time with family: 24 percent



Time off from school: 47 percent



30 seconds with Richard Schrock

compiled by Haley Vondenkamp



Mr. Richard Schrock teaches World History and World Geography. Prior to working at STA, he taught at a high school near San Francisco. Upon moving to Kansas City, Schrock worked in the admissions office at Rockhurst University while earning his Masters Degree in education and staying at home with his son. Earlier in his career, Schrock taught classes at various prisons in North Carolina.

Q. What influenced you to teach inmates?

A. "I always thought that it would be a fun thing to do, even before I knew I could do it. I was a starving graduate student...I could teach three or four of these classes a year and my income would almost double. From [teaching in the prisons] I found that I really liked teaching."

Q. What subjects did you teach in prison?

A. "I taught intro to government, like the government class here. It was interesting to talk about the government and legal system with them, because they all had different experiences with it and knew it so well."

Q. What's the biggest difference between teaching inmates and teaching high school students?

A. "[High school students] are not adults. We couldn't just sit around and have a conversation. At the same time I have more fun teaching high school kids. I like that interaction, where we're figuring stuff out together...you don't get that with adults."

Q. What was your first impression of STA?

A. "Everyone talks about how different single sex [education] will be. I think it's easier. The students are more relaxed in that way." ★

Photo Poll

compiled by Kylie Hornbeck

High school students have different views about dating. Some choose to date many people, others would like to find one person and some choose to forego dating altogether.

Check out the Main Editorial on page 6 for more opinions.

What do you feel is the ideal dating situation for a high school student?



"I think a steady relationship is best because you don't get anything out of getting around or dating a lot of guys."
- Clare Odegard, freshman



"As [an underclassman], it's not important to date. I've always pictured [upperclassmen] in a relationship, but it would be easier not to date, especially as a senior, because [of college]."
- Jordan Miller, sophomore



"It's best to just casually date different people. During high school, people often try to find their soul mate, but it's important to meet people and not worry about finding the person [you will marry]."
- Caitlin O'Rourke, senior



"It's best to not just date one guy or even to date a lot of guys. It's best just having a lot of guy friends because you probably won't marry someone you meet in high school."
- Diana Blessen, math teacher

Group to debate global issues

For the first time, students will discuss global issues at Kansas City conference

by MADDY MCGANNON
Section Editor

Senior Anna Boisseau teamed up with seniors Morgan Fry, Tara O'Flaherty and Lily Hough to bring Model United Nations to STA. Model UN is a day-long conference where local students are assigned countries and debate over specific global issues. This will take place April 2 and is sponsored by Johnson County Community College. According to Boisseau, a local conference is best since this is STA's first time attending. Hearing about Model UN from other friends inspired Boisseau to bring it to STA.

"From freshman to junior year, I thought I couldn't do anything to bring Model UN here," said Boisseau. "This year, I was reminded of it during a free in [Mr. Craig] Whitney's room with Tara [O'Flaherty] and Morgan [Fry] about how much we really wanted to bring it to STA. So I thought 'why don't we do it, what's stopping us?'"

After discussing the idea briefly with Whitney, he encouraged the girls to talk to Mr. Richard Shrock. According to Boisseau, Shrock had thought about bringing the Model UN to STA but did not know if there was an interest with the students. Shrock received approval by the administration and together they decided to collaborate on this project.

"We started to talk after school and began having meetings during Activity," Boisseau said. "We had to pick out our countries and discuss the application process. Once we started researching [Model UN], we realized how many people from every grade were interested. I didn't expect that so many people would want to be a part of it."

Boisseau has always been interested in international politics and although she thought it would be hard to bring Model UN to STA, she was encouraged by all the interested students.

"My friends made it sound like [bringing Model UN to STA] would be difficult to do," Boisseau said. "But I've never been



Desiring diplomacy ★ Nineteen of the 29 members of the Model United Nations group congregate in advisor Richard Shrock's room last Monday. Front row from left, freshman Emily Strickland, sophomore Becca Sommerhauser, junior Mollie Caffey, sophomore Jessica Ann, junior Elizabeth McNamara, and sophomore Nicole Twaddle; middle row from left, sophomore Samantha Waekerle, freshman Madalyne Bird, junior Katie Kenney, sophomore Sydney Deatherage, senior Anna Boisseau, and junior Lauren Bly; back row from left, sophomore Allison Pericich, junior Kit Landwehr, junior Megan Monsees, sophomore Julia Barnett, sophomore Maura Hinken, junior Mary Lee Ptacek, and junior Emily Schapker. PHOTO BY CLAIRE MCINERNEY

afraid of a challenge and the more I heard everyone talk about wanting to participate in the conference, the more I got excited."

The application process was open to everyone, and 29 STA students were selected. Students were asked to write a per-

"This seemed like a really great opportunity to get involved."
Emily Schapker, junior

suasive essay on the topic of their choice and a short paragraph about why the UN is important to them. Junior Emily Schapker was one of the 29 selected.

"This seemed like a really great opportunity to get involved," Schapker said. "And what I love

most about Model UN is that we will debate over real world situations, not some hypothetical issue."

Shrock has yet to submit the application, which is due in February. Once STA hears back from Model UN, they will know the four countries they are assigned and will begin preparing for the conference.

"The one day event will actually be a lot of fun," said Shrock. "It is the research and preparing for [Model UN] that will take the most work." ★

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Science Bowl Team learns by practice

Science Knowledge Bowl team places well in Avila competition, gains trivia

by CARLIE CAMPBELL
Staff Writer

There is a team at STA that has been formed every year for over 20 years. They practice once a week and compete two times a year. They don't hold try-outs or make cuts. This year, there are 11 sophomore, junior and senior members.

The Science Knowledge Bowl Team forms every October, in time to participate in the Avila Math and Science Challenge, which is hosted by Avila University. This all-girls competition challenges competitors in all areas of science, math and technology. This year, the STA team finished first in the mathematics portion of the competition and third overall. They competed against other local schools, including Lincoln College Prep and Shawnee Mission South.

This year the team has three senior members, six junior members and two sophomore members. Winning isn't at the top of the team's priority list, according to science teacher and team moderator Mary Montag.

The competitions consist of 16 questions displayed on a screen. Teams are given points according to speed and correctness. If a competitor doesn't answer first, but they still answer correctly, they are awarded points.

To practice for the competitions, Science Bowl team members work on answering different questions that may appear in their competitions. Apart from helping students prepare for the competitions, these questions are excellent preparation for the ACT and SAT, Montag said.

"Freshmen are often a little intimidated because they feel there's so much they don't know," Montag said.

But current team members don't feel that should be the case.

"It doesn't matter how much you know because you always learn something new when you go," sophomore Celeste Bremen said. "It's just fun."

Junior Haley Doyle agreed that younger students should not feel intimidated to join the team.

"I really enjoy it, but I wish I would have joined sooner," Doyle said.

"It really is girls that just enjoy science," Montag said. "The part they enjoy is the camaraderie."

Bremen said she joined the team because she heard the announcements made about it earlier in the year and though it sounded like fun. Doyle joined for the



Sporting their knowledge ★ Science Knowledge Bowl members Haley Doyle, top left, Margaret Schneider, Casey O'Malley, Katie Kenney, Celeste Bremen, bottom left, Nicole Twaddle, Emily Schapker and Haley Doyle pose at their weekly meeting Monday, Dec. 3. The groups last event was Oct. 27 at Avila University where they took first place in math and third overall at the "Science and Mathematics Challenge For Young Women." PHOTO BY TAYLOR BROWN

same reason.

"I thought it was interesting, so I went to the first meeting and really en-

joyed it," Doyle said. "When we practice, I learn so many interesting and cool facts." ★

Students desire love over hook ups

Teenage girls avoid 'hook-up scene,' find alternatives by developing meaningful, secure relationships instead

by CAROLINE QUINN
Copy Editor

Over a month ago, 70 STA students took surveys asking various questions about their relationships and intimate experiences. Some parents and teachers were alarmed to read that roughly 66 percent of those polled reported having hooked-up at least once. What shocked some students, however, was that the other 40 percent or so had not hooked-up.

Who are these people in the STA community who choose alternatives to hooking up?

One of these things is not like the other

Junior Alexis Collins predicted she'd encounter people who didn't always follow her philosophies when she entered high school.

"I knew girls would be hooking up with guys on the weekends...I just expected it," Collins said. "So I wasn't really alarmed by how many girls were hooking up."

Collins said she does not view girls who hook up frequently in a negative light. She believes it's not a matter of having low standards, but rather it's a personal choice.

"I'm not saying girls who hook-up are bad, I just don't want that for myself," Collins said. "I want to be different and set myself apart."

Her decision to stay out of the "hook-up scene" is based on many factors. First, she wants a relationship built on respect. She thinks this requires getting to know a guy well and making sure he knows who she truly is. Collins said it's important for her to make sure the guy realizes she won't constantly be right by him and she won't always be available, adding that sometimes "he has to chase me."

Secondly, Collins would like to wait for a guy she really likes to come along, "a true love kind of thing." She chooses exclusive relationships because she said they're emotionally involved and stable.

Morals also play a role in Collins' decision not to hook-up. She embraces her deep Catholic faith and said being involved with her church's youth group keeps her away from hooking up and other activities she doesn't want to be a part of.

Collins feels working to improve the self-esteem of girls will decrease the pressure they feel to hook-up.

"Girls need to know that they're worth so much more than [a hook-up partner]," Collins said. "They're amazing people and don't need to suck up or please guys. Not all guys are looking for just [intimacy]."

We've come a long way

For 1 year, 5 months and 23 days, sophomore Caroline Thompson has felt "warmth, happiness and love."

During her 9 years at Nativity Parish School in Leawood, Thompson formed a friendship with Andrew Watts, a current sophomore at Rockhurst High School.

Thompson had a crush on Watts in 6th grade, and in 7th and 8th grade they began to hangout more frequently. After their graduation, Watts asked Thompson out. She said this was unexpected, but she was "so excited."

Now, Thompson and Watts have a close relationship built on a strong friendship.

Thompson likes their exclusive relation-

ship because it's more meaningful and secure than hooking-up. She said she can talk to Watts about pretty much anything and be her true self around him.

"In a relationship, there definitely has to be trust between both partners," Thompson said. "Friendship, understanding, genuine care and a common face are so important. I don't think things would be the same if we weren't both so strong in our religious beliefs. We've put God at the center and I think that makes our relationship really healthy."

Thompson said her parents really like Watts and have known his parents for years. Both parents are happy about the relationship, but Thompson said her dad is in denial.

"My dad thinks we're too young to be in this relationship," Thompson said. "He won't call Andrew my boyfriend. He'll refer to him as my special friend or significant other."

Despite the slight uneasiness of Thompson's father, she and Watts see each other often. For dates, they usually hang out at one of their houses and watch movies. Thompson said "we're big dorks, we watch Shia Labeouf movies

like 'The Transformers' and 'Disturbia.'"

Thompson said the way she feels when she's with Watts is almost indescribable.

"I'm just glad to be where I am," Thompson said. "It's like this warm feeling...it feels so right to be with him. There's just a weird feeling in my stomach."

Turning a corner

Two years ago, former STA student and now St. Thomas Aquinas High School junior Emily LaGrand said she "bounced around a lot."

She would feel a physical attraction for a particular guy, become intimate with him and rarely see him again.

"While I was hooking up, I had all the physical affection and the endorphins that are running, and it just felt so good," LaGrand said. "Then the next morning I'd realize, 'okay, that guy didn't really like me...not that much...he just wanted to make out with me.' And I would feel like crap for days, wondering why I had done that."

LaGrand said her tendency to hook-up was unknowingly influenced by her parents' relationship and her bond with her father.

She believes women need to get their initial images of masculinity from their fathers, and hopefully those images are positive, heroic ones, she said. LaGrand looked at the fighting between her parents and knew she didn't want that for herself. So she searched for a guy who she had a true connection with and who didn't resemble her father, adding that she now realizes her father is a wonderful person. But LaGrand had difficulty finding a guy who would stay for more than a brief moment.

"I'd hook-up all the time because it felt

Hooking Up a three-part series

This generation of teenagers has been called the "hook up generation." The past two issues of The Dart have explored what this means and how this affects students at STA.

Part One: Issue 1 Sept. 27

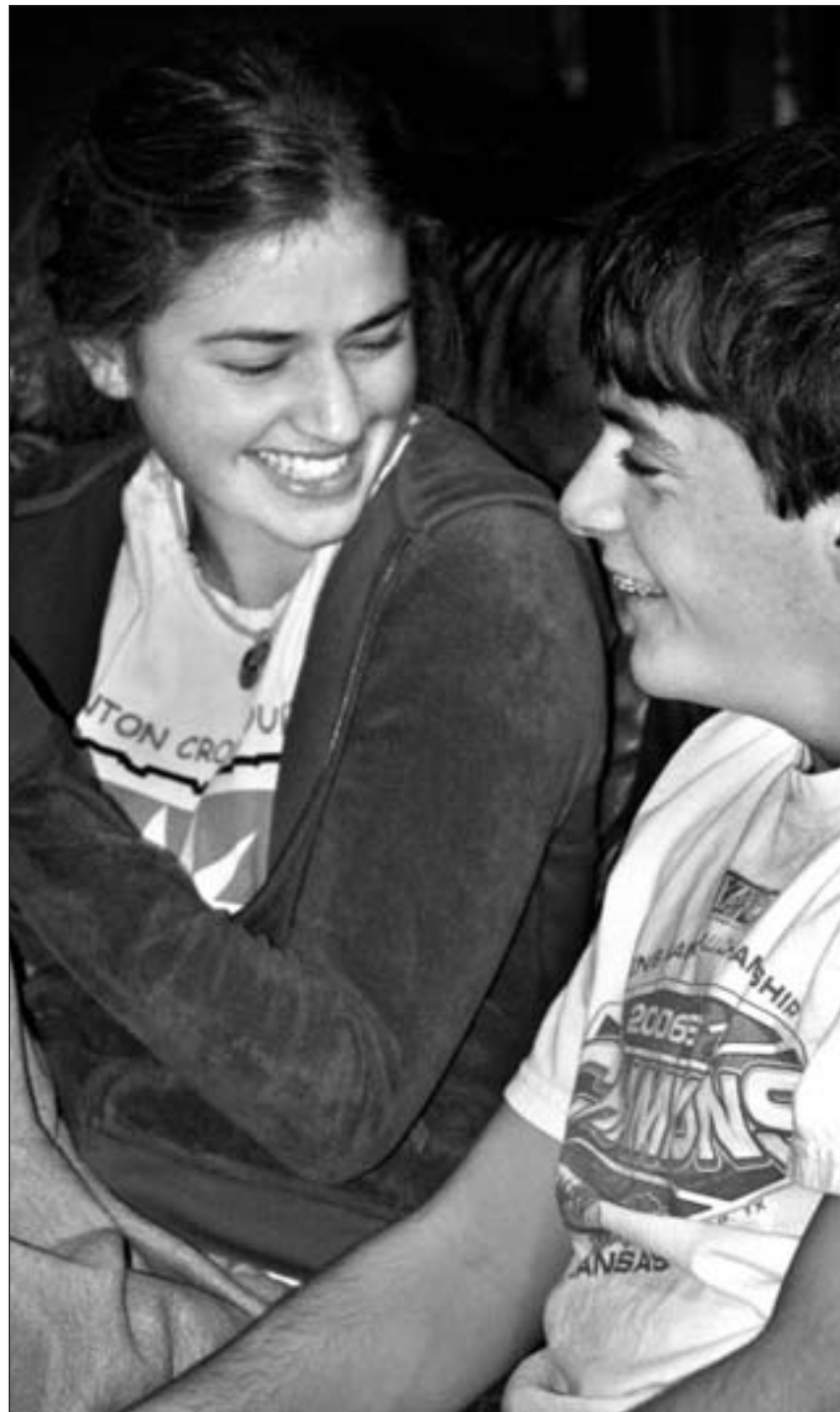
What is "hooking up?"

Part Two: Issue 2 Oct. 25

How does hooking up affect teenage girls?

Part Three: Issue 3 Dec. 6

What are the dating alternatives to "hooking up?"



Movie night ★ Sophomores Caroline Thompson and boyfriend Andrew Watts sit in Thompson's basement last Thursday. Thompson and Watts spent some spare time that night watching a movie after finishing homework. **PHOTO BY ALLISON POINTER**

like in that minute that [we were together], this is what I had been missing in my life and that's what I needed," LaGrand said.

Last summer, LaGrand and her parents had a falling-out over her unstable relationships and hook-ups. LaGrand was put on "lock-down" all summer. She received a wake-up call.

"It was like being slapped in the face and realizing what I was doing," LaGrand said.

"I knew I was not the way I needed to be. I decided I needed to reform my relationships."

In the beginning of the summer, LaGrand received a phone call from a guy she dated her freshman year. He said he missed her and wanted to hang out. LaGrand took it slowly. He'd come over, eat dinner and they'd watch movies.

"One morning...we were sitting in the car and he gave me a letter with all of his feelings in it," LaGrand said. "It was everything he had really wanted to say to me since I had broken up that first time. So I turned to him and said 'hey, this makes me really happy. I'm so happy I could kiss you. In fact, I think I will.'"

LaGrand and her boyfriend Tim Lowndes, a freshman at University of Central Missouri, have been dating for 6 months now. She loves how Lowndes gives her "fluttering in my stomach."

LaGrand is working to overcome the skeletons in her closet. With her new outlook on relationships and life as a whole, LaGrand is optimistic.

"I'm so happy with how I've changed," LaGrand said. "I mean [everything] is so steady and even, and it's just nice. I don't know how it happened, but I am really thankful."

Some sociologists and parents alike view today's youth as over sexualized, commitment-fearing teenagers or the hook-up generation. No students or parents in the first issue agreed on what exactly hooking up means, but the basic consensus was that hooking up is a sexual encounter between two people without the expectation of a future relationship. The second issue revealed that sometimes young women only get the message that hooking up is straightforward and worry-free and they don't hear about the potential damaging effects of the behavior. Survey results may show that the majority of STA students polled have hooked-up at least once, but it's clear not everyone is following the trend. Will this generation be forever remembered for its' casual intimate behavior, or can this reputation be saved? ★

Stress doubles times of trouble

Senior collapses under pressure from school, looks for techniques to lessen her workload, her anxiety

by **BIANCA DANG**
Staff Writer

Two girls stumbled into the M&A office Oct. 25, one with her arms wrapped around the other's neck. Senior Samone Jarvis was panting heavily as she leaned against a backpack on the ground while senior Megan Woodrum ran to get former nurse Betsy Hansbrough. Ms. Julia Berardi frantically attempted to contact Jarvis's mother and an ambulance as students peered in the office to observe the commotion.

"I felt like I couldn't breathe and my chest really hurt," Jarvis said. "It felt like someone had just punched me in the chest and it had stayed. My lips went numb, my hands went numb and my eyes started to water."

Jarvis suffered from an anxiety attack; her body reacted dangerously to the stress of her week. It occurred after a meeting in Ms. Karen Sinco's office about service agencies. Jarvis' workload also contributed to the anxiety; she has a job at Sonic in Redbridge and participates in softball year round with KC Athletics.

According to physiatrist Innocent Anya, Jarvis's symptoms - an increased heart rate, a tightening in the chest and sweating - were signs of normal anxiety.

"Normal anxiety is the way that the body warns of trouble," Anya said. "It enables you to take measures to protect yourself...The body is equipped to think fast in times of distress."

Though Jarvis was suffering from ordinary stress, such attacks are not common. Anxiety disorders, more severe ailments that tend to cause attacks, are irrational and triggered by no real threat. These include panic disorders, agoraphobia (a condition characterized by fear of public or open spaces), social phobia and post traumatic stress disorder. They cause feelings of impending doom and the people affected by

them are not able to think clearly or do what they normally can.

Everyone experiences normal anxiety, but at any given time, one and a half to two percent of the American population will have an anxiety disorder or something resembling one. Though more predominant in adults in their early 20s, such disorders are present in teenagers. Women have twice the chance of having panic disorders than men. Anya believes normal anxiety does not need treatment because it is short-lived, but the seriousness of anxiety disorders call for treatment, such as cognitive behavior therapy and use of medications, such as Xanax and Prozac, antidepressants.

Jarvis has had smaller scale attacks in the past and knows her attacks are not healthy, but she does not think she has a disorder. She believes she just needs a better way of dealing with anxiety.

"I have friends that are really supportive and know how to calm me down," Jarvis said. "I'm not really worried because I've never gotten to the point of passing out."

Jarvis's friends are currently filling the role of confidantes, helping her cope with stress and discussing her problems.

"I just talk to her," Woodrum said. "She vents whatever is bothering her. She gets it off of her chest and gets some insight in to what to do."

Jarvis is also receiving a list of counselors from Sinco. She hopes to unload some of the stress she has built up from school, the ACT, college applications, softball recruitment issues, and her personal life. She has not had a serious attack since the one in Berardi's office.

"I think [the attacks] have continued because I haven't really been trying to stop them," Jarvis said. "I've been working more hours and have three days of softball a week as well as stuff at home." ★



Getting anxious ★ Anxiety attacks have increasingly become more towards females. Treatment for these attacks are told to not be short term but long, consistency in therapy. **PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY ALLISON POINTER**

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Bug Off!

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention offers these tips for keeping the flu away

1.) Wash your hands often.

The flu is spread through close contact with those who are ill. If you have to be around others who are sick, wash your hands and avoid touching your face, mouth, eyes and other areas where germs can easily enter your body.

2.) Practice good "health habits."

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention advocates good health habits to keep your immune system strong. Get plenty of sleep, balance your stress and make sure you're eating a nutritious diet. Drinking plenty of water and getting some exercise daily will also improve your ability to fight off diseases. If you're sick, be sure to stay home from school or work.

3.) Get vaccinated.

Vaccination is "the single best way to prevent the seasonal flu." Talk to your doctor or your parents about receiving the shot. There are also antiviral flu drugs to treat and prevent flu.

Source: <http://www.cdc.gov>

BY ALY BROWNLEE

Ask a Doctor ★ Dr. Daryl Lynch

COMPILED BY EMILY BECKER



Is it bad to have your joints popped?

Your joints can make a variety of sounds: popping, cracking, grinding and

snapping. The joints that "crack" are the knuckles, knees, ankles, back and neck. There are different reasons why these joints "sound off."

1. Escaping gases: Synovial fluid present in your joints acts as a lubricant. The fluid contains the gases oxygen, nitrogen, and carbon dioxide. When you pop or crack a joint, you stretch the joint capsule. Gas is rapidly released, which forms bubbles. In order to crack the same knuckle again, you have to wait until the gases return to the synovial fluid.

2. Movement of joints, tendons and ligaments: When a joint moves, the tendon's position changes and moves slightly out of place. You may hear a snapping sound as the tendon returns to its original position. In addition, your ligaments may tighten as you move your joints. This commonly occurs in your knee or ankle, and can make a cracking sound.

3. Rough surfaces: In older people, arthritic joints make sounds caused by the loss of smooth cartilage and the roughness of the joint surface.

Is joint cracking harmful?

If you are feeling pain when your joints pop, than you should seek a health care professional. In terms of knuckle cracking, some studies show that knuckle cracking does not cause serious harm. Other studies show that repetitive knuckle cracking can do some damage to the soft tissue of the joint. It may also lead to a weak grip and a swelling hand. There are no studies that prove that popping joints leads to arthritis. ★

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Teachers carefully plan their rooms to be

Environmentally Friendly

Experts weigh in on effects of physical setting of classroom

by RACHEL SCHWARTZ & HALEY VONDEMKAMP
Section Editor & Staff Writer

As a student makes her way into the classroom, she stumbles over books and bags that blanket the floor. She greets her fellow classmate curled up in the leather armchair in the corner. She spots a bare patch of carpet by the open window, hoping to find relief from the light breeze in the muggy classroom. Waiting for class to start, she eyes the posters covering the walls and photos and flyers tacked to the other whiteboard. More students filter in, making themselves comfortable wherever they see fit. As the bell rings the teacher strolls into his classroom and the student chatter subsides as class begins.

These physical attributes as well as behaviors and other intangibles all help to create the classroom environment, according to Rockhurst professor Amy McAnich.

"My definition of a classroom environment is the feeling of respect, high expectations and commitment of students and faculty to learn [that is made up by] students, faculty and physical components," Rockhurst University professor Rena Shull wrote.

However, these components are continuously changing according to McAnich. Major adjustments began to be made at the start of the 20th century.

"In the 1910s and 20s some people argued that you should take out individual desks and put in work tables so students could work on projects," McAnich said. "It made the environment more social."

McAnich described the transitions that have been made from the twenties to the sixties all the way to today. She spoke of the "anti-authoritarian, free thinking" mentalities of the sixties.

"[The 1960s] involved the idea that students should be able to move around classrooms freely without walls because walls were confining," McAnich said. "Schools were built in open classroom architecture. One classroom was completely open to the next."

However, this movement did not last long. It created dysfunction and distraction. Therefore, alterations and experiments continued, and still do today.

"[Today classroom environment] sway back and forth, but right now we are swaying back into the notion that it is not so much a shared community as a individual achievement or endeavor," McAnich said. "There are some school that emphasize community and some that don't."

Teachers at STA have their own philosophies. Science teacher Mary Montag believes that nature of classroom environments stem from the subject be taught.

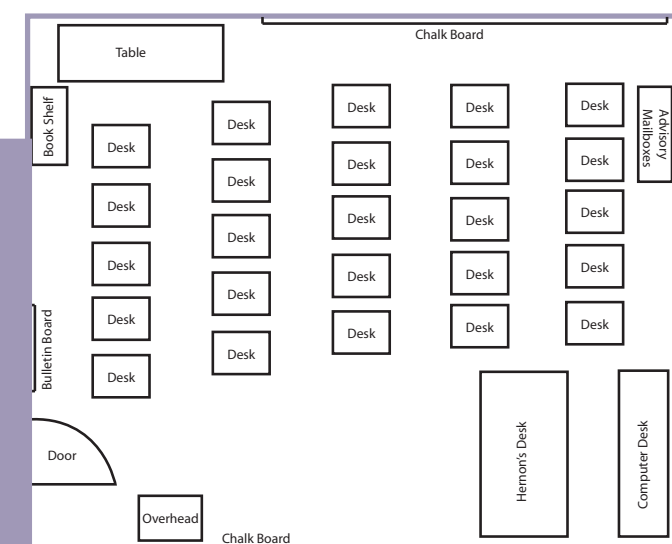
"When you're teaching about science and the earth, it is full of color and it is full of images," Montag said.

English teacher Mark Fudemberg also has reasons behind his approach.

"There is a method to my madness," Fudemberg said. "Abraham Maslow had the hierarchy of needs...People have to have their basic needs met and be comfortable. I can't meet all of your basic needs...but I can make sure you are comfortable." ★

Hernon

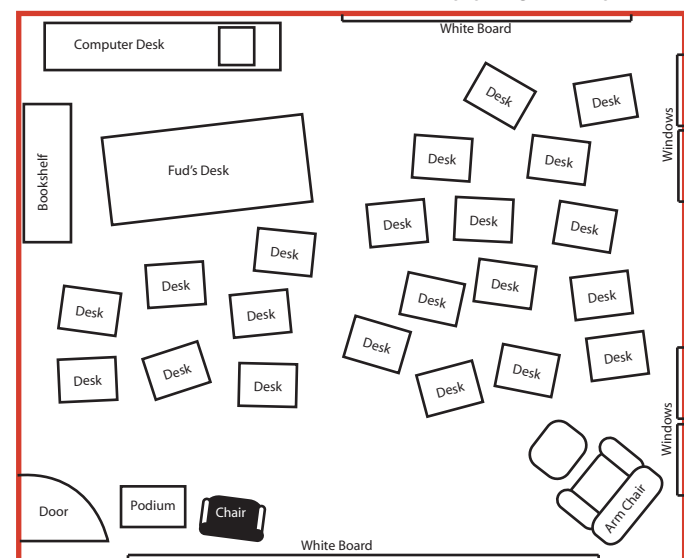
Student Seating: Algebra: desks in organized rows with a seating chart; Pre-Calc: desk groupings with seating chart
Teaching Method: Algebra: developmental lessons; Pre-Calc: independent learning, reading and writing
Classes: Advanced Algebra I, Algebra II, Pre-Calculus
On the Walls: Three bulletin boards with advisory news, articles and class information
Overheard: "[Hernon] always asks 'are you writing this down?'" senior Stephanie Chapman said.
Student Reactions: "[Hernon] manages the class time well," said junior Marisa Raimo.
"[The room] is really cold and does not have any decorations," said senior Katie Embree.



Helpful Hernon ★ Senior Linda Kovac takes notes from Ms. Arlene Hernon during Algebra II. Notes are part of Hernon's daily lesson plan. PHOTO BY CLAIRE MCINERNEY

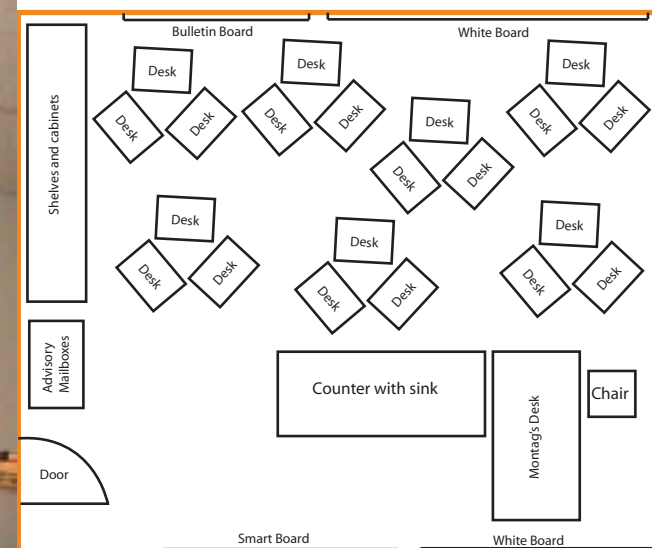


Funky Fud ★ Mr. Mark Fudemberg, right, leads a discussion in AP American Language as, from left, juniors Kate Bohnert and Lauren Bly look on. PHOTO BY CLAIRE MCINERNEY



Fud

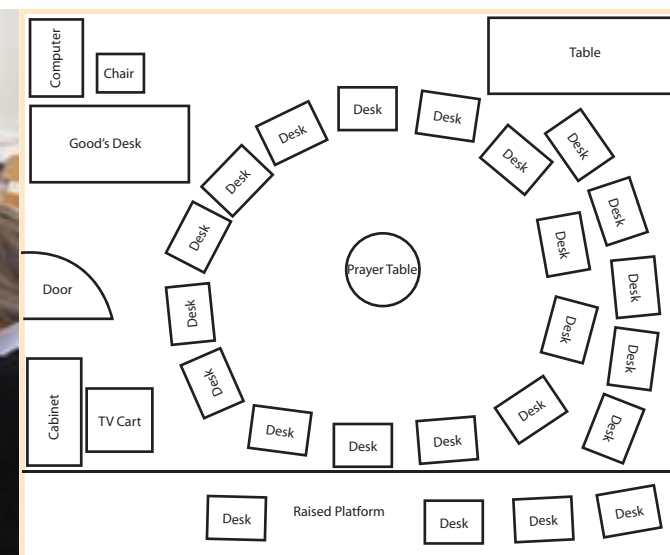
Student Seating: Desks in an attempted circle with no seating chart, some students sit on the floor
Teaching Method: Socratic
Classes: English I, AP American Language
On the Walls: Posters of Fud's heroes, important historic and literary events and people
Overheard: "He does the 'Soulja Boy' dance a lot and he taught me..." freshman Kiersten Schorgl said. "He's like 6'2" so it's funny to watch him."
Student Reactions: "You can start a yes or no conversation with him and it will last for 15 to 20 minutes," Schorgl said.
"Sometimes the desks feel cluttered, but it was never a huge negative thing," senior Jennifer Cashen said.



Montag

Student Seating: Desks in groups of three or four with a seating chart
Teaching Method: Interactive lecture, group activity
Classes: Physical Science, Biology
On the Walls: Posters, student projects, "toys," puzzles and other objects lining the windows and ceiling
Overheard: "When you walk by that classroom there's always a lot of laughing, discussing and interaction," junior Mollie Caffey said. "You can tell it's not just [Montag] lecturing."
Student Reactions: "You can tell it's a fun class and it's more than just her lecturing and labs," said Caffey. "The other science rooms are cold and all sciency."

Montag's magic ★ Science teacher Ms. Mary Montag stands on her chair to drop a piece of paper to show a demonstration to her freshman physical science class. Montag frequently does small in-class experiments to show different science related topics. PHOTO BY ALLISON POINTER



Good

Student Seating: Desks arranged in a circle with no seating chart
Teaching Method: Storytelling, group discussion
Classes: Christian Spirituality and Christian Lifestyles
On the Walls: Bulletin boards covered with news articles, pictures of family and students, quotes and advisory news
Overheard: "Whenever you are freaking out or she wants to calm everyone down she says 'Just calm down, everybody, and breathe,'" senior Katie Embree said.
Student Reactions: "[Good's classroom] is very welcoming and it's a good setting for religion classes because she puts candles because she puts candles and stuff in there," Embree said. "She is really strict about everyone not talking when she's teaching."

Good's guidance

★ Ms. Robin Good speaks to her Christian Lifestyles class about single life stereotypes Tuesday. Good creates a more open classroom environment by arranging her desks in a circle, around a small stand with her "prayer" candles, seashells, and meditation book. PHOTO BY JAIME HENRY-WHITE

Runners meet end of era

Team places sixth in State Meet, form unique bond throughout season

by NICOLE GRAVINO
Staff Writer

The STA cross country team took sixth place in the state tournament held at Oak Hills Golf Course in Jefferson City. This was an improvement from their seventh place finish last year. Sophomore Caroline Thompson led the team, finishing in 27th place individually, and senior Elizabeth Keaveny followed her in 30th place. Seniors Julia Gigliotti, Emily Thompson, Claire Hickey, Kellyn Smith and sophomore Katie Sharp completed the state team this year. Because of the number of seniors on the team, there was a lot of emotion surrounding the event.

"It's hard for us seniors to accept we are not going to be running any more races," Thompson said.

The team had set their goals on at least winning a banner, placing in the top four and possibly winning.

"With all the talent and all the potential on our team, if we had all run to that, our place would have been better," Smith said. "Based on our past races, if everyone ran their best, we definitely had a chance. It was one day out of many. Some days you run well and some days you do not. That is the way the season is."

For these seniors, it was difficult to adjust to the end of the cross country season.

"A week later, I haven't run in a while and it feels like its over," Keaveny said. "After state, I didn't really accept that it was over. Now that I don't see everyone everyday, it's more real."

The team gathered in Goppert Center to turn in their bags, warm ups and uniforms the week following state and were not sure what they were supposed to do next.

"We were all just standing there looking at each other like 'what do we do now?'" Smith said. "It's not like you're never going to see each other again. It's not like you still don't have the bond, but you aren't the same team."

The girls plan to quickly start running club again and to continue the tradition next summer, even though they will not be returning to the team.

"It's only like cross country has been postponed," Smith said. "We are going to revive it pretty soon, I think."

Keaveny also says the girls will continue running.

"We will definitely run over the summer with the sophomores," Keaveny said. "We will drag them out of bed like last summer,



Passing the torch ★ Senior Elizabeth Keaveny, left, falls behind sophomore Caroline Thompson during the cross country state race Nov. 3. Thompson finished 27th while Keaveny crossed the finish line in 30th place. PHOTO BY CLAIRE MCINERNEY

just for fun."

Four out of the five seniors have been running together since freshman year. Gigliotti joined the team their sophomore year.

"The bottom line is we want to be together," Thompson said. "Being together keeps us running. We are still friends outside of cross country and we will keep running and pushing each other."

State did not live up to the expectations of the team, but all members agree it was a positive experience.

"Overall, looking at the season and all the fun times we had, state didn't seem as

important as being really close," Thompson said. "It was a really important lesson and it made us realize how much we cared about each other."

When asked to explain why STA cross country runners are so close to each other, Keaveny recalled what a senior said to her when she joined the team freshman year.

"She said 'it's because you go through hell together,'" Keaveny said. "I couldn't imagine not getting along. It is so much a part of our team that we are so close. Running is so much of a drag sometimes that it's impossible not to look forward to seeing these people." ★

CYO season brings conflict

LINNY KAUFMAN



SPORTS EDITOR

This basketball season, I am expecting to see some out-of-control games.

I have already witnessed intense trash talk at STA. I know I will hear more as the season progresses. And I am ready to watch with amazement as retired basketball stars, skilled soccer, volleyball, tennis, golf and everything else players and some girls just looking to have fun, step on the court to sink basket after basket and make play after play.

I'm not talking about the STA basketball team, of course. I'm talking about a league much more behind the scenes, although rarely lacking in spirit or drive: the CYO basketball league.

CYO basketball teams are cut-throat. Last year, STA sophomores formed a huge team. About two-thirds of these girls were great players (old basketball players who decided not to play for STA and/or talented athletes in their off-season for a different sport), but the other third would rather sit on the bench than have to run up and down the court in the game. Still, this team received first place in the CYO championship.

But this year, the "better" players formed their own team and decided to hold tryouts. This meant if the captains thought someone wasn't good enough, she was off the team.

Retaliation quickly followed. The other half of the players decided to create a team as well. Team leaders fought for the best players, placing calls and reaching out to find only the worthiest of athletes. After weeks of convincing, manipulating and gossip, the teams formed.

I am as excited to watch the showdown between those two teams as I was to watch the MU/KU game Thanksgiving weekend.

CYO basketball games are as grueling as it gets. If you have never been to one, you are definitely missing out. Sure, some teams aren't as "for real" as others, but STA teams definitely do not fall into this category. I've seen some CYO players who could probably play varsity basketball at STA if they decided to try out. And don't take the fluorescent lighting of the grade school gyms where they play lightly - it only fuels the players' intensity.

Hearing junior Kaitlin Zidar describe her game Sunday furthered my knowledge of the overwhelming intensity involved in CYO basketball. She said one girl on the other team broke her finger during the game, and the referees called junior Megan Monsees not just for fouling, but for "tackling" an opposing player.

So these next few months, if you see a star golfer or cross country runner with a swollen ankle or bruised knees, you'll know why. Just make sure you tell them good game. ★

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Swim team practices, locations finalized

Last year's assistant becomes this year's head coach as swim travels between three different practice locations

by ELIZABETH WILSON
Staff Writer



Taking a breather ★ STA junior Laura Peterson swims 100-yard breaststroke time trials during swim team practice at the Shawnee Mission East High School indoor pool Nov. 12. Peterson placed fifth in the Blue Springs Invitational Meet Dec. 4. PHOTO BY JAIME HENRY-WHITE

The bell rings - school's out. Varsity swimmer, junior Erin Nelson, and two of her teammates get in the car and drive to the Plaza Library to work on their homework until it's time to get back in the car and drive 20 minutes to Shawnee Mission West High School for swim practice.

"It's hard to make it out to the practices," Nelson said. "I have to stay at the Plaza Library after school and then drive to practice because there isn't enough time to go home. Sometimes I'm not home until 10 and I still have homework left. It's hard to juggle because practice is in the middle of the [evening]. It's at an awkward time."

After an informational meeting Oct. 15, swimmers and those involved in the STA swim program began to discuss and resolve concerns such as the practice times and locations for the upcoming season.

This year, the swim team will practice Monday (at SMW from 6:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m.), Tuesday (at Shawnee Mission East High School from 8 p.m.-9:30 p.m.), Wednesday and Thursday (at SMW from 6:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m.) and Saturday mornings (at Shawnee Mission Northwest High School from 10 a.m.-noon).

"Whether or not I was going to swim [this year] depended on how the practice times worked out," Nelson said.

According to athletic director Mike Egner, several dates for the swim team have been scheduled at the University of Missouri-Kansas City's pool.

"We're kind of at the mercy of everyone who has a pool because we don't [have one]," Egner said.

Ms. Kim Koenig, last year's head coach, moved to Chicago and Mr. Rob Cole, coach of several teams in the Kansas City area, was

See SWIM, page 23

New coach breaks barriers



Sending in the troops ★ STA assistant varsity basketball coach Mark Einhellig, left, and varsity coach Jamie Collins send junior Paige Kuhlmann into the game against Hickman-Mills High School at Lee's Summit North Nov. 28. This is Collins' first year at STA coaching. PHOTO BY CLAIRE MCINERNEY

Jamie Collins sets her goals for the basketball team this season, focuses on fundamentals, up-tempo defense

by LINNY KAUFMAN
Section Editor



Watch your shot ★ Coach Jamie Collins encourages her player during the STA varsity basketball game against Hickman-Mills High School Nov. 28. Collins is the first African American and the second female head coach at STA. PHOTO BY CLAIRE MCINERNEY

In 140 years of sports history, STA has never had an African American head coach. This year changes that.

Varsity basketball coach Jamie Collins is the first African American to be the head coach of any sport at STA. She was the freshmen/JV and assistant varsity basketball coach at Notre Dame de Sion High School for the last three years. Collins grew up in Kansas City, graduated from Center High School and played basketball at the University of Nebraska. She considers herself tough but fair and is trying to turn the STA basketball program around.

Collins never considered whether she was the first African American coach at STA or not.

"I was most surprised that I am actually the second female to ever be the head coach in the history of basketball at STA," Col-

lins said. "I had never even thought about it from the race standpoint."

Ms. Ann Bode-Rodriguez, the longest standing coach at STA, recalls only four African American assistant coaches in her 29 years here. She said "it's about time" an African American is the head coach of a team.

"I see two big pluses in [Collins]," Bode-Rodriguez said. "She is both African American and a woman. We've never had a black head coach, and we've only had one woman basketball coach at STA."

Varsity basketball player senior Jessica Nouri was surprised that Collins was the first African American head coach at STA. She said Collins is energetic and fun but sometimes intimidating.

"The first time I met her was at the basketball meeting before the season started," Nouri said. "I just remember her telling us, 'Have fun in the summer and enjoy doing whatever you want to do, but once basketball season comes, I have your lives.' I was a little intimidated."

Collins described herself as tough but fair. She likes to focus on fundamentals, defense and an up-tempo game style. She hopes to strengthen the basketball program tremendously this year.

"A big difference between here and Sion is that at Sion, basketball is a big sport," Collins said. "At STA, volleyball and soccer seem like the better followed sports. I

remember back when STA was all about basketball. If you heard someone talking about St. Teresa's, they were probably talking about the basketball team. Now there isn't as much of a following. I'm hoping to change that."

Bode-Rodriguez also remembers when "basketball was king" at STA. She hopes this season will be a lot of fun for the players and fans. Bode-Rodriguez believes Collins will be a huge asset to the basketball program.

"I talked to Heather Macintosh after Collins was chosen as the basketball coach because Collins coached her while [Macintosh] was a student at Barstow," Bode Rodriguez said. "And out of all of her past coaches, [Macintosh] said Collins was the best one she had ever had. That says a lot."

Bode-Rodriguez said she thinks the players were not confident enough last year, but that this year, they are stronger and more experienced.

According to Nouri, the team has been conditioning for longer and began conditioning earlier in the pre-season. Collins believes this early conditioning helps to keep the players in shape so the body is protected during the off season. She said that way, the players can jump right back into the game during tryouts instead of focus on conditioning early in the season.

"I want to make games fast, exciting and fun to watch," Collins said. "When people come to watch the team play, I want them to remember the big games. Basketball should be exciting." ★

"I had never even thought about [my position] from the race standpoint."
Jamie Collins, coach

Athlete celebrates area nomination



Celebrate good times★ Senior Erin Vogel cheers at the Monday, Nov. 12 Mo-Kan All Star match, playing on the Missouri team. Vogel was nominated for the Evelyn Gates award and played varsity volleyball at STA. PHOTO BY ALLISON POINTER

Local coaches nominate senior Erin Vogel as one of four best volleyball players in the KC Metro area

by ROSIE HODES
Staff Writer

After a free, senior Erin Vogel said goodbye to her three-year volleyball coach, Ms. Amy Carlson, and left the chemistry lab. Free from teachers' eyes, Vogel checked her phone and saw she had received a text message from Allison Mayfield, a friend from St. Thomas Aquinas High School saying "Congratulations!"

"What?" Vogel replied.
"Evelyn Gates nomination!" Mayfield said.

The Evelyn Gates Award is given to the top volleyball student athlete in Kansas City. Coaches from the area nominate and vote for the female varsity player who they think displays the best volleyball ability, leadership and character. STA alumna Michelle Jantsch won last year and Bishop Miege High School student Kathleen Ludwig was given this year's award Nov. 8.

"I didn't expect [the nomination]," Vogel said. "It had been in the back of my mind since our loss at sectionals."

Vogel played varsity volleyball all four years. She was also chosen to play on Missouri's team for the Mo-Kan All Star Match Nov. 12. According to Carlson, Vogel is a leader in digs.

"She does things that are physically and humanly impossible," senior Jessica Marak said.

Vogel said her favorite position is outside hitter.

"I get to play all around and not miss a moment," Vogel said. "I can always be on the court and not on the bench thinking 'Oh, I could have done this.'"

According to Carlson, Vogel is not a vocal leader, but both Carlson and Vogel agree that she leads by example. She was a team captain for STA this year.

"I see her out there every day getting better," Carlson said.

Vogel demonstrates her abilities as a student athlete. She was a National Merit Semi-Finalist and holds STA's record for highest PSAT score.

"She tries really hard in school even though she doesn't have to because she's so naturally smart," Marak said.

Vogel hopes to attend the University of Notre Dame next year, but she will be a Fighting Irish on the sidelines, not on the court.

"College sports are such a huge time commitment," Vogel said. "I would rather have my college experience be more about school and social stuff."

Vogel might play recreational volleyball in college. Her biggest support and inspiration is whatever team she is playing on.

"I push as hard as I do for the team," Vogel said. ★

★Scoreboard★

Varsity Basketball (4-1)

Nov. 19	North Kansas City	W
Nov. 26,	Lee's Summit North	2W 1L
28, 29	Tournament	
Dec. 4	Pembroke Hill	W

★ The varsity Stars have a new coach this year, Ms. Jamie Collins. They beat Notre Dame de Sion High School for the first time in four years in the Lee's Summit North Tournament. This week, the team is competing in the Blue Springs Tournament. Seniors Megan Konz and Jessica Nouri are the team captains.

JV Basketball (2-2)

Nov. 19	North Kansas City	W
Nov. 26	Lee's Summit West	L
Nov. 27	Hickman Mills	L
Nov. 29	Raymore-Peculiar	W

★ Mr. Mick Fletcher has coached the JV basketball stars for 17 years. The team's home opener marked the most exciting game thus far; the Stars beat North Kansas City High School 50-33. This week the Stars play Truman High School Wednesday and play Archbishop O'Hara High School tonight at home.

Freshman Basketball (3-2)

Nov. 27	Blue Springs	L
Nov. 28	Bishop Ward	W
Nov. 29	Lawrence S. Jr. High	W
Dec. 1	Bishop Miege	W
Dec. 4	Notre Dame de Sion	L

★ The freshman basketball team kicked off its season with four games in five days, winning three of the four. The Stars beat Lawrence South Junior High School Nov. 29 for the first time in five years.

Dance Team

Dec. 1	Yvonne Cole	4th in Jazz
	Invitational	5th in Hip-Hop

★ The dance team participated in their first competition Saturday. The team is relatively young, welcoming seven new freshmen. They will compete in Kansas Spectacular late January.

Swimming

Dec. 4	Blue Springs South	2nd
	Invitational	

★ The swimming Stars competed in their first meet Tuesday at Blue Springs High School. The team has a new coach, Miranda Spini, who was the assistant coach last year. Seniors Sami Setter and Libby Ring are the team's captains.

Varsity Volleyball

Oct. 22-23	District Tournament	1st
Oct. 27	Sectional Tournament	2nd

★ The varsity volleyball team, last year's State Champions, came up short this year with a loss to Lee's Summit West High School in three close games. Last year's head coach Lori Hanaway returned to coach at Archbishop O'hara High School this year, and Ms. Amy Carlson came back to STA to head the volleyball program. The team graduated four senior players.

Cross Country

Oct. 27	Sectional Meet	2nd
Nov. 3	State Meet	6th

★ The varsity cross country team finished one place higher overall at the State Meet this year. Sophomore Caroline Thompson led the team, finishing in 27th place. Senior Elizabeth Keaveney followed Thompson closely, finishing in 30th place. Seven athletes qualified for the State Meet this year, five of whom were senior runners.

STA mascot, Twinks, now in need of 'surgery'

After over 10 years, Twinks' past, critical condition is revealed

by TAYLOR BROWN
Staff Writer



Fading star★ Spirit Club member Sadie McCue ventures into the Goppert Center storage room to retrieve STA mascot Twinks from hiding Nov. 28. Stuffing spilled from the seams as McCue inspected the costume. She voiced her concerns for Twinks during a Spirit Club meeting. PHOTO BY KAYLA LOOSEN

The St. Teresa's Academy mascot Twinks can be spotted every day at school. Whether it's in pictures, emblems, paintings, stickers or in costume, Twinks constantly makes its way into the lives of STA community members. Despite the prominence of this character, many disregard the origin of STA's mascot.

The history of this star is a mystery to many students at STA, including senior Spirit Club treasurer Kerry Beckett.

"The origin of Twinks? I should probably know this," Beckett said, as she looked to a friend for help.

In reality, Twinks' starting point dates back to the time of STA's former athletic director, coach and P.E. teacher Sue Christenson. At this time, STA was known as the Tessies, a mascot that is indefinable by current P.E. teacher Ann Bode-Rodriguez. After being the Tessies for decades, STA students and staff thought it was time for a change.

"Nobody knew what a Tessie was, and we got made fun of a lot so we decided we needed a new mascot," Bode-Rodriguez said.

STA held a school wide competition to

elect a new mascot and its nickname. Students nominated different mascots and then voted for their favorite selection. According to Bode-Rodriguez, it was a close race between the Saints, Tigers and Stars, but ultimately, the STA Stars was chosen, followed by a mascot named Twinks.

After Christenson had a graphic of Twinks painted on the gym floor, STA purchased the Twinks costume. According to Christenson, a long period of time passed before she found the best one. Christenson chose a female star costume named Twink-

les from a catalog, but decided the title was not suitable and so changed her name to Twinks.

The costume is now the property of STA's Spirit Club. A member of the club dresses up in the costume at STA home games to rally the fans.

"Whenever Twinks comes out at a game, people get excited because she's notorious for being the symbol of spirit," Beckett said.

See TWINKS, page 23

Photo Poll compiled by Taylor Brown Do you think Twinks is a suitable mascot for STA?



"I don't know if Twinks is a suitable mascot for STA. Why are we the stars? Why can't we be an animal like every other school is?"
- Lexi Vaughan, sophomore



"Twinks is a suitable mascot for STA because 's', 't' and 'a' are the first three letters of the word star and Twinks is a star."
- Hillary Johnson, sophomore



"Twinks is too happy. No one is going to be scared at a basketball game if they see a smiling star running at them."
- Lauren Kenner, junior



"I like being the Stars but Twinks doesn't exactly strike fear into the hearts of our opponents."
- Maureen O'Rear, senior

Sculpting a tradition of holiday art

Artists welcome shoppers into their homes during 25th year of holiday tour

by SARAH SMITH
Section Editor

The Kansas City Clay Guild is hosting its 25th annual Holiday Open House and Studio Tour December 8 and 9. This year's tour will showcase 38 local potters across 15 metro locations.

The Holiday Tour was organized by a group of the founding potters at the Clay Guild.

"The idea was to open our studios to the public so they can come see where and how [the pottery] is made," former Clay Guild president Rex Walkenhorst said. "This way there is no middleman and it provides an alternative place for people to buy gifts instead of the usual shopping mall thing."

The Holiday Tour, which happened informally for several years before the Guild started, evolved into a formal event as more people joined in.

Ms. Irma Starr has participated in the sale since the first year. She looks forward to bringing people into her creative space.

"Being an artist can be a lonely job," Starr said. "You need to be alone and have that space to create. To have people come into the studio over the holidays and see the result of being alone is nice."

Starr estimates more than 200 people come through every year looking for the perfect hand-made gift. Most of the artists prepare for several months before the sale to have a full inventory.

"People like to buy art for their homes because it makes them happy," she said. "The things I make, the ornaments, are happy. Putting up a tree is happy. The



Decking the walls ★ Potter Irma Starr hangs handmade ornaments on one of the many Christmas trees decorating her home studio. Starr has been participating the Kansas City Clay Guild Holiday Open House and Studio Tour for over 20 years. PHOTO BY SARAH SMITH

holidays give people a time to share that joy."

The Centered Earth Gallery, located inside the Clay Guild's building at 200 West 74th street, has had a preview show open since November 1 with samples from the 12 potters showing there during the tour. People are encouraged to start at the gallery, where tour maps will be available.

Many of the potters in the tour have col-

laborated with other artists of other mediums. Jeweler Keith Harryman and painter Shirley Harryman have participated in the tour for over 20 years. Their mailing list includes more than 1,700 people.

"It's amazing how many people come when you invite 1,700 [people] to your house," Keith said. "Actually, only a little more than one percent of them, but that's still 200 people."

Starr sees the event as an opportunity to support her fellow artists. She said there is no competition between the potters and they are happy to let their personal customers know there are other artists out there.

"People love to buy art," Starr said. "Even when the economy is down, people still buy art. Stocks and bonds can plummet but art can only go up in value. It's the best thing to buy." ★

Winter concert 'kicks off' holiday season

Choirs, musicians celebrate Christmas with annual performance following several months of practice

by JULIA STAPINSKI
Staff Writer

It's 1 p.m. on a Monday afternoon in mid-November and the sound of Christmas music fills the halls of the Music & Arts Building. While some may protest at the sound of "Silver Bells" two months before Christmas, others enjoy the melodic sounds that echo throughout M&A. The STA Singers, along with the other music students, have been practicing holiday pieces since September in preparation for the concert, which took place Monday.

"My favorite thing about preparing for the concert was knowing how good I would feel after it was over," sophomore and STA Singer Kristina Strader said. "Once it's over, you feel like you've worked hard and everyone appreciates your performance"

Freshman Taylor Woodruff agrees. "Seeing all the people out there is a great feeling," the concert choir member said. "They know how hard we've worked...to put on this concert for them."

Sophomore Shayla Sigler, an STA Singer, says one of her favorite parts of the Christmas concert was being onstage with the other singers.

"I like being up there with the group, the energy is fantastic," Sigler said. "We have worked so hard and being up there and being together just makes everything worth it."

Woodruff, aside from being excited for the concert, had apprehensions about forgetting the lyrics.

"I was nervous," she said. "I was afraid I was going to forget the words...but they just came naturally once we started sing-

ing."

Sophomore Caitlin Sweeny can remember being nervous for the Christmas concert when she performed in it last year.

"I was so nervous, you wouldn't even believe it," Sweeny said. "The thought of being onstage with so many opportunities to embarrass myself is crazy."

Despite her stage fright, Sweeny finds the Christmas concert to be an enjoyable holiday activity.

"It was a great way to kick off the holiday season, and I think it also is part of what... made me enjoy choir so much last year...but seriously, Christmas music gets old really fast. It's annoying sometimes," Sweeny said jokingly.

Woodruff was also able to offer a light-hearted perspective on the topic.

"I'm kind of tired of Christmas music," she said. "I love Christmas music, but I mean, we've been practicing since, what, September?"

Strader shares Woodruff's opinion, but thought any boredom she had with the material washed away once she got onstage.

"Yeah, the music really does kind of get old after awhile," Strader said. "But I think both choirs performed with a lot more enthusiasm onstage than we did in practice, which made it worth all the rehearsing and being sort of sick of the songs."

Sigler also believes her effort has paid off.

"It was definitely worth the months of practice," she said. "I really enjoyed the entire experience... I would do it again in a heartbeat." ★



Christmas caroling ★ From top left, seniors Claire McFarland, Brianne Taormina, Stephanie Chapman, juniors Laura Nendick, Rachel Turgeon, Chloe Lundgren and senior Jordan Behnken rehearse in the STA A Cappella choir Wednesday, Nov. 28 in the STA auditorium. Ms. Shauna Moore, music director, started teaching different Christmas songs starting months ago. PHOTO BY ALLISON POINTER

Bakery whips up authentic conversation

EMILY BECKER



NO DIRECTIONS HOME

Boulangerie Philippe is located in an area that looks like a goldmine for interesting and unique places. However, it is not. Behind the wooden rooftops, cheery awnings and wide sidewalks lies chain stores and high-priced, snooty restaurants disguised as neighborhood hangouts. Do not be convinced that the gaggle of middle schoolers that occupy the Starbucks a few doors down constitutes the area as a neighborhood hotspot. But braving the hoity-toity stores and the hordes of preteens is worth it for Boulangerie Philippe.

The Boulangerie is, as far as I can tell, a real French bakery. The owners, Frederic and Allyson Philippe, boast pastry chef certifications from culinary institutes in San Francisco and Lyon, France, where Frederic's family owned a bakery for over 100 years. The menu displays several choices of French pastries, tarts, cookies and sandwiches, including the quintessential Croque Monsieur.

I tried a cookie that was so chocolatey it looked like only a few bites would put me into a coma. I looked around the small space while I ate. The deep tan walls warmed the room and the slightly chipped yellow ceramic plates made the store seem like more than just a business. The owners had worked hard to create the air of the French countryside in Prairie Village. There was only seating for about 20 people in the store and only a few more would fit on the patio furniture outside. Clearly, this was a store that cared more about the quality of the food and the experiences of the customers than profits.

But the best part of the Boulangerie was the people. I was greeted as soon as I walked in the door and even though the store was to close in 5 minutes, the cashier struck up a conversation, telling me about his favorite menu items and apologizing that there was not a lot of choices left. He rang up my order and told about the food and the ingredients, never once mentioning that it was time for the store to close. The welcoming staff and cheery conversation completed the intimate and rustic atmosphere. Although, the real charm of the bakery lay in its story and the friendly people.

At Boulangerie Philippe, the food was good, but the conversation and the people were better. The best meal can be made tasteless by a rude or inconsiderate staff. In the end, it is the people that really make a place and what are really important. ★

Boulangerie Philippe
6937 Tomahawk Road
913.384.2445

Hours
Monday: Closed
Tuesday-Thursday:
7 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Friday and Saturday:
7 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Sunday 7 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Sprinting ahead...

The Sprint Center, located in the Power and Light District of downtown Kansas City, hosts entertainment venues such as concerts and athletic events. Here is a list of upcoming attractions along with ticket prices.

- University of Kansas vs Ohio University**
Dec. 15, 2007 4 p.m.
PRICE: \$45
- Harlem Globetrotters**
Jan. 3-4, 2008: 7 p.m.
Jan. 5: 1 p.m., 7 p.m.
Jan. 6: 2 p.m.
PRICE: \$15 - \$121
- Dancing with the Stars**
Jan. 13, 2008 7:30 p.m.
PRICE: \$49 - \$165
- Matchbox 20**
Feb. 25, 2008 7 p.m.
PRICE: \$35 - \$65
- Michael Bublé**
Mar. 7, 2008 8 p.m.
PRICE: \$79.50
- Bon Jovi**
Apr. 22, 2008 7:30 p.m.
PRICE: \$55 - \$99.50
- Celine Dion**
Nov. 15, 2008 8 p.m.
PRICE: \$49 - \$150

PHOTO BY JAIME HENRY-WHITE
GRAPHIC BY MADDY MCGANNON

Park illuminates holiday spirit

Christmas in the Park celebrates twenty years of holiday entertainment

by MICHELLE REICHMEIER
Staff Writer

Life jackets, swimsuits and water skis are packed away as Longview Lake transforms into a winter wonderland for the annual Christmas in the Park. One of Jackson County Parks and Recreation's most renowned events, Christmas in the Park celebrates its twentieth anniversary this year. This family oriented event has been enjoyed by more than two million people since its debut in 1987, making this experience one of the region's most admired holiday activities.

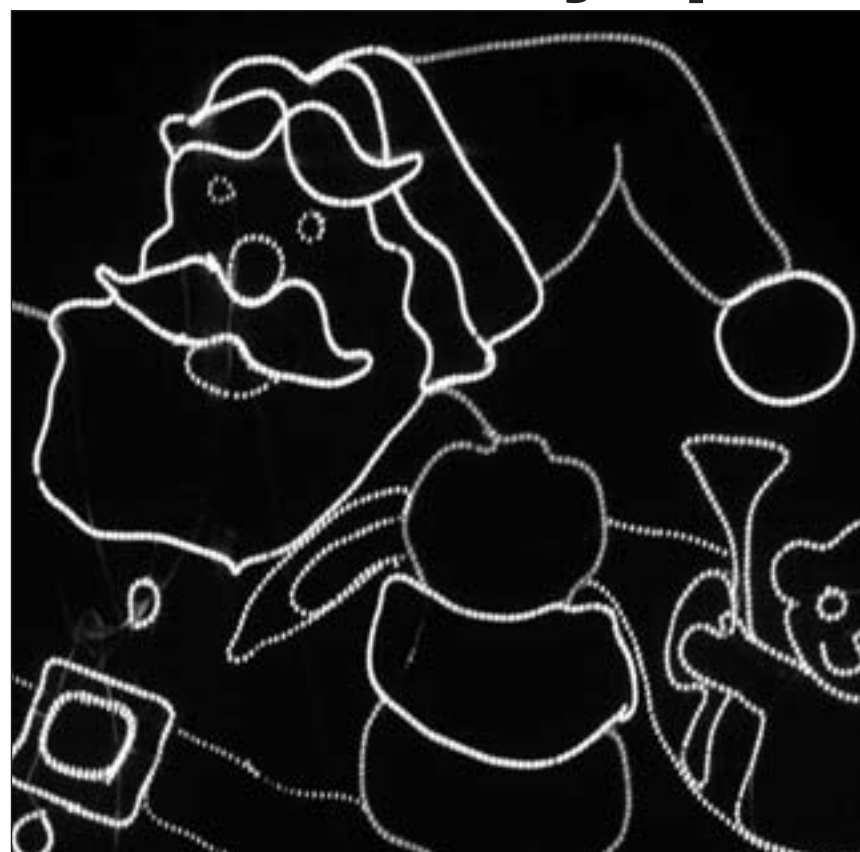
"My family and I keep going back because it's something the entire family can do around Christmas time to help get us all in the holiday spirit," sophomore Allie Lueke said.

Splashes of Christmas colors along with 300,000 vibrant lights and 175 animated characters are positioned along the winding road. Drivers exit the busy highway and, directed by glowing elves, enter what seems to be a completely different world. Spectators drive around and tour the seasonal displays. Light arrangements vary from bears on trampolines to fish jumping out of water, and from children sledding to drumming toy soldiers.

"As you drive along, we invite you to sing along with each fun-filled animated display," said Ms. Michele Newman, director of Jackson County Parks and Recreation.

Each year on the day before Thanksgiving, this illuminated spectacle kicks off with Christmas in the Sky, an immense firework display synchronized to holiday music. In addition, every year a new attraction is unveiled on this night. In celebration of two decades of holiday entertainment, this year, Christmas in the Park introduced a "Twelve Days of Christmas" themed exhibit.

"My whole family enjoys looking at all the lights and animated features," sophomore Caitlin Sweeny said. "The



Ho Ho Ho! ★ A big, bright Santa waves on drivers during a ride in Longview's Christmas in the Park, Wednesday, Nov. 28. Many people make traditions to journey down to the park to experience a scenic display of various Christmas lights. PHOTO BY ALLISON POINTER

park looks so realistic. It really puts you in the Christmas spirit."

This free event is co-sponsored by the radio station KUDL and the Jackson County Parks and Recreation Center. Admission is free; however, donations of money, canned goods, clothing and other non-perishable items are accepted and encouraged. Portions of the proceeds are divided among 41 local charities. Since the sight's debut, the park has netted more than \$500,000 for various charitable organizations.

As the vehicle exits the park, elves wave goodbye and chocolate is distributed

in special thanks for one's visit and possible donation. Finally, a flashy banner says to all a "very merry thank you." ★

"It really puts you in the Christmas spirit."
Caitlin Sweeny, sophomore

Just a side note

Where is Christmas in the Park?

Christmas in the Park is located at Longview Lake, two miles south of Interstate 470 on Raytown Road. Take 470 East to the View High Drive Exit, Exit South on View High Drive and follow to 3rd street. Directional signs are posted off View High Drive.

Over the moon for marbles

Demonstrations, musical items await visitors of unique store in Kansas

by ELIZABETH NELSON
Managing Editor of Design

Pirates, crocodiles, snakes, Betty Boop, paintings, swords and shields, rubber duckies, kites, water fountains, clothing, board games, puzzles, movie-star cutouts and jewelry.

Believe it or not, all of these items can be found at Moon Marble in Bonner Springs, Kan.

Pulling into the gravel parking lot at Moon Marble, guests may find themselves a little surprised to learn of Moon Marble's popularity.

"We get people from all 50 states and 40 countries," Mr. Brian Heikes said, an employee who makes many glass crafts.

While the shabby outer appearance may turn off some customers, it's what is inside that counts. Not only does Moon Marble sell what its name implies - marbles - it also sells many other assorted items and offers demonstrations of glass work.

You will be able to find some fun Christmas gifts for your friends, but you may also enjoy the show in the back. Old wooden bleachers sit against a wall facing a small, messy table covered with marbles. In this room, you have the opportunity to see glasswork in action from an artist such as Heikes or Moon Marble owner Bruce Breslow.

Heikes describes the process as difficult but rewarding. He starts with two clear glass rods. He heats them up to about 1250 to 1300 degrees until they stick together and a marble starts to form. He shapes the glass in a graphite marble mold, then flattens it into half of a marble. He then adds stripes of color - red, blue and yellow - and flattens it again.

"Different metal oxides will give you different colors," Heikes said.

After a while, he begins to create the other half, sticks them together, then slowly swirls two stainless steel rods to make the three colors form a spiral. Heikes said one way to know whether a



Playing with marbles ★ Manipulating glass, Mr. Brian Heikes forms a hand made marble at Moon Marble Nov. 17 in Bonner Springs. Breslow has been making marbles for four years and currently demonstrates marble making. Once the marble was molded, he placed it into the kiln to be fired for at least 24 hours. PHOTO BY CLAIRE MCINERNEY

marble is hand or machine made is from such a design - a machine cannot make the spiral design.

Heikes has worked with glass for about eight years, four of which he was an apprentice. He enjoys his work but says it is not for everyone.

"[Some people will] do a design, then get frustrated and quit, or come back to it and realize they're good at it," Heikes said.

Marble creation can take anywhere from a few minutes to multiple hours, depending on the size, intricacy of the design and the type of equipment used. Heikes explained that many people set up home studios spending as little as one thousand dollars.

Moon Marble is a great place to go on a unique date, a girls day out or

just a quick stop to pick up a one-of-a-kind gift. Moon Marble also offers glass working classes in their "School of Glass." Classes cover lampworking, bead making, pendants, glass slumping, marble making and more, and start at about \$100.

While the process is time consuming and tedious, and you may find yourself a little bored, just remember - how often will you get to experience something that unique? These small items take care and work, and if you go into the demonstration with an open mind, you will probably enjoy it.

If you do start to yawn and you can't keep your feelings to yourself, just remember, as a sign on the table warns, there will be a \$5.00 charge for whining. ★

Just a side note

Moon Marble information

Address: 600 East Front Street, Bonner Springs, Kan. 66012

Phone: 913-441-1432

Holiday hours: Nov. 23 through Dec. 23, Tuesday through Sunday 10 to 5

Regular demonstration hours: Tuesday and Friday 10:30 to 4 and Sat. 10:30 to 2

6 december 2007
★
The Dart
★
St. Teresa's Academy

movie



"Awake" is a thriller with an original plotline and unexpected twists that create heaps of dramatic irony for viewers. In the film, a wealthy young man undergoes a heart transplant. At the beginning of the procedure, the patient realizes his anesthetic isn't working, which means he is able to feel the operation but is powerless to complain. Conscious but paralyzed, he gives a voice-over play-by-play of the proceedings. Along with the medical thrill, "Awake" is a story of love, pride and betrayal. Hayden Christensen, **Jessica Alba** and Terrence Howard played the main characters.

-Taylor Brown

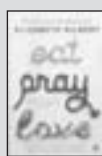
cd



This could be the comeback **Britney Spears** and her fans have been waiting for. "Blackout," Britney's fifth CD, has techno-sounding vocals and hard-hitting beats. The 12-song album includes songs like "Freakshow" and "Radar," which will make your body move. I really liked "Heaven on Earth" because it was different from the other songs with its 80s sounding beats and soft-flowing lyrics. It may remind someone of a Donna Summer song. Britney has proved to her fans that she is still the Princess of Pop.

-Rachel Flattery

book



It's easy to see why Elizabeth Gilbert's "**Eat, Pray, Love**" is a *New York Times* bestseller and has been featured on the "Oprah Winfrey Show." With a wise, witty and reflective tone, Gilbert tells her journey to self-discovery. After a touchy divorce and a dysfunctional rebound relationship, Gilbert decided to spend a year traveling. The characters she meets are unique and genuine, and the experiences she relays are not soon to be forgotten. If you're in the mood for a story that warms the heart while providing life insight, "Eat, Pray, Love" could provide you with the perfect balance.

-Caroline Quinn

tv



Almost everyone has heard of "Grey's Anatomy," but few have heard of the show that comes on right after it, "Big Shots," on Thursdays at 9 p.m. on ABC. **Michael Vartan** plays James Walker, the group's moral center. It is about four men, each of them very successful in business, and the women in their lives. The dry humor, sexual innuendos and constant sarcasm will have you snickering. Plus, it emphasizes the power, if not total control, that women have over men in everyday life. You go girls.

-Paige Kuhlmann

song



Colbie Caillat's new Christmas single, "Mistletoe," is warm and simple. Her pure, angelic voice makes you want to snuggle up by the fire. According to Caillat's official website, a great song should lift your heart, warm your soul and make you feel good. All of her songs seem to do this in one way or another. "Mistletoe" will be a break from the traditional Christmas music. She ties love into the lyrics, as her voice rises nicely above the instruments. The 22-year-old singer from California is quickly making her way into iPods of numerous teenage girls.

-Maddy McGannon

6 december 2007
★
The Dart
★
St. Teresa's Academy

Journey through DARKNESS

by SYDNEY DEATHERAGE
Staff writer

Tensely, quietly, 14-year-old Katya Stetsiuk lies on a hard mattress, shivering in the freezing gloom, listening to her roommates on both sides of her breathing rhythmically as they finally sleep. It's around 4 a.m. on her last night in Zlagoda Orphanage in Kiev, Ukraine, and her thoughts are jumping wildly from excitement to fear to nausea. In her arms she grips a treasure: a brand new, soft, strange looking brown bunny with long legs - a gift given to her by her soon-to-be adoptive parents, Charlotte and Frank DiTirro. Tomorrow, Katya goes to live with the DiTirros for two weeks in Kiev before leaving behind her homeland perhaps for years, perhaps forever.

A broken home

Katya was born to Tanya and Igor Stetsiuk Sept. 9, 1990 in Kiev, Ukraine, where she spent the next 14 years of her life. Shortly after Katya's birth, her parents divorced when Tanya realized Igor was in the thick of a Ukrainian drug-dealing ring. Not having the ability to provide for both herself and her daughter alone, Katya's mother left her daughter behind. Katya was raised in Igor's home, amidst cocaine and heroin trafficking, where her grandmother Raya Stetsiuk was her sole mother figure.

According to Katya, it was more suitable for her to live with Raya and Igor than Tanya because Raya had a steady job and could afford to take care of Katya, whereas Tanya could not. This made it safer for her to live with Raya and Igor than with Tanya. Nonetheless, Katya grew up in a home where her safety was questioned almost daily. When Raya would attempt to stop Igor from trafficking cocaine and heroin through their house, Igor responded aggressively.

One morning, Katya woke to shouts from Raya and commotion outside her room. The night before, Igor had brought home a group of friends around midnight.

"They would never say anything to me, but I could see them doing

This is the story of junior Katya DiTirro, once upon a time called Katya Stetsiuk, as she tells it.

A world away★ STA junior Katya DiTirro, adopted in 2004 by Mr. Frank and Charlotte DiTirro, now lives a comfortable life in the United States. Yet, she can never truly forget the years of hardship she faced in her homeland, Ukraine, and the ghosts of her family members that have passed. PHOTO BY JAIME HENRY-WHITE

Pieces of the past ★ Left, DiTirro's brown bunny, given to her three years ago, is a symbol of her new life here in America. The rabbit was given to her as a gift before journeying over with her adopted parents. Middle, DiTirro points at a photo of her biological aunt Nadya, from left, her mother Tanya, and aunt Tuma Stetsiuk celebrating her mother's wedding day. Right, by the end of her bed, DiTirro keeps a framed picture of her biological parents Igor Stetsiuk, left, and Tanya Stetsiuk on their wedding day. After many rough years as a child living in many unstable homes, Katya was adopted by Mr. Frank and Charlotte DiTirro and came to the United States in 2004. PHOTOS BY ALLISON POINTER AND JAIME HENRY-WHITE



things - doing drugs - and I would be so scared thinking, 'What is going to happen to me? What am I going to do?'" Katya said.

She pushed open her door to see policemen gathered in her living room and Raya shouting at Igor. It wasn't until she stepped across the room that she noticed a young man lying dead on the floor. He had died from a heroin overdose.

Soon after, the police and Raya left the home.

"I didn't know what to do... I was so afraid," Katya said. "It was me and my father and this dead person in our house."

Katya skipped school that day, and walked around Kiev alone. She was 11-years-old.

Katya had witnessed death in her own home, but perhaps more difficult for her to witness her father's abuse of heroin and cocaine.

Igor used a dog leash to wrap around his arms and darken his veins. He waited 15 minutes, then took a needle filled with heroin and shot it into his hands or arms.

"I remember sometimes he would be on drugs really bad and he would say [slurring], 'Sit with me' or 'Have you done your homework?' or 'What grades do you have?' and I couldn't understand his talking," Katya said. "He made me sit in his room for two hours and lectured me. When my grandma would tell him to leave me alone, he'd say 'I'm the father.' It was so painful to watch him basically then pass out on drugs."

Katya's experiences have had a long-term affect on her.

"Drugs can change people and their lives," Katya said. "People talk about how bad they are but how they think they're fun, but I've been around them. I've seen people die. Drugs destroy people's lives."

Facing deaths

Katya continued to live with Raya and Igor until she was 12. In early 2002, Raya passed away. Katya didn't feel safe living alone with Igor in an environment where drugs and midnight visitors were common occurrences, and Igor could not afford to take care of her without the support of Raya. So Katya left her father's home to live with her mother Tanya.

Almost as soon as Katya moved in, her mother Tanya became ill.

"We thought it was just the flu," Katya said. "We didn't take it seriously... but then she started losing a lot of weight."

By the end of May 2002, Tanya knew she had blood cancer. According to Katya, it began to affect her mother's brain and her behavior, and Tanya often saw things.

"She started doing crazy things," Katya said. "One time she pointed across the room and said 'Jesus is here' and we'd tell her that no, he wasn't, and she'd say 'How can't you see him? He's right here.'"

Katya said, this became a regular occurrence.

"Another time she said to us, 'Our neighbor, I think he died' and we would say 'How do you know?' and she'd say 'I can see him dead.'"

Tanya's behavior frightened Katya. "It was really difficult for me to see her like that and sometimes I was scared because I never knew what she was going to do," Katya said. "I didn't know what to think... I used to cry all the time. I used to think 'What would happen to me if she died?'"

Soon after her mother became sick, Katya was sent to a summer camp, only to have her aunt summon her home a week later. Katya's mother had died.

"At first I didn't believe my aunt," Katya said. "I thought she was playing a joke on me. I started laughing and saying things like 'Ha-ha, I don't believe it, yeah right.' It took a week or two for me to realize that, yes, my mom died."

After her mother's death, Katya could no longer live with her aunt because she could not afford to take care of her.

"Basically, I was homeless for a summer," Katya said. "I stayed with friends and relatives and jumped from house to house."

Katya's lack of a permanent home was soon to end, and not in a pleasant way. In early September, Katya had been staying with another aunt, one of her mother's five sisters. On her birthday, when she arrived home from school, her aunt and her mother's ex-boyfriend were drinking together and crying. "We miss your mom, we miss your mom."

"I said, 'What are you doing?'" Katya said. "'Why are you doing this? It's my birthday.'"

Then, later that night, Katya's drunken aunt woke her from her sleep and kicked her out of the house.

"I didn't know what to do... I had nowhere to go," Katya said. "So I used a [phone booth] to call my teacher."

After realizing Katya's homelessness, the teacher and school intervened and

sent her to Zlagoda Orphanage in Kiev. Though Katya had relatives and a father, none of her family members were capable of taking care of her. So in one way, Katya had already become an orphan.

Girl of an orphanage

In December later that year, Katya's friend Marina became ill and went to the hospital in Kiev. When she returned, Marina informed Katya that her father Igor was in the hospital. Katya, who had rarely seen her father since her mother's death, had not even known he was sick.

A few days later, Igor passed away. Katya hadn't seen him in months. Marina was her only source of information. She told Katya that Igor had been spitting up blood the day before he died, and probably died from lung cancer.

Though Katya had been living at the orphanage, she still had friends, relatives and her father whom she could visit on weekends if she chose. But now Katya had become a true orphan, with no father or mother and no relatives who could afford to take care of her.

According to Katya, life at Zlagoda was difficult for her. There was a bedroom for the older girls (where she slept), a bedroom for the older boys, and the younger children all slept together, 10 to 11 in a room. The orphanage children constantly abused drugs, especially marijuana, tobacco and alcohol. Katya said that illegal items were readily available to them.

"[Cigarettes] were very easy to get; you didn't have to have an I.D.," Katya said. "Everyone would smoke out of the windows or in the bathroom."

Cigarettes weren't the only substance easily available to the children.

"You don't have to be 18 to buy alcohol or drugs," Katya said. "I used to buy vodka for my mom when I was 12 and she would just write a note. It's like buying chocolate... and in the villages, people grow [marijuana] in fields. It's basically legal."

In Katya's room, the older girls often stole items from the younger ones and this resulted in physical fights, such as slapping and pushing. On top of it all, Katya was usually hungry and the temperature in the orphanage was constantly freezing.

"I would wake up in the morning and be able to see my breath," Katya said.

Not only was it cold, but the orphanage only provided the children with the minimum amount of food.

"I always used to be hungry," Katya said. "It's not like we starved; it just wasn't enough for a teenager."

Even though the orphanage was her home, Katya still attended a regular school in Kiev.

"I used to get so upset because I had so much homework," Katya said. "I studied hard because I knew that I wanted to leave Ukraine and go to the university... other kids would be smoking or drinking and I would be studying."

Katya said that she always believed in herself and believed she was going to be successful. So in 2004 when Kansas City residents Charlotte and Frank DiTirro decided to adopt Katya, she felt like her dreams had come true. After the adoption process began and during the year of waiting, Katya spent many sleepless nights in the orphanage.

"I prayed to God, 'Please, please, I want to get adopted,'" Katya said. "I waited to tell my friends because [I] know that sometimes when you say things out loud, they don't happen."

In the last month of waiting, the DiTirros rented an apartment in Kiev, where they visited Katya in the orphanage a few times and gave her gifts. Katya's final days in Ukraine were coming to an end.

Beginning from an end

Lying on her mattress, she grips the soft, strange little brown bunny and turns it over in her hands. Katya smiles at the treasure that symbolizes her life to come: new, exciting, comforting. Rolling over she attempts to fall asleep, taking one last look at her roommates around her. She knows tomorrow will be the last time she will see her friends at the orphanage. She feels for them, for they are not as lucky as her, but readiness for her new life overcomes her pity. Smiling, Katya finally falls asleep.

The next morning, Katya made her last good-byes to the orphanage, and two weeks later moved across an ocean and a continent to Kansas City, Missouri.

That Katya Stetsiuk of Ukraine is now junior Katya DiTirro of the Academy, who brushes past you in the hall or smiles at you crossing the quad. Only the ghost of her previous life remains. It may not be visible on the outside, but this ghost is one Katya will live with for the rest of her life to come. ★

"I prayed to God, 'Please, please, I want to get adopted.'"

Katya DiTirro, Junior

6 december 2007

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The Dart
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St. Teresa's Academy

Once upon a time, a dancer lived an inflexible life

JAIME HENRY-WHITE



TALK TO YOU LATER

Editor's Note: Jaime Henry-White will write an interactive column each issue of The Dart. We welcome you to write your own stories or responses, in 100 words or less, to her column. Drop your writing in room M205 and your work will be published in The Dart!

When the heavy red curtain at the downtown Folly Theater slowly closed before me at my dance recital last spring, my chest and tutu still moving up and down in rhythm from heavy breathing, I was hit by a wave of sadness. This would probably be one of the last dance

performances I'd ever have after over 10 years of dancing. I hated that thought. I hated it. I sank into the stage. As I looked down over the layers of sequined white tulle that made up my tutu, my pointe shoes stared up at me. "How can you leave us behind? Look at all we've done."

Yet, I had decided that for my junior year, I was going to stop dancing and just run cross country. I had convinced myself that I couldn't manage doing both sports, six days a week, like I had my freshman and sophomore years. If I wanted to really excel in one, I couldn't keep up the other.

The week after the performance, I repeatedly told myself I was finally going to swap my pointe shoes in for my running shoes. I'd be traveling to Garry Gribble's Running Store rather than The Dance Shop. I'd be taping my running spikes for races rather than taping my toes for pointe class.

After the summer passed and the applause of my dance recital had finally faded from my mind, I began to allow myself to be happy with my decision.

But, one thing couldn't let me forget that choice: my mother.

She unintentionally did it. In fact, she really couldn't help it. She's had and still continues to have an incredible dance career that inspires me. I'm constantly surrounded by her accomplishments. I read reviews of her in the newspaper. I eat Thanksgiving dinner with her dance friends. I walk past her as she's happily choreographing her latest piece in our living room. I watch her dance company perform and let my heart ache as I jealously stare. I sit still in the audience as I watch my chance at a dance career pass me by.

So I confronted her about my decisions. I knew I had stopped dancing because I didn't want to have the same life as her. I wanted to be different and not fall in love with dance like she did, because I knew it would happen.

But she asked me, "What's keeping you from doing something you love? You don't have to dance just to become a professional dancer. You should dance because you love to."

She was right. I felt ashamed for limiting myself so much before. How could my supposed open mind work if it was so closed on itself?

So, I wrote up a life list. It seems a little drastic and maybe a little weird, but I did. My list followed somewhere along the lines of becoming a fluent-Spanish speaking doctor who saves the world while running marathons, flying planes to Africa, studying marine biology and dancing my heart out whenever, wherever. But what was most important on this list came at the very end: "Go for it."

With those three words, I saw on paper that I had absolutely no restrictions on what I want to accomplish or what I love to do. I am the only one who can hold me back.

Now, on my own terms, I've let go of my structured way of thinking. I can go to an open dance class one day, go on a cool autumn run the next, or just simply let go, sit back and enjoy the moment. There's no time to waste with my silly limitations when opportunity is right at the door. ★

Supporting the Stars

The total budget for the upkeep and care of STA is \$3,376,213. Only 85 percent, or \$2,869,781, of this budget comes from student tuition. *The Dart* explores where the other 15 percent comes from.

Tuition

The 529 students that attend STA pay \$8,950 in tuition each year. Each student also contributes a \$325 registration fee and a \$300 comprehensive fee each year.

Annual Giving Campaign

Elements of the Event: solicitation letter to parents, alumnae, and school friends
Average amount raised: \$87,612
Percent of total budget: 2.6 percent

TNT Sale

Elements of Event: sale of used furniture, books, linens, lamps, pictures, antiques, collectibles, kitchen items, knick knacks to STA community and the less fortunate in the surrounding community
Date: Late March/Early April
Volunteers: 100-150
Time spent planning: being collecting donations in September
Chair people: Beth Berardi, Joan Jones, Terry Duffey, Jan Fakoury
Average amount raised: \$38,282
Percent of total budget: 1.1 percent

Alumnae Golf Tournament

Elements of Event: fee to play: \$125 (covers the cost of greens, carts, a continental breakfast, lunch, a player gift, complimentary beverages), team and individual prizes are awarded, Leawood South Country Club
Date: May
Attendees: 32 teams with 4 players each
Chair People: Jon and Barb Haden, Bob and Dodie McShane
Average amount raised: \$35,000
Percent of total budget: 1 percent

Fundraisers

Auction



Auction talk ★ Social studies teacher Patrick Sirridge talks to a friend by the prize table at the annual STA auction in the Goppert Center Nov. 17. **Photo by Jaime Henry-White**

Elements of the Event: gourmet dinner, live auction, silent auction, super-silent auction, raffle, auction parties, underwriting
Date: Saturday before Thanksgiving
Attendees: 450-480 people
Volunteers: 200
Time spent planning: 7 months
Chair people: Mark and Nancy Fitzpatrick, E.J. and Martha Burke, Jeff and Mary Orndoff
Average amount raised: \$381,823
Percent of total budget: 11 percent

Other

Includes plant sale, alumnae dues and miscellaneous sales
Average amount raised: \$26,715
Percent of total budget: 0.8 percent

ringing in the holidays



Bucket of love ★ A young girl gives a donation to a Salvation Army bell ringer on the Country Club Plaza Nov. 24. Every year during the holiday season, the Salvation Army launches The Red Kettle Christmas Campaign, whose donations provide food, toys and clothing for over 6 million people nationwide. **PHOTO BY JAIME HENRY-WHITE**

Swim: Coaches list team's objectives for season

Continued from page 14

going to take Koenig's place, but the agreement fell through.

"According to my dad, things fell through when [Cole] found out that practices were so late and so far away," Nelson said. "He didn't want us to be out that late and he didn't want to be out that late either. I can understand that."

Last year's assistant coach, Miranda Spini, stepped up to fill Koenig's place as head coach. During the summer she found out she would most likely become this year's head coach, but it wasn't finalized until late this fall.

"I love this program," Spini said. "I liked [Koenig] as a coach and would've rather returned as [her] assistant, but I'm excited to carry on the program."

Nelson said Spini is a good coach.

"[Spini] isn't as hardcore as [Koenig] was but she will do a good job,"

Nelson said. "She knows us, what we need to work on, and our strengths and weaknesses. She knows how to push us to do better."

According to Spini, the practice times are nice for her because they allow her to coach. She said she is just glad to have found some pools that weren't already booked.

Mr. Nick Erker, a graduate from the University of Kansas, has been hired as this year's assistant coach.

Together, Erker and Spini created a list of objectives for the swim team. Two of the objectives were for everyone on the team "to swim the best you can by putting your best efforts forward" and "to work as a team to reach team goals that the swimmers set."

Nelson hopes that everyone on the team will work hard throughout the season.

"We have the potential, we just need the right coaching to get us there," Nelson said. ★



Big splash ★ Senior Rebecca Rogers, from left, and juniors Ellie Mullane and Lauren McQuaid burst into laughter during swim practice Nov. 12. Rogers returned to the STA swim team after swimming for her club team last year. **PHOTO BY JAIME HENRY-WHITE**

Twinks: Wear, tear sideline STA's mascot

Continued from page 16

Twinks might not appear at STA games for a while, though. According to STA athletic director Mike Egner, Twinks is "falling apart, misshapen and needs an organ transplant." The last time the costume was damaged was a couple years ago after Twinks fell off a student's car on the way to a game. It cost \$1000 to repair, and Twinks is no longer allowed to leave STA property.

"It takes a lot to fix her, because it's so expensive, but [Spirit Club] is going to have to think of a way to get Twinks surgery," Beckett said.

Although many members of the STA community disregard Twinks' past, most agree it is a suitable mascot for STA.

"Other schools have harsh and threatening mascots like the Storm," Beckett said. "But Twinks is happy and brings positive spirit. I think the Storm is threatening which shows [Sion's] negative attitude. I definitely think it's better to be a Star than a Storm."

No matter if Twinks is shining on the gym floor, smiling from a bumper sticker or cheering at a basketball game, Beckett believes her origin is not important.

"I don't know if any student knows about Twinks' past," Beckett said. "But it's obvious that Twinks brings a unity to every sport despite what [her] background is." ★

Scholar: student's heritage adds to diversity at STA

Continued from page 3

students are to have an opportunity to interact with someone with such a unique background.

"She's African and that's something you don't find everyday," said Flattery. "That's important for students because they want St. Teresa's to be a diverse campus. She comes with experiences STA students will never know."

Seemani explained that in Lusaka she knew a variety of different people through her grandmother's school. Seemani described that aspects of Lusaka life are similar and different to life in Kansas City.

"[Lusaka] was like Kansas City where it's not a really big city," said Seemani. "But there I was always outside and loved to climb trees and run barefoot."

Flattery emphasized the importance of having cultural variety at STA. He explained that it is essential for students to educate themselves by networking and relating to Seemani, just as it is important for her to learn from these same peers.

"Diversity," said Flattery. "We want to maintain our diversity and bring students from all kinds of backgrounds to St. Teresa's." ★

Issue 2 ★ Corrections

★ From her response to "Talk to You Later," freshman Molly Kenney was misidentified.

★ From the photo poll on page 8, junior Emily Cappel was misidentified.

★ Senior Jordan Behnken was misidentified in a photo on page 24.

The Dart regrets these errors.

Get your freak on ★ In her final dance at the pep rally, senior Alex Miller starts her "lawn mower" Friday. Miller won the competition with her dance skills and senior supporters. **PHOTO BY CLAIRE McINERNEY**



Break it down ★ Freshman Claire Cirocco dances for the title of Twinks mascot at the pep rally Friday. "I was really nervous but once the music started, I wasn't really anymore," Cirocco said. **PHOTO BY CLAIRE McINERNEY**



Work it out ★ Trying to be Twinks, junior Nicolette Anderson plays to the crowd and the Spirit Club at the pep rally last Friday. Anderson advanced on to the final round, however did not win. **PHOTO BY CLAIRE McINERNEY**



Students compete for Twinks costume and

Bring It On

Dance off ★ Above left: Dancing in the hip hop routine, sophomore Anna Gigliotti busts a move during the pep rally last Friday. Above: Sophomore Riley Cowing, from left, senior Maddy McGannon, freshman Michaela Knittel, senior Kyle Hougland and freshman Grace Bisbee perform their jazz routine during the pep rally last Friday. The team competed in a tournament over the weekend, taking fourth place for this dance. **PHOTO BY CLAIRE McINERNEY**



The Spirit Club kicked off the winter sports season with a bang in a pep rally last Friday. In their first act of the afternoon, the dance team performed a jazz routine. The Spirit Club then made their debut, clad in the new STA yellow tie-dye T-shirts. The girls impersonated cheerleaders from the movie "Bring It On" and reenacted the cheer from the opening scene of the movie. The Spirit Club then held a "dance off" open to all students in which participants competed to don the Twinks costume in the upcoming Notre Dame de Sion High School basketball game. Seniors Jessica Nouri from the basketball team, Rebecca Rogers from the swim team and Betsy Koehne from the dance team judged. Students from every grade were called forward in small groups to dance to a random song, including "My Heart Will Go On" and "Space Jam." The dance team showcased a second hip-hop routine as "dance off" judges deliberated. The pep rally ended with the announcement of the dance off winner, senior Alex Miller. **BRIEF BY HALEY VONDEMKAMP**

Team spirit ★ Seniors Anne Tampke, from left, Elizabeth Warwick, and Jordan Leinen attempt to keep a straight face during their cheer at the pep rally last Friday. The girls imitated "Bring It On" during the pep rally to pump up winter sports. **PHOTO BY CLAIRE McINERNEY**



Roll call ★ Above: Sophomore Katelyn Devine pops up while waiting to begin the Spirit Club cheer during the pep rally last Friday for winter sports and Twinks tryouts. The girls wore their tie-dyed shirts as their uniform for the day. Near left: Cheering on winter sports, senior Emily Thompson get on her knees to pray. **PHOTO BY CLAIRE McINERNEY**

