



Arlington High School

December 2005

## Hazel. flies high

By Lucia

Although she may look like a typical AHS junior, sixteen-year-old Hazel Linn Briner has been touring with New England's Circus Smirkus for the past two summers and hopes to have the same opportunity in 2006. (Check out [smirkus.org](http://smirkus.org). If you click on the Big Top Tour Schedule, you'll find a picture of your classmate taken during the 2003 tour!) While she follows a weekly routine of homework and sports, similar to many AHS students, Hazel spends her weekends practicing gymnastics or circus skills at New England Sports Academy (NESAs) in Canton.

Prior to getting accepted into the Circus Smirkus Tour, Hazel attended Circus Smirkus Summer Camp at Sterling College in Vermont for three consecutive years. Although she learned to juggle both in the camp and during circus training, Hazel's main



role in Circus Smirkus is an aerialist, or an acrobat who performs in the air. The mediums used in her act range from hoops and ropes to more obscure things, such as fabric.

Hazel began gymnastics at the age of three and was involved with the Massachusetts Gymnastics Center (MGC) in Waltham for eight years. She has been on the AHS Varsity gymnastics team since freshman year and plans to continue this winter. Although her experience with gymnastics offers a great background for the circus, Hazel has had to undergo a great deal of other serious training as well.

(Continued on page 11)

## Angels draft Anthony

By Luke and Lucia

Have you ever met someone who has dreamed of playing in the major leagues since they were little? Well, Anthony Sullivan has since the age of five.

The Los Angeles Angels drafted former Spy Ponder Anthony Sullivan in this year's Major League Baseball draft. Sullivan was eligible for the draft after his sophomore year at St. John's University, where he pitched as a starter and also entered games in relief. After being taken in the 19<sup>th</sup> round, he signed with the Los Angeles Angels. After the college season had ended and Sullivan had signed his contract, he was immediately sent to play for a minor league team called the Orem Owlz from Utah in the "Short Season" league.

Throughout his career at Arlington High School, Sullivan played shortstop, second base, and pitched for the Ponders. Wearing number seven on his back, Sullivan was an all-star for Arlington, topping 92 mph in a historic 2003 victory over Pea-

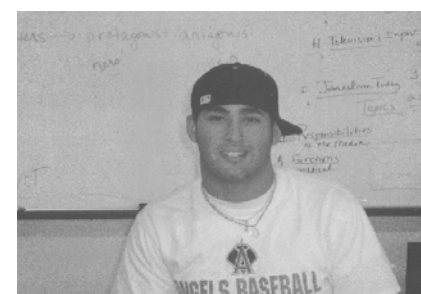
body, who featured a number one draft pick named Jason Allison. Due to Allison's reputation, there were many scouts present at the game who took notice of Sullivan's potential.

After being awarded a signing bonus for the completion of his one-year contract, Sullivan began training with the Angels.

One of the most important parts of training includes stretching, and as a pitcher Anthony was required to undergo rigorous workouts pertaining mostly to his legs. Not only do the stretches allow players to improve their performance, but they also prevent players from pulling muscles.

"Stretches are huge,"

(Continued on page 8)



## Roberts rides high

By Christian

Seventeen-year-old senior Matt Roberts is no stranger to *The Ponder Report*. We did a cover story on Matt last year about his love for bikes and how he has turned that love into a dream job- owning his own business, East Coast Custom Rides. Matt is making customized bikes that are specially ordered and tailored to the customer's preference.

Matt sat down with *The Ponder Report* and gave us an update on his business. He filled us in on everything from colors to parts, and how he's even trying to make a name for himself in Singapore.

PR: Why did you want to start a company like East Coast Custom Rides in the first place?

MR: I like to build things in general. Mainly bikes, and models, and other things like that. So I thought it would be cool to

start my own business.

PR: What exactly does your business do? Can you give us a brief overview of the company?

MR: Someone puts in an order for a certain bike, and I will go out and find places that have the parts. Online retailers are cheaper than stores and I usually go through them.

PR: Matt, how has your business changed since the last time we spoke with you?

MR: There has been some expansion and international shipping has been added. Hopefully soon we will have lower prices on the bikes and hopefully custom painting too.

PR: Since the company is growing, is it successful? What kind of response have you been getting?

MR: Yeah, it's getting a good response, especially in Asia.

PR: Was the "business" or "money" part difficult to begin? Are you good with math?

MR: I didn't really make a business plan to be honest. I just went with it. The company had enough money to start and I just went from

PR: How much does it cost to start a business?

MR: For me, it wasn't that much. I would say about a few hundred dollars. I had most of it and my parent's helped out. They're very supportive. Working at my own house and no special accounts and no special phone line saves money.

PR: Has the business aspect been hard to follow?

MR: Yeah, very difficult especially with taxes and all



(Laughs). Everything is in a different place. It's all going in different directions, and I find new situations constantly. There is always a challenge.

PR: With the cost of gas so high, do you think your business will expand? Will you get more adults wanting to purchase gas because of the high prices of gas?

MR: It's basically all adults anyway, but I think with gas prices so high, it could fuel business (Laughs).

PR: Do you have one of your

(Continued on page 4)

## Superintendent takes on AHS

By Chirstian

Arlington High School is constantly changing and most of the time, it's for the better, everything from class size to teachers, all the way to students graduating. But this year, AHS is receiving quite a large change. This change will decide important issues like the changes in the classroom as well as other important issues. So what's the big change? Arlington High's has a new superintendent, Mr. Levenson.

Something rather interesting about Mr. Levenson is that instead of changing everything at AHS, he is choosing to improve it. He feels that Arlington's schools could strive to be better and that is what he will be working on in the future. He wants AHS to go from "good to great".

Mr. Levenson is extremely qualified. He was the assistant superintendent in the town of Harvard for two years and has three children of his own.

In addition to being an assistant superintendent, he owned North American Ind. Manufacturing Machinery. Though he loved business, he felt that something in public schooling was more of his calling. He was also a parent activist in his own town for seven years. Mr. Levenson commented, "Life is too short. Do what you enjoy." A cliché but true nonetheless.

Mr. Levenson also has done extracurricular things such as running a youth program through the organization of Habitat for Humanity.

He feels that student input is greatly needed and is encouraging it. He has been visiting all the classes for three hours a week to get a feel of both the students and the teachers.

He is beyond impressed



with the relationships that the students have with their educators. Though Mr. Levenson has just arrived, he already sees the healthy environment that Arlington High has to offer. But, there is always room for improvement, he believes.

Mr. Levenson has proposed a "5 Goal" plan that will further the education of Arlington students. He wants every student to learn the same skills so they can apply them in the future. Four out of the five goals will focus on teaching and learning. He would like students to even learn how to write a research paper in the sixth grade to gear up for high school. He wants the students' skills to be consistently growing. Though he is impressed with the high school, he feels that, "the elementary schools are not always consistent" and would like to improve them the most.

Mr. Levenson's goals include encouraging diversity and simply helping the school system. He feels that even though class size is larger than it should be, he plans to have class size diminish by next year. Planning on having possibly less than twenty kids in a class. As for the No Child Left Behind Law, Mr. Levenson feels that, "It's important and valuable... some parts are unrealistic." Mr. Levenson is going to prove to Arlington High that he can cut it as our superintendent and is diving in headfirst.

## GSA shapes safe school

By Dianna & Megan

Did you know that the GSA is the largest club at AHS? It currently has between 60 to 70 members, and one week after the Day of Dialogue, on Club Day, 20 more names were added to that membership list. The GSA, Ms. Holt, Amanda Formica, Josh Bell, Mr. Byrne, and Ms. Cremens-Basbas organized the Day of Dialogue assembly.

The Day of Dialogue is a way for the gay community to inform new high school students at AHS that they have entered a safe and welcoming school.

There are normally about five or six speakers who talk about many issues with homophobia, etc. GSA members and freshman watching the assembly commented on the day.

The purpose of the day is to promote tolerance. It is also a way to give students a chance to talk about harassment. The day discredits stereotypes so students see that the gay community and all communities are the same.

The assembly is annual and has been presented for eleven years. This event took place on October 21<sup>st</sup> during second and third period. In the audi-

## "Pirates of the Caribbean" is just another movie. Think again

By Ana

Somali pirates have attacked five ships in the past month. Piracy along the Somalia coast is common nowadays and several ships a month are attacked or hijacked, with valuables stolen and crews held for ransom. The IMB (International Maritime Bureau) said that the situation is completely out of control and have warned ships to stay at least 150 miles away from Somalia's coast.

"Judging by the location of the attacks, the pirates were likely from the same group that hijacked a U.N.-chartered aid ship in June and held its crew and food cargo hostage for 100 days," said Andrew Mwangura, head of the Kenyan chapter of the Seafarers Assistance Program, according to ABC News.

Recently, a well-organized pirate group, on the 1,880-mile coast of Somalia, attacked a cruise ship carrying 150 passengers and a staff of about 160 people. The Pirates were in two small boats and were carrying machine guns and a rocket-propelled grenade when they attempted the attack on Seabourn Cruise Lines' "Spirit" at about 5:35 a.m. on November 05, as it rounded the Horn of Africa, told Deborah Natansohn, president of the cruise line, to CNNRadio.

"I looked out the window and saw a small boat with about 5 people in it about 20 yards away. One of them clearly had a rifle. Later I realized that two of them had rifles and one had some kind of rocket launcher. They were firing the rifle and then fired the rocket launcher twice. One of the rockets certainly hit the side of the liner into a passen-

ger's suite. Luckily nobody was hurt," said one of the passengers, to *The Sunday Times*.

The pirates tried to get aboard but were detained by crew members who set off what one of the passengers described as a "loud bang". A crew member suffered minor injuries from flying residues. Another crew member described the event to *The Sunday Times* as "really scary," but added, "everybody's okay."

Since mid-March, 32 pirate attacks off Somalia's coast have been recorded. "It's a massive problem area. We've gone from what used to be something like maritime mugging 20 years ago to really sophisticated attacks with grenades and rocket-propelled explosives," remarked Andrew Livingston, a spokesman for the National Union of Marine to *The Sunday Times*.

The luxurious Seabourn Spirit was on its way from Alexandria in Egypt to the Kenyan Port of Mombassa.

"We're always looking for adventure, but this is probably a little more than we would normally look for," explained a Canadian passenger to CNN at the end of the eventful day.



Illustration by Christian

**"It's not what you look at that matters, it's what you see"**  
-Henry David Thoreau

torium. The GSA hopes to grow and become a stronger force at AHS.

This year AHS had five speakers, including a state senator, a PFLAG (Parents Friends and Family of Lesbians and Gays) Mom, and an AHS alumnus. The speakers discussed homophobia and harassment that many homosexual, transgender, bisexual, and their supporters face. None of the speakers had pre-approved or censored

speeches. According to Ms. Holt, the administration is very open about the Day of Dialogue; their only restriction is that the speakers do not go in-depth about religion. She also commented that the day was remarkably successful and that they were very lucky to obtain the speakers we had because the GSA has always wanted Senator Barrios to speak at AHS. There has been only

(Continued on page 9)

## Skidmore focuses on positive changes

By Elizabeth

Arlington High School has seen some significant changes over the last year including new programs and a new outlook for the future of Arlington High School. Mr. Skidmore shares his thoughts about his first year completed as a principal and his plans for this year.

Within just one year, Arlington High School has come a long way in making a smooth transition into the academic aspect more than just being known for its athletics. Mr. Skidmore would like to see, "Arlington High School in the top 10% for Massachusetts high schools." Over the year, the MCAS failure rate has been cut in half and the standardized test scores have improved greatly. Although Arlington will still be known for its athletic achievements, Mr. Skidmore would like Arlington High School to be known for both "athletic and academic greatness."

With still a lot of room for improvements, Mr. Skidmore is looking to make a few changes throughout the school. By the time senior year rolls around, many students consider it to be a free ride or vacation because they have fulfilled all requirements and have enough credits to graduate. The graduation requirement for the class of 2007 will be 106 credits to earn a diploma. Currently students need 96. It may sound dreadful to the undergraduates, but Mr. Skidmore would like to help prepare students for college.

If students are not working to their potential in senior year, he feels that the college demand will be a shock and he does not want to send seniors unprepared.

He is thinking about changing the senior year curriculum. This might include half-year elective courses, independent studies, and graduation by performance. There will be lots of input from students and staff before any changes are made.

Something that is officially being started at Arlington High is Community of Caring which will establish a whole new outlook for the school in terms of interactions and speaking up. Mr. Skidmore would like to see Arlington High School come together and work together as a community. The Community of Caring program will work with teachers and students to help communication. Community of Caring is "vehicle for establishing core values and encouraging involvement from students and teachers to voice opinions."

At the beginning of this year's assemblies, the idea of "Good to Great" was introduced. Mr. Skidmore would like to set Arlington High School with high standards. The goal of good to great incorporates consistency throughout the building involving policies and rules. As well, the student handbook was revised. The discipline code is

*(Continued on page 10)*

## Club interacts with community

By Joe

When asked, "What is the Interact Club," many might have the same response as senior Rob Bowman, "I have no clue what that is."

The Interact Club, run by Mr. Minear and Mrs. Villano, is a great organization in which students can volunteer to help the needy in neighboring communities as well as Arlington.

The Interact Club works directly with the Arlington Rotary Club to plan events and receive some funding. According to the Rotary Club website, The Rotary Club is a group of businessmen and women whose objective is to serve the community.

The Interact Club volunteers in neighboring communities and with non-profit organizations. Erica Walkinshaw, last year's sophomore representative for the

club, describes some activities.

"We are involved in various service projects varying from raising money for homeless shelters, serving a Thanksgiving meal at the Salvation Army as well as visiting local nursing homes."

Last year, around Christmas, students and members of the Rotary Club gathered to fill bags with essentials that were to be shipped off to a local shelter. "It's nice to see the adults from the Rotary be so active and willing to participate in various activities along with students," said Walkinshaw.

This club meets once or twice a month, depending on upcoming events. If anyone is interested in this club, they should see Mr. Minear or Mrs. Villano whose offices are located on the first floor.

## Seniors dig for cash

By Elizabeth

Senior year is one of the most exciting years of high school. Many things such as senior pictures, prom, yearbook and college applications all happen in a short period of time. What students might not be aware of is the cost and the need to be financially ready for all of the expenses.

During the summer before senior year, students are mailed packages for senior pictures. Senior pictures are more expensive than any previous year's photos. The first cost is a sitting fee which starts at forty dollars. What is surprising is that the sitting fee entitles the student no photos. According to Prestige, the cost of actually buying photos starts at an alarming rate of one hundred dollars. A picture is worth a thousand words, but not hundreds of dollars.

Senior pictures are then placed in the yearbook. The class yearbook is one item that seniors want to buy, because it holds sentimental value, reminding us of friendships and events over the four years of high school. For one hundred dollars, a senior can purchase a yearbook and have Arlington High School memories forever.

The dance that every student remembers for many future years is the senior prom. Senior prom is the last time that virtually all of the senior class is together for one last social event. Besides the cost of a tux or a dress, the average senior can be expected to be spending money on tickets, limo, pictures, and any after prom activities.

Half of senior year is spent visiting schools and filling out applications. As if the college process were not hard enough, in order to submit an application, there is an application fee. The average cost, indicated by collegeboard.com, ranges between twenty and sixty five dollars for each school to which a student applies. Considering that most students apply to at least five schools, which is not a guarantee that he/she will be admitted, the cost will be in the hundreds.

Underclassmen of Arlington High School might not be entirely aware of the financial costs that senior year brings. The prom, college applications, yearbook, and pictures are only four costly expenses of senior year. Students should

*(Continued on page 10)*

## AHS wears denim to show support

By Taylor

In the time that it takes to read this, a woman living in the United States will be diagnosed with breast cancer, according to The American Cancer Society. In 2005 alone, there will be 211,240 new cases of breast cancer while an estimated 40,410 women will die from the disease.

October 7 marks the ten-year anniversary for Lee Jeans Co. National Denim Day. This fundraiser accumulates money for the research and treatment methods for victims of breast cancer. The day entails that people who want to contribute to the fund can wear jeans to work. People dressed in jeans will then donate \$5 to the fight against breast cancer.

All proceeds will then be donated to the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. Nationally, Denim Day collected 8.5 million dol-

lars.

Students and teachers at AHS followed the lead of Lee Jeans National Denim Day. Many participated in wearing denim to show their awareness and support for breast cancer. All faculty and students were able to make donations to the drive in the cafeteria at all three lunches.

Members of the student government were in charge of organizing the drive and collection the donations. Student Council Vice President, Corey Percival, was one of the people involved in the planning of denim day.

When asked about the outcome of the drive, Percival enthusiastically replied, "All together...we racked in about \$310. The day was a success and hopefully the tradition shall continue through the years at the Arlington High School."

## Roberts rides high

(Continued from page 1)

bikes? A special one for yourself?

MR: No, not now. Money is tight but maybe when the business takes off more.

PR: How much are the bikes? Price range?

MR: Now, Mountain and Road bikes are between nine hundred and a thousand. I am trying to bring the cost of the bikes down though. I also make Low Rider bikes for four hundred. I make all the bikes out of my garage.

PR: How long does it take to make a bike and what kind of materials do you use?

MR: It usually will take two to three weeks, and it depends on how complex the bike is. Higher end materials like Carbon fiber is a lot more expensive. I don't want to mess anything up so I take my time.

PR: Do you have anyone working with you or for you?

MR: No one working with me. I eventually want people to work with me and for me, but not yet.

PR: What have you done as far as any ads or press for your company? Have you done any PR for it?

MR: I've tried to link to websites that have to do with bikes and custom building. I've also done search engine submissions and the yellow pages. But basi-

cally, just word of mouth.

PR: How much time has gone into your business so far?

MR: About a year and a half. I had the idea about two years ago and officially started on April 24, 2005. I'm still learning as new situations arrive and whatnot. I need to learn more, though.

PR: What was your first order like?

MR: No real orders yet (Laughs)! As I'm still learning, it takes lots of time to process an order. I put a bike on E-Bay and someone from Singapore is interested. It might go through, you never know. But either way, it's really exciting.

PR: Last question, do you have any idols or anyone you've looked up to that had guided you into really doing this? Anyone inspire you?

MR: Not really actually. I did it spur of the moment about two years ago by accident, and it's been great ever since.

PR: How can we get in touch with you to get a bike?

MR: You can reach the company at [www.eastcoastcustomsrides.com](http://www.eastcoastcustomsrides.com) or E - M a i l a t [Mroberts@eastcoastcustomsrides.com](mailto:Mroberts@eastcoastcustomsrides.com).

## Changing the menu

By Corrie

Arlington Public Schools are joining in the emphasis of health and wellness. The school's plan is to remove the foods that are not nutritious and make minor changes to where the food sources.

Sweets, fats, and oils, those foods that are yummy but not nutritious, are becoming scarce in Arlington Public Schools' lunchrooms.

Self-serve salad bars are becoming the popular food in the cafeterias. These salad bars will now be offering fresh fruit and vegetables instead of canned ones. Arlington High School offers sandwich stations where students can order the sandwich of their liking with the toppings of their choice.

Traditional toppings will remain available (salad dressing, cream cheese, ketchup, etc.) but low-fat or reduced-fat versions will be available by choice also.

According to the *Arlington Advocate*, Robert Rice, Arlington's food service director said, "You have to do things gradually, or you'll have a revolution." The students of Arlington Public Schools found the idea of losing cookies to the low-fat type disappointing. Sales even dropped but soon plan to bounce back.

A change has already occurred to the pizza the cafeteria serves. The pizzas dough has upgraded to a bread of whole-grain variety. This switch does not end here though; the less-nutritious white breads have also been replaced by the healthier multigrain types.

Chicken and turkey meals will replace red-meat dishes, although red meat is still available.

The vending machines are facing changes as well. Otton Middle School has re-

(Continued on page 10)

## Local chiropractor uses honor free system

By Corrie

Judy Stirrat, a chiropractor, has changed her accepted form of payment to one from which everyone can benefit. She has created a connection between herself and her patients to maximize well-being, affordability, and health by creating an honor fee system.

Many families have trouble paying for traditional health care, which means it is difficult to afford frequent chiropractic care. To maintain proper spinal alignment and nerve flow, regular check-ups are recommended but can be costly. Dr. Stirrat considers regular, affordable, chiropractic care a part of a standard health program. To make this a reality, she has begun using an honor fee system.

Dr. Stirrat says, "Chiropractic is a way of health and lifelong commitment to being aligned and alive. I know the power of restoring nerve function. I know the ability of the body to heal itself. I know that we all express more life and health without spinal misalignments and the nerve interference they can cause."

If a person is not currently a patient of Dr. Stirrat's, an initial fee of \$40 is required. Her new system is a box hanging on the wall with a slot for patients to drop in the fee, which they can afford to pay. Patients set their own fee. The suggested fee is \$30 for a 15-minute visit.

Anybody can use the box. Dr. Stirrat also provides her patients with orthotics, supplements and individualized exercises.

## Retailers crack down on sales

By Elizabeth

The cough and cold season is quickly arriving this year. With TV ads promoting relief products such as Nyquil, Dayquil and Vicks, these over the counter remedies that were found on the shelves of a local drug store are now being restricted to minors. This winter, the consumer will have a harder time buying these items.

According to *USA Today*, over the last two years, doctors have noticed an alarming rise in overdosing with Robitussin and Coricidin. In fact, there are over 100 over the counter products that teenagers are purchasing and abusing. The internet is fueling ideas to younger kids and teenagers to new ways of reaching a high. The ingredient in many cough, cold and flu medication is called Dextromethorphan otherwise known as DXM. When Dextromethorphan is abused, it can cause hallucinations and the loss of motor skills.

DXM is the replacement of codeine which used to be found in cough and flu medicines. What is ironic is that the reason for replacing codeine for DXM is because people were abusing the products back in the 1970's.

Today the Food and Drug Administration is facing

the same problem they had 35 years ago. If a consumer is using any product that contains the active ingredient Dextromethorphan as advised with the recommended dosage, there would not be any problem. The products containing DXM are not faulty, they are just problematic when used other than directed and taken in large dosages at one time. In some cases, if taken in obsessive amounts, it can cause death.

This winter, local drug stores are taking precautions in selling over the counter medicine. "The increase of teenagers purchasing these products is questionable to whether they are using the product for its purpose or going to abuse it," said an employee at Walgreen's. Walgreen's has made a decision to ban the sale of Dextromethorphan products to anyone under the age of 18. When purchasing a bottle of Nyquil, the customer will be asked for an ID to ensure that he or she are over 18. Besides needing an ID to purchase cold and flu medication, all of these Dextromethorphan containing products are now located behind pharmacy.

For many consumers who use these products as directed, they find it to be an inconvenience to wait in line.

(Continued on page 10)

# EDITORIALS

## Hurricane can't destroy America's identity

By Paul

With all the controversy and scandal following the devastation of Hurricane Katrina: criticism of the handling of the situation by the states, allegations of racism, further division of social classes in the Gulf, and criticism for the president from other politicians and celebrities, such as our own Senator Ted Kennedy and rapper Kanye West, it is easy to lose sight of the real impact of this disaster.

This hurricane, and the ones that followed, crippled a portion of our country that was already poverty-stricken. It is important that we do what we can to help rebuild and strengthen this part of our nation. This part of the country also bears with it a great amount of the

origins of our modern day culture and national identity, particularly the city of New Orleans.

New Orleans was the most cosmopolitan city in the world centuries before New York and Boston were centers of culture. In fact, it was such a cosmopolitan city, that it was a major factor in President Jefferson's decision to purchase the vast territory that was collectively known as Louisiana, from the French.

At the time of this purchase, New Orleans was a bustling seaport filled with people of different races who were less segregated from each other than in other parts of the country. These people came from almost every European country and African nation. They were slaves, freed slaves, Creoles,

Native Americans, merchants, musicians, artists, and writers.

From this incredibly diverse culture came a music that would define the United States for years to come-jazz. The spirituals sung by the slaves of the South and in New Orleans especially, mixed with the classical traditions of the Europeans living in the city and created the blues. Jazz developed as an offshoot of the blues, not just the music, but also its message.

The blues was representative of the African American mindset, a call for liberation from a long night of suffering. Jazz continued to diversify throughout the decades, incorporating other styles as it went along, such as rock and Latin.

When I say that our national identity has its roots in New Orleans, I am speaking of the fact that jazz, the most

*(Continued on page 9)*

## Don't shake your heads

By Luke

As everyone knows, the semi-formal dance in November received some pretty horrendous reviews. People have distorted the behavior of the AHS students who attended the semi. Although there were students who acted inappropriately, out of the 400-plus students who attended, only six got suspended. It's a shame that the actions of about a half-dozen people make everyone think that Arlington kids are completely out of control.

It's unfair to stereotype the rest of the AHS student body because some kids made bad decisions. About 99 percent of the students who attended the semi made good decisions.

Although nothing has been formally announced, many people have been thinking that future semi-formals and proms will not take place. If future school events

*(Continued on page 8)*

# Ask Mrs. Ponder

Dear Mrs. Ponder,

I am seventeen-years-old and a senior here at AHS.

Between school during the week, work after school, filling out college stuff during the free time, and boyfriend and family, I never have anytime for myself. For the last three years of high school I imagined senior year being the best year of my life, or at least of my high school career. There are so many things I still want to do before I leave, like taking art classes, and being more involved in different activities such as sports and clubs. But it just seems like the world is against me! Do you have any advice as to how I can manage my life better?

Thanks, **Anonymous**

Dear Anonymous,

First off, I have to tell you that the world is not against you. I know it may be hard to believe right now because life can be so tough sometimes. Sounds like you're a busy person. Try to take a step back and relax.

Do some things that really make you happy and less stressed. For example, I find bubble baths really soothing or even running off my frustrations or working out at the gym. Exercising really does help with stress. As for your busy schedule, I'd suggest making a daily schedule of the things you want to accomplish and the times at which you need to get them done.

Sometimes it's easier to visualize your day to plan your time accordingly. I suggest making a list of your priorities and maybe finding out which come first by the ones that matter the most to you. Include those in your schedule and see where you have extra time to maybe join some clubs or do sports. You may find that you do have some extra time after all. Don't forget to give yourself enough time for each activity, including doing something fun and relaxing for yourself. However, if you don't, then maybe you can try eliminating activities that are less important from your

schedule so that you have time to do what you really want. Good luck and remember the world may seem like a scary place, but life is full of ups and downs, and you have the power to change things for the better.

Dear Mrs. Ponder,

I'm a senior, and I got into a fight with my best friend. We've been best friends since preschool and I've gotten into some arguments with him in the past, but I've always been the "strong guy" to apologize and admit when I'm wrong. He can never do the same, even when, in fact, he is the one to blame.

We got into a recent argument because he hooked up with my girlfriend over the weekend and stupidly told me the other night at a party. I'm obviously outraged because knowing him he was jealous to begin with and instigated it. Now he expects me not to be angry and claims that it meant nothing and my girlfriend still loves me.

First off, I don't even want to trust him and I still haven't confronted my girl-

friend. I just know that he's at fault here, and it kills me that he can't apologize and have the guts to admit that he was wrong.

- Frustrated friend

Dear Frustrated friend,

It is obvious that your friend messed up. He made a big mistake and needs to fess up to it. I know you said that he's been a great friend but if that's true, then he owes you an apology and you, as a good friend, should not settle for less. Wait until he apologizes to you and if he doesn't, then move on. Now whether or not he instigated it with your girlfriend, she is still as much to blame and you deserve an apology from her. It takes two.

**Hey, want to vent about school or other issues going on? Got a lot to say? Want advice? If so write down your questions, concerns and complaints and submit them to the ponder report in room 406, no need to sign your name, these must be left anonymously.**

# Reviews

## Fall Out Boy rocks sold out show

By Michelle

Tsongas Arena, in Lowell, was the place to be on October 8th. Despite the pouring rain, thousands of teens with studded belts and band t-shirts flooded the arena. They came in soaking wet anticipating the set of the pop-punk band, Fall Out Boy, one of the bands in the sold out "Nintendo Fusion Tour."

Beginning at 7:00, the show opened with the newly discovered band, Panic! At The Disco. They played a fifteen-minute set full of energy and had the audience dancing through the entire set.

After Panic! At The Disco, Boys Night Out, a rock band with screaming vocals, performed. Their set was also fifteen minutes long. They played songs from their old CD and also ones from their newly released "Trainwreck". They played with outstanding energy and related to the audience by saying, "How many people love the OC? Gotta love those Cohens."

Up next, Motion City Soundtrack played their 30-minute set. Most of the songs

were from their CD "Commit this to Memory", released in the summer of 2005. They ended their set with a crowd favorite, "My Favorite Accident" released on their 2002 CD, "I Am the Movie".

Finishing the lineup of opening acts was Pennsylvania's, The Starting Line. They also played a 30-minute set with mostly songs from their 2005 CD, "Based on a True Story". They played a mediocre set with no real interaction with the crowd. They threw in a few old songs for long time fans, but seemed awkward and bored.

The crowd was anxiously awaiting the big appearance of Chicago's Fall Out Boy. This was the tour's biggest show and as all the kids were standing on the floor anticipating them, this was evident.

After 20-minutes of the set being put together, Fall Out Boy took to the stage wearing white shirts and ties. The show was divided into two acts. Act 1 opened with the first track off of the new CD "From Under the Cork Tree", which was creatively titled, "Our lawyers made us change the name of this song

*(Continued on page 10)*

## While "In Her Shoes"....

By Christian

In the opening sequence of the film "In Her Shoes", Rose Feller (Toni Collette) drags herself out of bed in the wee hours of the morning after getting a call from a man to pick up her partying sister Maggie Feller (Cameron Diaz). Maggie is at her high school reunion and is in need of assistance after she has had a sexual romp in the ladies room and is now passed out in the lobby holding a lit cigarette.

As Rose approaches Maggie, all she can see is her sister's very long tanned legs topped off with black patent leather Stella McCartney four-inch heels on the coffee table. "Those are my shoes!" Rose shrieks.

This is just the beginning of the witty, funny, and enchanting comedy of "In Her Shoes".

Cameron Diaz shines as beautiful Maggie Feller, a notorious party girl who is twenty-eight and hasn't got a single penny to her name. Her successful lawyer sister Rose, whose apartment she often crashes and whose shoes she always takes, is constantly her fallback. Though Rose isn't the skinniest or the prettiest, she has one thing Maggie doesn't, expensive shoes.

After housing Maggie for a few weeks, Rose can't take it anymore and kicks her sister out. While in between



In her shoes drawing by Christian

homes, Maggie finds herself at her father's and stumbles upon a stack on letters that she never received. They were from her long lost grandmother, Ella Hirsh (Shirley MacLaine), who resides in Florida. Maggie's find leads her to her grandmothers leaving Rose and her former life behind. After that, the story of the girl's mother and family unravels, as does the self-discovery of the two sisters.

"In Her Shoes" is a rare type of film that mixes the essentials of comedy and drama (AKA a "Dramedy") and comes out a winner. Each and every performance in this film is beyond amazing.

Diaz is a critical darling and often is stereotyped for her beautiful blonde exterior, but she shines in this role. Diaz plays the rough and tumble character that suffers from dyslexia, alcohol abuse, and being unstable with flare. Though many may not see it at a first

*(Continued on page 10)*



## Commander in chief is a new success

By Luke

Drama on television has officially reached a new level. The new hit on ABC, "Commander In Chief", has audiences tuning in nationwide. The show is compelling for viewers and addresses one of the most provocative political questions facing America today. Is it feasible for a woman to serve as president?

Airing on Tuesdays at 9:00 pm, Oscar award winner and Wareham, Mass. native, Geena Davis, plays the main character Mackenzie Allen. In the season's opener, Allen is the Vice President of the United States. However, Allen is con-

fronted with the decision to become president after President Bridges dies, failing to recover from an operation on a brain tumor. Despite suggestions by the Republican Party leaders, and by the Speaker of the House, Donald Sutherland, to resign, Allen has taken the oath and assumed the title of Madame President of the United States. Allen will hold her position as Madame President for the remaining two years of the term until the next election.

As the first female president of the United States, Allen faces the hardships of dealing with sexist American views. In addition, some

members of her own administration are trying to expel her from office. The Speaker of the House, Nathan Templeton, has devised a plan to make the most important cabinet members resign in order to publicly make Allen look bad in front of the entire country. Templeton has also promised those resigned officials even higher jobs within his administration when he is elected president, upon Allen's resignation.

Moreover, in dealing with the pressures from being the President, Allen has the duty of being a devoted wife and mother. Besides having to decide worldwide issues, Al-

len must also deal with her two teenage twins, which does not make her job easier.

The popularity of this show has come with the possibility of America having a real-life female president in the future. Hilary Clinton has publicized her desire to run for president in the 2008 election, which has stirred up controversy on the topic of having the first woman president in America's history.

Although the show is fictional, it could provide an insight for Americans on how a female could succeed, or fail, as President of the United States.

# Reviews

## Don't lease; Rent

By Christian

fortable with his performance artist ex-girlfriend Maureen (Idina Menzel) for leaving him for Joanne (Tracie Thoms), a triumphant lawyer who despises Mark.

Those who are not struggling in love are Angel (Wilson Jermaine Heredia) and Tom (Jesse L. Martin). AIDS positive Tom, former roommate of Mark and Roger's, falls in love with AIDS positive transvestite Angel. After Tom comes back from a teaching job and falls for Angel, he brings the group back together simply because of Angel who is the group's center point. The only problem is Bennie (Taye Diggs, Menzel's real life husband) who has left the group and now wants to evict his former friends from the apartment buildings to build a studio.

Based on the 1996 musical, a loose adaptation of the opera *La Boheme*, *Rent* is the story of eight struggling Bohemians living in New York City's East Village; while some are dealing with AIDS and HIV, others are simply dealing with love and loss. *Rent's* cast is mainly compiled of the original cast members from the musical.

*Rent* follows the story of roommates Mark (Anthony Rapp), a struggling filmmaker and Roger (Adam Pascal), a struggling musician. While Roger still hasn't come to terms with his AIDS, AIDS positive exotic dancer Mimi (Rosario Dawson), isn't hiding her feelings for him. Mark, on the other hand, still isn't com-

Dawson and Thoms join original members Rapp, Pascal, Martin, Heredia, Menzel, and Diggs. Having most of the original cast revisit their original roles, the film has an authentic feel to it that "Rent-heads" AKA avid *Rent* fans will enjoy.

Director Chris Columbus tackles the heavy hitting story head on. *Rent* has been ten years in the making, and Columbus makes the wait worth it. He brings the gritty underbelly

(Continued on page 9)

## Cracking SATs

By Elizabeth

By junior year in high school, students are expected to be studying and preparing for the notorious tests known as the SATs. The pressure is placed upon students to do well and achieve high scores. All of the hype of how "it is important to do well", and "that colleges base students upon the scores", is easier said than done. While preparing for the SATs, I came across, [The Princeton Review, Cracking the New SAT](#) publication, which put the SATs into a logical helpful perspective.

The Scholastic Aptitude Test is published by the Educational Testing Services

which creates the "SAT". The new SATs are out of 2400 possible points. Which is broken into three sections, which include writing, critical reading and mathematics. When taking the SAT, the test taker has four hours to complete the test with no extra time allotted.

Before taking the test, students are bombarded with offers for test preparation and encouraged to review material. Students may not be able to find time for SAT classes or cannot afford the outrageous prices of Kaplan which range from \$399 to \$2000; the next best solution is, [The Princeton Review, Cracking the New SAT](#). The cost of this book ranges from \$16 from Barnes and Nobles.

(Continued on page 8)

## Title says it all

By Ana

With a little bit of awkwardness and lots and lots of blood from the beginning until the end, David Cronenberg and Josh Olson pulled off one of the most poignant thrillers I have seen in the last year. "A History of Violence" left me with a "huh?" in the end, but it sure kept my eyes on the screen. The movie came out on September 23, 2005, but at 10:35 p.m. on a Saturday in mid October, it still attracted a good crowd.

Tom Stall (Viggo Mortensen) is like any regular family man, or so it seems. He is happily married to Edie (Maria Bello), and is the father of Sarah (Heidi Hayes) and Jack Stall (Ashton Holmes). The Stalls play a "normal" joyous middle-class American family living in Millbrook, Indiana.

All of that changes after two men appear at the Stall's diner looking for trouble. Tom ends up killing the men, is charged with self-

defense murder, and becomes the hero in town appearing in various televisions news broadcasts. After the incident at the diner, the family is haunted by a group of mobsters, who claim they know Tom. The chase between the Stalls and the mobsters is almost realistic.

A couple of the bloody scenes were a little extreme and gruesome. This movie has been adapted from a graphic novel by John Wagner and Vince Locke, according to *The Boston Globe* review, which explains some of the gaps and surreal scenes in the movie. Though this movie is nothing like "Sin City", it was enjoyable.

This movie is rated R for strong brutal violence, graphic sexuality, nudity, foul language, and minimal drug use.

The tagline for this movie is that everyone has something to hide, according to The Internet Movie Database.

When I watched the preview, I thought this movie was going to be one of those "Dad, the hero"- flicks, but it wasn't. \*\*\* ½ stars out of 5

## Aniston and Owen get Derailed

By Christian

Dark, passionate, suspenseful, violent, and sexy are all words to describe the unbelievable thriller *Derailed*. This flick is packed with a juicy storyline and smoldering cast. *Derailed* is set in the business and private world of Chicago. Charles Schine (Clive Owen) is a business executive for an advertising company whose daughter (Addison Timlin) is terminally ill while his wife (*Alias* alum Melissa George) barely gives him the time of day.

On an average day, Charles takes the train into the city to get to his mediocre job. On this particular day, he misses his train and catches the next one. When he is about to be forced off after forgetting to pay for his ticket, a mysterious married beauty, Lucinda Harris (Jennifer Aniston), offers to pay. This is the beginning of the derailment.

After this random act

of kindness, Lucinda and Charles develop a friendship over a few weeks that evolves into a sexual tension neither one can hide. After the pair share drinks, they begin their affair.

Lucinda and Charles are about to escalate their affair when a random act of horror strikes them. Philippe Laroche (Vincent Cassel), a gangster neither one knows, causes an extremely traumatic chain of events that makes Charles and Lucinda end whatever they started. After this, Philippe makes their lives a living hell, blackmailing both Lucinda and Charles and their families.

Adding deception, betrayal, and infidelity, this film goes beyond the norm into a different kind of filmmaking. Though it's much more stylish and clever than *Fatal Attraction*, it falls into the same category and genre.

Owen, known for his dark roles in *Sin City* and *Closer*, proves yet again he can be doing the most heinous acts

(Continued on page 9)

## Angels draft Anthony

(Continued from page 1)

said Anthony. "Explosive stuff."

Right now Sullivan specializes in pitching and has been clocked on the radar gun with a 96 mph fastball. He throws four pitches: a two-seam fastball, a four-seam fastball, a changeup, and a slider. Sullivan said that the key to improving the speed on his fastball throughout his career has been doing more exercises to make his legs stronger.

Sullivan said, "When guys get their upper body too big, they lose velocity...the secret to throwing hard is to have strong legs to push off the mound."

According to Sullivan, he has matured as a person and has become more of a responsible adult since becoming a pro-

fessional baseball player. Having to manage his money well and having to avoid trouble, which results in fines or suspensions, Sullivan has realized what professional sports is all about.

Another concern he must take into consideration is his free time, because there are many limitations set by the Angels restricting Sullivan's hobbies. Even during the off-season, Anthony remains property of the Angels and can be dismissed at any time if he hurts himself. Anthony must make cautious decisions because everyday hobbies run him the risk of injuring himself.

Although there are many limitations set by the Angels, being a professional base-

ball player has its perks as well. Anthony has just recently hired an agent from the Blue Sky Sports Agency, who will help to obtain signing deals and promotional items such as new gloves and cleats.

Overall, joining the Angels has been a positive experience for Anthony. Despite the difficulty of leaving his home and friends, Sullivan has adjusted to life on the road. One person that made Sullivan's transition easier was Marco Albano, another former Arlington High All-Star. Albano was drafted by the Angels this year as well and helped Sullivan through the process of becoming a professional athlete.

"If Marco wasn't there, I don't know if I could have survived being so homesick."

The whole experience of being drafted by a Major League team has been a great change in Sullivan's life and is something that he will never take for granted.

"I've dreamt of being a professional ballplayer all my life and right now I'm just livin' that dream."

## Cracking SATs

(Continued from page 7)

com to \$21 on Amazon.com. As well any local library has The Princeton Review, Cracking the New SAT for borrowing.

This book focuses on the preparing for the new SATs with a sense of humor and logical approaches. The Princeton Review uses character "Joe Bloggs" to go over tactics to eliminate answers and re-wording questions for easier understanding. This book is helpful in a way to approach the SAT with a different thinking method rather than the conventional school testing style. Also included in the book is a chart that can help test takers pace themselves appropriately to obtain a certain score by answering a specific number of questions.

This book also features a practice test for the eager student who would like to simulate the real SAT. I highly recommend this book.

## Don't shake your heads

(Continued from page 5)

such as semis and proms were cancelled, it would be a tyranny of the minority.

A suggestion on how to reduce the amount of bad behavior is to have less people at one venue. Perhaps there could be two separate semis for the junior class and the senior class. This would increase the ratio of chap-

erones to students, which would make the dance less chaotic.

The fact of the matter is that the entire school should not acquire such a poor reputation because a small group of kids messed up. Although the event ended early, the semi was more successful than some people have acknowledged.

## Pondering the name

By: Joe

The "Spy Ponders" is a name unique only to Arlington High School.

For many years, The Arlington High School name was the "Indians". Ms. Nancy Ortwein, a graduate of the high school and current teacher at A.H.S., reflects on the era by saying, "When I was in high school here, that was our name. Kids wore Indian headpieces, etc."

Attorney William J. Grannan, a former selectman in Arlington, remembered when he was in high school the name was the "Indians", but everyone referred to the teams as the "Red and Gray" because this was the name of the Arlington High School's fight song that was composed by Hassle Einzig, a former music teacher.

In the late 1970's, Arlington High School's name changed to the "Trojans". According to Mr. John Hanley, a former A.H.S football coach and physical education teacher, stated that the coaches, faculty, and principal dreaded the name because of

the "implications" behind it.

In the early 1980's, Mr. Grannan and Mr. Ed Burns, a former Athletic Director at A.H.S., pushed to have some uniformity between the town and sports. Both men wanted to see all sports' teams using the same name, colors and logo.

The logo that now represents Arlington High School isn't very old. In 1983, when Mr. Grannan wanted to make a uniform logo for Arlington, he spent a lot of time playing with different color schemes and designs.

Mr. Grannan worked with professional artists, Lise Freilinghaus and Joseph Keefe, but neither artist drew the rendition of the Cyrus E. Dallin sculpture commonly used today. Donna Devellis, a student at the time, is responsible for the artwork, but all of the ideas were that of Mr. William Grannan. He requested a stylized "A", the Cyprus Dallin "Indian Hunter", and water to represent the town's previous name, Menotomy (which means "swift running water").

The school committee was responsible for choosing the cardinal maroon and the deep gray colors that are present today.

For a long period of time, the football and hockey teams used the name "Spy Ponders." According to Mr. Robert Bartholomew, a former graduate and now a physical education teacher at the Ottoson Middle School, the school name is attributed to a local *Boston Herald* reporter who was covering a football game at Spy Pond field, and coined the name Spy Pond men after the scenic field.

Friends of Arlington Hockey first called the A.H.S. hockey team the "Spy Ponders". In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, there weren't many indoor hockey rinks, so the hockey team practiced on Spy Pond. According to Mr. Grannan, many A.H.S. hockey alumni have written letters to *The Arlington Advocate* confirming that the Spy Ponders name was initially used to refer to their team.

Many people realize that Spy Pond is located in Arlington and are able to associate the sports' name to that. Not many people realize the history of the

pond that made it a respectable name to use for the high school

An *Arlington Advocate* article from 1989, provided by Robert DiLoreto, the current A.H.S. Athletic Director, describes the historical significance behind the name "Spy Ponders". The pond was first named Spy Pond in 1775 when a British spy was caught near the pond. This created a lot of publicity for the town.

From the late 1850's until the 1920's, Spy Pond was a major ice-producing center shipping the ice to Arlingtonians as well as across the globe. The fields next to Spy Pond were known for the produce grown on Wyman's Farm.

It is obvious that much effort has gone into establishing the school name over the years. Mr. Grannan mentioned how he has seen tee shirts with just the name "Ponders" written on the back of them. He believes that it loses the meaning when only part of the name is used. "Spy Ponders" is something that not only represents athletes, but also has come to represent and bring pride to the town of Arlington.

## Derailed...

(Continued from page 7)

and still being liked by the audience. *Derailed* let's Owen shine as a family man also.

Before his character begins the affair, the audience witnesses that Charles in an amazing father who works hard so his father can get the right medical attention and so he can pay the hospital bills. Though he seems to be more in love with his wife than she is with him, Owen again gets to show his "softer" side as Charles.

Though Aniston is clearly known for her role on *Friends* where she played everyone's favorite best friend Rachel Green, she is proving that she can play a seductress as well. Everything from her dark locks to her almost all black wardrobe, Aniston proves that she tackled the character of Lucinda head on showing her range as an actress.

Clad in black stockings and tiny Gucci skirts this is a very different Aniston than audiences are used to. Though she has several comedic films coming out this year (Including *Rumor Has It* and *The Breakup*) having *Derailed* come out first, shows she has an edge and range.

Between her piercing blue eyes and triumphant turn as a sexual vixen, Aniston is irresistible, outrageous and is putting on possibly one of the best performances of her career.

## Hurricane can't destroy...

(Continued from page 5)

American of art forms, began its glorious history in this city. Jazz describes the very essence of what it means to be American.

In a typical jazz group, you have many musicians playing different instruments. From this configuration, several soloists emerge, people who will improvise, or make up music on the spot without prior planning, a solo which expresses who they are. There is a great conflict here, since the soloist must express their own unique identity, while fitting within the framework of the group. This is the essence of what it means to be American: expressing ones individual feelings and beliefs

Owen and Aniston's passionate exchange in this film is breathtaking and extremely natural. The pair have excellent timing and compliment one another. Rather than making an affair look raunchy and tasteless, they make it look classy and intimate.

Not only is the acting genius, but also the cinematography is extremely well done. The characters are feeling dark, ashamed and scared and cinematographer Peter Biziou embodies these emotions in their surroundings. Though the cinematography is very impressive, the timing and pace is not. Some parts are generally slow but eventually escalate.

Starring along Aniston and Owen is RZA, Tom Conti, Xzibit, and Giancarlo Esposito. This is *Derailed* director Mikael Hafstrom's first American film and he shines bringing a stylish thriller like *Derailed* to the big screen.

Though *Derailed* has the acting and plot down, it tends to feel a tad non-linear. But nonetheless, it's an extremely entertaining ride that has two very interesting twists. Not only is it suspenseful but it also has a moral to it. *Derailed* is now in theaters.

\*\*\* 1/2 Out of 5 Stars

within the structure of a larger establishment. One must constantly reinvent oneself within their solos. Jazz has also reinvented itself throughout the years, remaining relevant.

Like jazz, America continues to diversify to meet new challenges. It is the fact that jazz is representative of our national identity that gives many for the future of New Orleans and the rest of the Gulf. We will find some way to deal with this disaster and come back stronger than we were before. America will have to reinvent itself to deal with this tragedy. New Orleans will always be a microcosm of American society, and even a category 5 hurricane cannot change that.

## Don't lease; Rent

(Continued from page 7)

of New York and the lives of these characters to the screen with perfection and grace.

Little dialogue in the film makes this truly a musical.

Dawson, a musical novice, never had experience on Broadway. Her chemistry with Pascal is irresistible, raw, and real. Her musical solo "Out Tonight" showcases her booming voice and sexual vibrance as an exotic dancer that is done in a classy tongue and cheek way as does her flirtatious duet with Pascal "Light My Candle".

Menzel and Thoms is also a pair to be reckoned with. Though the two both have powerful pipes, they don't drown one another out. In their duet, "Take me or Leave me", they show that they not only keep up with one another but their chemistry is sizzling. Original *Rent* member Menzel reprises her

role magically. She even sang the solo "Over The Moon" live.

Possibly the strangest but most powerful relationship in the film is between Heredia and Martin, a teacher and a transsexual. Heredia has the most emotion baggage out of the eight Bohemians simply because he is the one who is dying the quickest from the disease. Angel is the one who keeps the group together and turns Tom's pain into love. Their love is the most efficient and touching.

Each actor's voice in this film is so emotional, touching, and vibrant it's as if they are singing live. Not only is this film enjoyable, but it's inspirational. The closing number, "No day but today", shows how important everyday life truly is. *Rent* is now in theaters.

\*\*\*\*\* Out of Five Stars

## Famous athlete saves girls from drowning

By Frankie

On October 7<sup>th</sup> 2005, two girls 17 and 18-years-old were lingering around a Pub in Chicago when one of the girls fell off the dock and into the water. Her friend tried to rescue her from drowning but ended up falling in and hitting her head on the way into the

water. Former Boston Red Sox shortstop Nomar Garciaparra made a leap of faith that changed the lives of two girls forever.

On a calm, cool Friday night around 10 pm, Nomar and his uncle Victor were at a Pub in Chicago when they heard a scream

(Continued on page 12)

## GSA shapes safe school...

(Continued from page 2)

positive feedback. "The GSA assembly was good. It almost made me cry," said incoming freshman Rebecca Penney.

"Last year there was no dialogue, which is the purpose of the day for everyone's opinion to be heard," said Ms. Holt when commenting on possible changes in the day. This year students were involved in the actual assembly. They did not have to wait until they return to a classroom to speak. There is talk of possible question and answer portion with the speakers, and the freshman might be broken up into study groups in the auditorium. Teachers and student moderators from the GSA ran the discussions.

Many hours of work went into producing the Day of Dialogue; the GSA deliberated two weeks before school began. They also held various fundraisers, although they do

have very good funds with some generous donations.

The GSA is hoping to become more diverse and widespread. They hope to have a bigger presence at Diversity Day, and there is a youth organization intertwined with the GSA who is hoping to hold their conference at AHS.

The GSA will also be participating in the Day of Silence in early spring. This day is when GSA members and supporters silence themselves for a whole day to represent those whose opinions have been silenced by harassment.

Many students at AHS think all the members of the GSA are gay. That is completely false. According to Ms. Holt, 98% of the GSA members are straight.

**Please join the  
Arlington High School  
Interact Club  
Sponsored by the Arlington Rotary  
Club**

## Retailers crack down on sales

(Continued from page 4)

USA Today reports, researchers have noticed that the abuse of DXM products has increased over the years. Retailers and the FDA are taking a closer look to what is available on the local store shelves of America and are making changes.

In the near future, DXM will be replaced with another active ingredient less dangerous to the younger society as indicated by Walgreen's. The replacement for DXM will be placed in all cough and cold medications.

## Skidmore focuses on positive changes

(Continued from page 3)

better defined which leaves no room for misinterpretation. "A sense of community is built if everyone is working together and on the same page."

Last year at Arlington High School there were a few memorable days such as Multi-cultural festival, ice cream social and achievement awards. Mr. Skidmore was impressed with the success of these events and is awaiting student input and student government to help organize more events for this year.

Besides being a princi-

## Seniors dig for cash

(Continued from page 3)

consider saving money earlier.

The sophomore class wonders why they were approached about class rings so early. It is evident that by the time senior year hits, no one will

## Changing the menu

(Continued from page 4)

moved all vending machines, while AHS has made simple changes such as replacing carbonated drinks with juice, bottled water, and teas.

Students need not panic. The typical cafeteria food, french fries and mozzarella sticks will remain.

**CRESCENT PLUMBING**  
☾

pal, Mr. Skidmore also teaches history. What keeps Mr. Skidmore motivated is the fact that he loves teaching and feels that it has great importance.

The demand in college and the competitive job market keeps Arlington High School pushing for higher standards. Mr. Skidmore believes, "Teachers touch the future." Even though he admitted that this is a "bumper-sticker philosophy", in the end it makes the difference for a successful future.

be able to afford jewelry.

The more financially prepared students and family are about the expenses of senior year, the easier it will be to plan ahead and organize to make things much more enjoyable.

## A stronger Santa is coming to town

Fiction by Pat

Dear Children,

With all the controversy in the news about steroids and other illegal supplements, the media failed to expose where these drugs are coming from; and it's not Mexico. Everybody, even the president, seems determined to stop the flowing river of drugs into our country. In the midst of all this, there seems to be only one person not concerned with stopping the flow of these muscle-introducing drugs; Santa.

It all started before the fall of the Soviet Union. Santa knew he would have to do something to increase production with the rise in economy

around the world, especially in America. He decided that the easiest way to increase his toy-making capabilities without hiring more elves would be to make his existing elves stronger, so Santa created the E.L.F (Elf Lifetime Fitness) program. But the elves quickly tired of the monotonous and cold runs around the tundra as blank and bleak as a piece of paper, and begged Santa for an easier way to get in shape.

Santa, who always knows who is naughty or nice, saw a prominent scientist working on a new type of steroid in his lab, and struck a deal. The scientist could have all the funding he wanted to (what... you don't know that the elves make counterfeit money in the off-

## Fall out boy

(Continued from page 6)

so we wouldn't get sued".

Fans jumped around singing along and crowd surfing. The whole atmosphere was positive and exciting. Everyone seemed happy to be there. Also included in Act 1 was the radio favorite, "Sugar We're Going Down". They ended the first act with another new song, "I slept with someone in Fall Out Boy and I all I got was this stupid song written about me". This was a perfect song to end with, it got everyone moving and anticipating more.

There was a 10-minute intermission before act 2 began. Fall Out Boy opened their second act with "XO", also from their new CD. This time around, the band wore black shirts. They played for another 30-minutes, trying to fit in every song they could before the arena time limit was up. They played mostly songs from their new CD, but also played some old ones from 2003's "Take This to Your

Grave". They ended the show with the song, "Saturday".

A local fan from Arlington, Natalie Perna, commented on the concert. "It was a fun concert for any type of person. There was a variety in the crowd and everyone felt like they belonged there", she said. "Fall Out Boy really surprised me this time, I didn't stop dancing the entire night".

The show was non-stop music and fun and worth the twenty dollars it cost to get in. It means a lot that the show sold out in a venue as large as Tsongas Arena. It goes to show that today's music has changed immensely from that of the past. Concerts that are selling out have mostly been those that feature alternative rock bands with popish vocals and lyrics. Music is always changing and these days, this is what the kids like most. Kid's like music that they can relate to and Fall Out Boy's lyrics address life issues and relationship issues that can be therapeutic to teenagers today.

## In her shoes

(Continued from page 6)

glance, Diaz does bring depth to a character. She was the perfect fit for the part and plays it flawlessly with sexual vibrancy and eccentric comedy.

Diaz's partner in crime is Ms. Toni Collette as her frumpy sister. The Australian actress puts on her best American accent and dives right into this juicy role. Collette's character may be the most emotionally unbalanced in the whole film while being the most reliable. The actress packed on thirty pounds for the film and sheds it as the movie progresses.

Collette's humor and wit isn't lost in the ensemble cast. Alongside Diaz and Collette include MacLaine, Mark Feuerstein, Brooke Smith, Richard Burgi, and Candice Azzara.

Anyone and everyone can enjoy this film. Though woman could probably connect to it more because the situation is with sisters, anyone with a sibling or friend can easily relate. The film's comedy is also something out of the ordinary. It isn't all slapstick, black comedy, or dry humor. Each of these elements is mixed in creating something unique and fun.

In all, "In Her Shoes" is a rare type of feel good film that isn't cheesy or unrealistic. Each performance is both deep and moving with a cut of comic relief to keep the film rolling. The whole movie doesn't miss a beat and is a must see.

\*\*\*\*\* Out of 5 Stars

season?), if he provided Santa's workshop with an unlimited supply of his steroid. Of course not one to refuse a request with Old Saint Nick, the scientist was eager to have people test his new drug.

Gone are the days of portly little elves singing happily as they prepare toys for Christmas Eve, now there are angry, Herculean elves with disfiguring acne covering their faces and back that looks as if

they have permanent chickenpox. While the other reindeer and I would tire as quickly as sloth in Santa's newly established fitness center, these elves would workout endlessly in their free time, always remembering to check their drug schedule. Well, I guess that Santa has Succeeded, as a production went way up after the first year, even if it seemed that more and more elves are

(Continued on page 11)

## A stronger Santa...

(Continued from page 10)

dying of heart failure and cancer.

Because that first year was such a success, Santa reached new and better steroids to give to his workers. It seems that everyone up North, with the exception of the other reindeer and I, are injecting themselves with steroids. Mrs. Claus is bench-pressing over four-hundred pounds, and you can't even see Frosty the Snowman's neck anymore because of the muscle that envelops his body like a finely chiseled statue.

I'm afraid that no one will recognize Santa this year. After years of trying to keep his signature pear-like rotundity for marketing purposes, he has taken off every ounce of fat on his body, he's added a hundred pounds of rock-solid muscle. His comfortingly familiar beard and hair are gone too, in exchange for a more intimidating Mohawk. It seems that Santa won't need to struggle down those tiny chimneys around the world this year, for he could probably tear down a wall with a single grasp.

Since Santa is a huge sports fan, mainly baseball and football, he's made friends with many notable players over the years. I've noticed that after seeing Santa's hulking figure, many of these players have put supplements on their Christmas lists. To keep up with this demand, Santa set up the "Better and Larger Christmas Organization", otherwise known as B.A. L.C.O. Thankfully, no one in the Attorney General's office knows the real leader of this company, so in the upcoming months I won't be out of a job on account of Santa being in jail.

So, if you see a gigantic man dressed in a cut-off sleeveless red shirt under your tree this year, don't be alarmed. Santa may be as angry as an attack dog and have a quick temperament because of the side-effects of his new habit, but as long as you don't startle him, you should have no fear of being broken in half. The other reindeer and I will do everything in our power to keep Christmas under control this year, but if we miss your house, whatever you do, *don't* complain to Santa.

Happy Holidays,  
Rudolph  
Reindeer-in-Chief



## Superstar is again surrounded by trade rumors

by Andrew

Once again trade rumors surround the Red Sox star Manny Ramirez. Manny's agent Greg Genske reportedly met with Red Sox CEO Larry Lucchino and chairman Tom Werner to discuss possible trade opportunities, according to the Red Sox public relations office. After the meeting, Manny's agent said, "We want to do what's in the best interests of the Red Sox and in the best

interests of Manny."

Manny has tried to leave Boston on a few different occasions; the latest was over this past summer when he was placed on irrevocable waivers. As good as he is, no team seems to be interested in picking up the rest of his monstrous contract, which is for eight years at 160 million, making him the second highest paid player in baseball.

Teams may feel that they are only getting half of a great player out of Manny because of his average play in the out field but no one can argue with his numbers when he is at the plate.

After five seasons with the Sox, he is hitting .315 with 40 homeruns and 122 RBI's a season. He broke his own record this season after belting out 45 homeruns. He has joined Carl Yastremski as the only Boston player to hit more than 40 homeruns a season on three separate occasions.

## New Rules

Baseball has new drug policies much harsher than in the past. Offenders can be suspended from 50 games to a lifetime.

## Hazel flies high

(Continued from page 1)

Becoming a Smirkus performer isn't easy. Hazel has to audition annually. The initial step is to fill out a written application explaining why she's interested in the Smirkus tour. Every potential trouper also submits a video of an original routine he/she created. After being awarded an audition, Hazel travels to Vermont for a weekend in January where she must audition in person so that the coaches can evaluate her abilities and special skills.

For Hazel, summer then begins in early June, when she heads to Vermont for an intense three-week training program. Last year, Hazel took finals early, wrote extra papers and took her 10<sup>th</sup> grade textbooks with her. "It was a lot of work, but my teachers were great about letting me take advantage of the opportunity Smirkus offers," she says. The training program, which lasts six hours every day, is not only aimed at getting troupers in shape but also at allowing the coaches to decide which people are best

suited for which acts.

After all the vigorous training comes the fun part---performing. Circus Smirkus is a non-profit organization, which includes approximately fifty 13-18 year olds from around the world, and tours throughout Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Hampshire and Vermont. The Smirkus tent holds an audience of 750 people, and the troupe spends 2-3 three days in each town. All performers donate their time; no one is paid

Each summer there are about 85 shows. Smirkus tries to keep the price of tickets low (around \$15 for adults) so that a maximum number of people will have access to the show. Although the preparation for shows can prove to be a stressful time for performers, Hazel says, "As hard as training is, it all pays off when you perform. To stand in the middle of the ring with spotlights and see the faces of little children surrounding the ring...that's worth all the time in the world," she recalls.

Hazel won't deny that touring provides for a hectic schedule. Every morning the troupers wake up at a different "home stay". A "home-stay" is a local family that offers to take 2-3 troupers in while the circus is in their area. After leaving the home stay, the performers report to the site of the performance and begin setting up equipment one to two hours before the 1<sup>st</sup> show. Everything is set up by hand as the performers work together to arrange bleachers and the ring itself.

After eating lunch and getting their make up done, the cast members warm up for an hour before beginning a two hour performance. Many times over the summer, there are two shows in a single day. In this case, the troupers are given a brief break between shows before they must report for call time and begin the process again. "It's a lot," Hazel admits, "but it's all worth it."

Although she has various acts in the circus, Hazel is known for one in particular:

her pre-show act from 2004. In that act, Hazel appears in a giant hoop, where she sits playing the cello, suspended in midair. Despite all the mastery this act required, Hazel definitely agrees that it is the most rewarding. "That's one act," Hazel says, "that was really unique. People remembered it even a year later!"

Unfortunately for Hazel and the rest of Circus Smirkus, it's an act that may be seen much less this year. Due to financial problems, Circus Smirkus has temporarily been shut down, leaving performers and fans throughout New England devastated. The non-profit group must raise \$250,000 by December if the 2006 tour is to happen. In hopes of reestablishing the circus, Hazel and some other local troupers from Canton, Concord and Waltham are hosting a benefit show at 7pm on Saturday, December 3rd, at New England Sports Academy. The show will include performers from all over New England. "I'd love to see some Arlington High students there," says Hazel. "Smirkus has spread smiles every summer for last 18 years."

# SPORTS

## Bruschi is back in action

By Joe

On February 16, 2005, only a few days after returning from his first ever Pro-Bowl, Teddy Bruschi was taken to the hospital with headaches, temporary numbness and blurred vision.

Later that week, it was made public that Teddy had suffered a stroke and a broken blood vessel in his head.

The type of stroke that Teddy suffered was from an intracranial stroke. According to the American Stroke Association, an intracranial stroke is a type of brain hemorrhage, where a blood vessel pops. This could have very well been from playing football his whole life and taking repetitive hits to the head.

Teddy also suffered from a tear in his heart, which was surgically repaired in March. After several months of rehabilitation, Teddy declared that he would sit out the 2005 season.

As part of Bruschi's rehabilitation, he continued to lift weights with the team and attend meetings and home games. In late October, eight months after suffering his mild stroke, Bruschi was officially cleared to play football his doctors, starting with week eight of the season.

According to *The Boston Globe*, Seymour, Patriots' defensive end, says, "He plays with a lot of emotion and a lot of heart. He is the heart and soul [of the defense]." The ten-year veteran ap-

proaches every aspect of his life in this manner. Bruschi intended to make a comeback were he healthy. According to doctors, he is medically cleared to perform the everyday routine of an NFL player.

For fans, this must be exciting to watch. Teddy is the epitome of a New England Patriot. He works extremely hard to prepare for each game. Some fans who cannot play the sport, look to Bruschi every Sunday to brighten their spirits. According to the website, [www.patriots.com](http://www.patriots.com), the Bruschi jersey is always one of the top selling jerseys, which shows a large support for Tedy.

He also has a great aura about him. In *The Boston Globe*, Seymour said, "There's always a presence when he steps in that huddle." It is safe to say everyone is glad to have Bruschi back.

Bruschi, as quoted in *The Boston Globe* said, "It was a relief to get the first day under my belt, I've still got a way to go. I'm just going to take it one day at a time."

Teddy Bruschi returned to professional football on October 30 against the Buffalo Bills. According to ESPN.com, Bruschi was involved in 64 of the 77 defensive plays. On this night, he had 2 tackles and 5 assists in a 21-16 win over the Bills.

unconscious. When she awoke, she noticed that Nomar was sitting next to her, and she was excited to see him. According to *The Boston Globe*, one girl said, "No way are you Nomar Garciaparra?" Sarcastically Nomar replied, "I think you hit your head a little too hard."

According to CNN, "If it weren't for Nomar and his uncle, who knows if they would have made it through the night alive," replied the mother of one of the victims. Luckily, at the end of the night, both girls left with only minor cuts and bruises.

## Famous athlete saves girls from drowning

(Continued from page 9)

and a splash. Nomar reacted to the girls in trouble quickly as he sprinted off to see if he could help the stranded swimmers.

According to *The Boston Herald*, the girl was trying to save her friend who had fallen off the dock but ended up falling in herself hitting her head on the pier the way down. Nomar jumped twenty feet off the dock and into the water trying to save the lives of the two girls. Uncle Victor then headed in after, but by the time he reached Nomar and the girls, they were already being helped out of the water.

After the two stranded swimmers were helped to safety, the girl who had hit her head was

## Bush awards Ali highest civilian honor

By Taylor

President Bush hung the Presidential Medal of Freedom upon the former heavy weight champion Muhammad Ali's neck on November 9, according to CNN.com. This award is the highest civilian award of our nation. President Truman established the award in 1945 to recognize notable service in the war. In 1963, President John F. Kennedy reintroduced the award as an honor for distinguished civilian service in peacetime. Ali was one of fourteen who received this award on November 9<sup>th</sup>.

During his career, he defended his title nineteen times. Ali retired from the ring in 1981. His fighting record was 56-6, with 37 knockouts, and a gold medal in the 1960 Olympics.

Shortly after his retirement, he joined the Nation of Islam and then the

Sunni of Islam. He spent much of his time as a U.N. ambassador for peace. Ali tried to raise awareness of poverty in the poorest countries around the world. Bush referred to Ali as "a fierce fighter and a man of peace", noted by CNN.com. During the Vietnam War, Ali refused to serve and was sentenced to jail for avoiding the draft. He was a conscientious objector and advocate for peace. After the Supreme Court overturned Ali's jail sentence, he became part of the Black Nationalist movement.

While giving Ali this honor, Bush called him "the greatest of all time" and "a man of peace," reported CNN.com. Ali was a hero in the ring as well as in real life. He stood up for his beliefs, advocating peace while being both giving and receiving.

The champion accepted his award proudly.

## A-Rod takes home League MVP

By Taylor

This year the American League Most Valuable Player Award went to A-Rod of the New York Yankees. It is Rodriguez's second award in the past three seasons. The third baseman, received 16 first-place votes, 11 seconds and 1 third place vote for a total of 331 points from the baseball Writers' Association of America in balloting announced Monday November 14, according to SI.com.

A-Rod beat out designated hitter of the Boston Red Sox, David Ortiz, for the first place title. Ortiz received, 11 firsts and 17 seconds for 307 points. The voting took place right before the start of the post season, where both teams had been eliminated in the first round. The votes leaned more towards A-Rod who is an all-around player rather than Ortiz who is a DH.

"I think defense, for the most part, being a balanced player and also saving

a lot of runs on the defensive side, I think was a major factor here," Rodriguez said, according to SI.com.

For winning the MVP, Rodriguez gets a \$1 million bonus because this is the second time during his record \$252 million, 10-year contract. With Ortiz's coming in second place, the Red Sox 2007 club option improves \$400,000 making his salary 8.4 million. Vladimir Guerrero got \$200,000 for finishing third and outfielder for the Boston Red Sox Manny Ramirez came in fourth receiving \$75,000.

Both Rodriguez and Ortiz have had outstanding years, the winner proved to be A-Rod who is able to both hit, and field as a defensive player. "Congratulations to Alex. Either one of them could have won it. Both had MVP years," said Curt Schilling of the Boston Red Sox, according to SI.com.

