

# THE BANNER

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THE MOCK TRIAL TEAM ASSEMBLES FOR A GROUP PHOTO  
PHOTO COURTESY: MR. DAWSON

## The Mock Trial Raiders

LISA MATHEWS  
Staff Writer

"Objection!" The indignant lawyer furiously defends her client. The judge glances at the prosecution, then decides, "Sustained."

This isn't a real court, the scene isn't part of an intense T.V. drama either; this is NBTHS' Mock Trial practicing. The "judge" is Mr. Sidney Dawson, a history teacher, and the advisor of Mock Trial, and the "lawyer" is a student. Mock Trial is a nationwide competition club. In it, students learn how to deal with a court atmosphere and to prepare for legal cases.

A different "mock" case, similar to a real court case, is given every year to all the schools. Throughout the year, using given witness statements and other information regarding the case, each school individually prepares their witnesses to play the roles while their attorneys come up with opening, closing, and questioning arguments. The cases are proceeded over just like a court case, with judges, a jury, and objections. At the close of each competition trial, the jury decides to acquit or persecute based on the performance of the attorneys

and witnesses. The two real judges over the case then decide which team is better prepared for their side of the case.

The president of NBTHS's club is Melissa Kaye, and the leading attorneys are Nthabi Choma, Swati Patel, and Hannah Whitman, all sophomores. Other members, who had the roles of witnesses this year, are sophomores Katrina Schroeder, Rachel Druker, Traci Rubin, Kajal Patel, and seniors Nishit Nandankar and Nitish Harid. Sophomore Whitney Allen and junior Bruce Delacruz performed jury duty this year. Most are returning members.

The team was also advised by local attorneys Michael Zerres of Chatham, and Anne Renaud of East Brunswick. Mr. Dawson remembers his own high school Mock Trial experience as "fantastic." His team reached the Nationals, which Dawson attributes to their inspiring advisor, Maureen Startzel. Dawson believes that his Mock Trial knowledge was invaluable, as it "taught him how to be confident, how to be persuasive, how to think on his feet, and how to speak well in front of other people,"

skills he uses daily as a teacher.

After meeting for practices every Tuesday and Wednesday, and sometimes Saturdays, NBTHS' Mock Trial team competed in the preliminary district trials on February 5th and 6th. Though they did win the first defense case, they did not win the prosecution case that would have catapulted them to the Middlesex County Final Round, followed by the State and National Finals.

However, this year's team of predominantly sophomores was much better prepared and more connected than last year's team, setting a higher precedent for next year. Mr. Dawson said, "I'm so proud of what this team accomplished this year. The students put in long hours and worked tremendously hard. Thanks to them, the Mock Trial program at NBTHS is flourishing." He also encourages students to try out for next year's team.

The students of Mock Trial performed brilliantly at their competition, and hope that 2009 will be even more successful.

## Brotschul Named Permanent Principal

MATTHEW CONNOLLY  
Co-Editor-in-Chief

On February 7, Interim Principal Brian Brotschul was appointed as permanent principal of North Brunswick Township High School.

The North Brunswick Board of Education approved Brotschul by a vote of 5-4.

"I'm happy to be the principal of this building and I look forward to moving the organization in a positive direction and incorporating an increased academic climate," Brotschul said.

Brotschul also wanted to assure the school and the community that he will be around for the long haul. "I love being here," he said. "Professionally, this satisfies a lot of my needs and I feel like I can positively impact the lives of the students and the teachers."

With the newly afforded freedom that the interim tag's removal provides, Brotschul wants to take the school in a new direction. He said the administration is taking a look at a myriad of options, including a freshman transition program and smaller learning communities. "We're trying to be more progressive than we have been in the past," he said.

Brotschul also expressed his goal to "make the high school a part of the North Brunswick community." He would like to find a way for student athletes and club members to give back to the township.

With these plans in mind, the newly appointed principal is positive about the future.



NEW PRINCIPAL OF NBTHS:  
BRIAN BROTSCHUL  
PHOTO COURTESY: SENTINEL

### WHAT'S INSIDE?

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# RAIDERS ROCK

MATTHEW CONNOLLY  
Co-Editor-in-Chief

Since today's high school students often forsake sleep for friends and schoolwork, it should come as no surprise that many jumped at the chance to stay up all night in North Brunswick Townships High School's Rock-a-Thon.

The event, in which students sit in rocking chairs for an entire twenty-four hour period, took place from Saturday, March 8 to Sunday, March 9.

Students supplied their own rocking chairs, and many brought additional items to make the night more comfortable and entertaining. Televisions, board games, and snacks were widely used to keep participants awake and active. "It was tough," said senior Shilpa Dutta, "But holding out was worth it."

All the rocking was indeed worth it; the event raised over \$10,000 for Miracle Flights for Kids charity, which supplies sick and disabled children with flights to get the specialized medical care they need.

At twenty-three years old, Rock-a-Thon can certainly be considered an NBTHS tradition. With nineteen of those years under his belt, History teacher, Joel Chesler is a vital part of

this tradition. Chesler, along with Meg Wright, organizes and runs the event, and stayed up all night with the students. He also made sure everyone was continuously rocking in their chairs: the rockers soon got used to the phrase, "It's called the Rock-a-Thon, not the Sit-a-Thon."

"Besides the change of dates," said Chesler, "Things went very well."

This change was due to a snow day on Friday, February 22, the original Rock-a-Thon starting date. Luckily for the organizers, student spirit was not hampered by the delay.

The event has now raised over \$169,000 in its history at NBTHS.



STUDENTS BROUGHT VARIOUS VIDEO GAMES TO PASS THE TIME  
PHOTO COURTESY: JAMIE MOUNT

## The Basics in Speaking

LISA MATHEWS  
Staff Writer

"All the great speakers were bad speakers at first." Ralph Waldo Emerson was a great orator himself in the 1800s, and his advice still holds to be true now as the basis of speech making. In the history of the world, people have heard impressive speakers, and their speeches. Some instigated wars, some ended them; some raised spirits and others came about from spirits. But being a composed, eloquent speaker is a skill any teenager or adult should have, and that is what the class of Basic Public Speaking teaches.

This elective is taught by Mr. John Cogan—who also teaches ninth and tenth grade English classes—since the previous Public Speaking teacher, Mrs. Given, left at the end of the '06/'07 year. As a result, Mr. Cogan has had the chance to try a new approach in the class. He explained that the most difficult part of teaching the course is that it contains students of a mixed age group (freshmen to seniors).

The class is mostly taught out of the *Essentials of Speech and Communication* textbook, which gives tips and outlines for several different types of speeches. The textbook also has examples of great orations from the past, from Sojourner Truth's impromptu Women's Convention speech to JFK's eulogy for Robert Frost. While learning one distinct style of speech, such as informative or descriptive, the class takes weekly quizzes on the information.

Then, at the close of the lesson, the students are given one week to research and prepare a speech of that type and a visual aide on a chosen subject. The speeches are graded on conciseness, organization, and the smoothness of the speaking, eliminating pauses or the use of the words "Um, uh, or like", as well as posture and appearance (dressing up, though optional, receives five points).

The *Essentials* textbook quotes

that, "In making a speech one must study three points: first, the means of producing persuasion; second, the language; third the proper arrangement of the various parts of the speech." Aristotle, among other talents, was a skilled speaker. And this advice is as relevant in 350 BC Greece as it is now. The Public Speaking students go through these same rules for each speech they prepare, and are graded on adhering to them.

After covering topics from controversial speeches to sales pitches, the class begins a section entirely of impromptu speeches. The class chooses a list of about 20 varied subjects, from Modern Fashion to the Iraqi war. The students are expected to do a small amount of general research on each topic as to be able to speak about each for two minutes.

The impromptu speeches help students maintain clearness in their speaking; to plan out logical sequences and to above all else, avoid speaking off a piece of paper. Also, each student is given the same grading sheet as Mr. Cogan and grades each speaker along with him, giving the student more positive feedback.

Mr. Cogan repeatedly reminds the class that they can't always know when or on what they could be called to speak. "We live in a society that can provide us with opportunities at every turn. For this reason, it's necessary that we all know how to communicate our ideas clearly," he says. Being able to clearly speak in public is a valuable skill that comes in handy for college and job interviews, class discussions, and for just getting the point across. This class "is a great course because it because it provides students with the practice they need to begin to grow and develop into confident and articulate speakers." For, as William Penn advised, "Speak properly, and in as few words as you can, but always plainly; for the end of speech is not ostentation, but to be understood."

## Final Exam Policy Unchanged for 2008

MATTHEW CONNOLLY  
Co-Editor-in-Chief

Amidst a firestorm of hearsay and student opinion, the North Brunswick Township High School administration has announced that no changes will be made to this year's final exam policy.

Alterations to the exam policy for upcoming years, however, are being discussed.

"The policy won't change for this year," said Principal Brotschul. "We're taking a look at the exam policy starting with the 08-09 school year. I anticipate working closely with all reaches of the organization in order to formulate a logical policy that continues to uphold high standards."

There was much speculation on the part of the student body, and many thought finals exemptions would be outright abolished. Those that feared the worst seem to be happy with the announcement that the status quo will be kept. "It's good because a lot of kids worked so hard in the beginning of the year to get that A, and to change it mid-year would be unfair," said senior Yuri Moon.

Those who are not graduating this year, however, are less than pleased that the policy is under review. "I don't see the difference between the senior class and ours," said junior Lori Head. "Why should the policy change for us?"

That question, among many others, was brought up at a focus group assembled by the administration to gauge opinion and take suggestions on future exam exemption guidelines. The group was comprised of students (mainly class officers and SGO board members), teachers, and some administrators. The discussion was led by guidance supervisor Kevin Farrell.

The opinions raised in the

meeting were diverse, and the topic often strayed from finals exemptions to AP testing and even the purpose of midterms and finals altogether. Science teacher Thomas Strouse went on record against all exemptions. "An A is its own incentive," he said. "It's sacrifice and it's suffering."

On the flipside, mathematics supervisor Diane Galella was completely in favor of finals exemptions. "Some of us forget what it's like to be a senior," she said.

Band director James Egan expressed his concern for how performance and product-based classes like band and wood shop are forced to adhere to the same exam structure as more academic courses like math and science. He said that making music students sit down and take a written midterm or final is "like fitting a square peg in a round hole."

The students were not lacking in opinions either. Senior class treasurer Enid Sun argues that exemptions at the end of the year are hard-earned. "We still have to work our butts off to get that A," she said.

SGO president Patrick Chung said that exams helped give him an extra incentive to study. "I'm actually pretty lazy," declared the University of Pennsylvania-bound senior.

No decisions as to future exam guidelines were made following the meeting.

The current policy states that any student who earns an A or higher in all four marking periods and on the midterm exam will be exempt from the final. Any senior who earns an A or higher in all four marking periods and a B or better on the midterm exam will also receive an exemption.

## Embryological Advances

RAFIA BAIG  
Staff Writer

Since the dawn of the science fiction genre, and possibly even before that, humans have been intrigued with manipulating life. Dolly the sheep, the first mammal ever to be cloned in 1997, added only fuel to the growing flame that was mankind's curiosity. Since Dolly and similar experiments involving altering the embryo, science has discovered a way where a to-be child could have three parents, all of whom would contribute DNA.

The process, conceived by the Newcastle University team in the UK, initially created the technique to eradicate hereditary diseases, such as faults in the mitochondria's, or the powerhouse of a cell's, DNA. Such mistakes are responsible for conditions such as fatal liver failure, stroke-like episodes, blindness, diabetes, and more.

About one in every 6,500 people is affected by these afflictions. "We believe we could develop this technique and offer treatment in the foreseeable future that will give families some hope of avoiding passing these diseases to their children," says Professor Patrick Chinnery of the University.

The procedure included three parents: two females and one male. It involved an embryo, which would be conceived

when the ovum from one of the females was fertilized with sperm from the male. Within hours of the embryo's creation, the nucleus, or the organelle that contains the DNA from the father and mother, was removed and implanted into an unfertilized egg of the second female whose DNA had been largely removed.

In this case, since it was mitochondria diseases they were focusing on, the only genetic information remaining from the egg donor was the tiny bit that controls the production of mitochondria.

For the experiment, the Newcastle team made a total of 10 embryos in this fashion, all of which, upon the nuclear transfer, grew normally but were then destroyed by the scientists after six days.

As of now, the team only have permission to carry out experiments in the lab. Dr. Marita Pohlschmidt, of the Muscular Dystrophy Campaign and who also funded the project, has high hopes. "Mitochondrial myopathies are a group of complex and severe diseases," she says.

However, the experiment has attracted much opposition as well. Many believe that scientists shouldn't be messing around with the building blocks of life.

## The Stairway M Case

ANGIE O'DOWD & RACHEL HUNTER  
Staff Writers



STAIRCASE M, SOON TO BE CLOSED.  
PHOTO COURTESY: MATTHEW CONNOLLY

The question on everyone's mind is why? Why close down a main staircase when so many students use it on their daily routines of going to class. Why close down a 7 main passageway when it's become so convenient?

In answer to that question, Mr. Brian Brotschul calmly stated, "I just wasn't built for 1800 students to walk on for a daily basis."

When asked if it would hamper student's chance of getting to class on time he simply replied, "We have three other entuturances that are just as quick. Students waste more time trying to go through the traffic that accumulates on staircase M then using the fairly empty staircases: A,B,C,D and F."

However true that may be, the closing down of staircase M will continue under the close supervision of Mrs. Knox. She took notice of how popular staircase M has become, but doesnt have a part in making the decision. She just "does what she's told."

The closing down of staircase M is supposed to take place fairly soon. Mr. Brotschul hopes to close it down by having

the doors locked, and putting up a sign to remind the students that it cannot be accessed. The teachers will be still be able to use it during the day. They will have keys that access it, but should not allow students through it at any time of the day.

The closing of stairway M is not a permanent thing. Mr. Brotschul kindly stated that, "if the traffic calms down, and students find a new way to go, then stairway would be opened again. For the time being, students and teachers will just have to cope."

How will closing up Stairway M impact the freshman student body who have already become so accustomed to their daily routine? In reaction to the closing of the staircase, sophomore Emily Nazaro said, "This is Ridiculous!" then stormed off. Apparently, the student of NBTHS school are not taking this very lightly.

Despite the numerous pleas to keep it open, the school will continue forward with the closing down of staircase M. MoreAdequately stated by Mr. Brian Brotschul, "We'll just have to wait and see..."

## The End of an Era

VIANCA VARGAS  
Staff Writer

After 525,600 minutes; 8,760 hours; 365 days; or rather 12 long years of excellent performances, the Broadway production of *Rent* will be closing down as of June 1st 2008.

Written by Jonathon Larson, *Rent* was brought to Broadway in January of 1996. It caught the attention of the younger generation as it told the story of a group of young adult struggling to survive in New York's East Village.

They make up a varied group of different cultures, morals, and struggles; each character "measured their lives in love."

Throughout the hard times and life's difficulties, the main characters help

each other out and express true love and friendship.

Though many people enjoyed the melodies and lyrics to this musical, it brought controversy to the Broadway scene. Many of the characters were infected with the AIDS virus and some characters were part of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community.

*Rent* was honored with the New York Drama Critics Circle Award, the Drama Desk Award, The Obie Award, the American Tony Award, and the Pulitzer Prize for its outstanding performances and musical talent.

In 2005, the musical was transformed into a full-length motion picture starring most of the original Broadway cast.

Twelve years of success on Broadway will leave remarkable memories in the lives of its loving audience after the last show this June. Although the movie version of *Rent* will be available on DVD for purchase, the original production of *Rent* on Broadway will never be replaced in its audience's hearts.



CAST OF RENT ON BROADWAY  
PHOTO COURTESY: GOOGLE IMAGES

## Couch Potatoes Rejoice

TIFFANY HSUEH  
Staff Editor



WRTIERS ON STRIKE IN HOLLYWOOD.  
PHOTO COURTESY: GOOGLE IMAGES

The three-month writers' strike that left the entertainment industry crippled ended on Tuesday, February 12, 2008. Writers resume their jobs the following day.

The writers' strike, which started on November 5, 2007, affected the lives of millions. The film-TV industry is reportedly responsible for an estimated 1.3 million U.S. jobs.

In early November, the Writers Guild of America voted unanimously to strike. The walkout that halted Hollywood for three months was the first strike by the Writers Guild of America in twenty years. The last strike that occurred in 1988, lasted 5 1/2 months and cost the industry almost a half-billion dollars.

The strike transpired after writers criticized the lack of payment over shows from DVD sales and viewable "new media," including all online outlets that allow for public viewing.

A dispute arose over the way parent companies of shows earned profits through advertisements and other media, but the writers were not compensated for their contributed work to the shows. It was the lack of response from producers, however, that spurred the strike.

Television writer David Schiff commented on the conditions of the strike, stating, "The future of TV is not going to look like what it's been for the last 30 years. So, you know it's not just for us who are currently working, but writer down the line, that we make sure that we get a...piece of the pie."

Late night television hosts were the first ones influenced by the strike since networks do not usually record episodes in advance, whereas prime-time television shows are taped weeks in advance.

With numerous announcements hinting at a resolution, the strike finally ended in early February, nearly three months after it had started. The Writers Guild of America asked guild leaders and its members to vote on a tentative contract for a quick end. Membership meetings were held in New York City and Los Angeles.

The contract entails securing writers a share of the growing "new

media" market as well as for DVD sales. The contract garnered support from both the East Coast and West Coast branches of the Writers Guild.

Executive producers, those in charge of TV series, were back at work immediately after talks of the new contract ended.

The strike affected not only prime-time TV shows, but also dramas, late-night shows, and Hollywood's exciting awards season. This massive halt to the entertainment industry left TV stations to air reruns and depend heavily on unscripted reality shows.

The cancellation of the Golden Globes marked a turning point in negotiations. John Bowman, chairman of committee negotiations, said that the Globes showed the strength of the writers' resolve and solidarity. A similar threat was made for the Academy Awards, also known as the Oscars, and sped up the negotiation process.

The unanimous decision to end the strike cast some much needed optimism on Hollywood as plans for the Oscars were pushed forward. Under the tentative contract, writers are to receive a maximum flat fee of about \$1,200 for shows viewable online in the deal's first two years and then receive two percent of a distributor's profit in the third year of the deal. With the deal tentatively settled, the Academy Awards aired live on February 24, 2008 without any threat. Patric Verrone, president of the West Coast guild, spoke of the new deal and said, "These advances now give us a foothold in the digital age. Rather than being shut out of the future of content creation and delivery, writers will lead the way as television migrates to the Internet."

The end of the strike will allow for many hit shows to return this spring and air remaining episodes of the current season, which could be anywhere from four to seven new episodes. Many shows tried to prolong their series during the strike, but it proved too difficult to continue airing new episodes with the ongoing strike. Hit shows such as *The Office*, *Ugly Betty*, *Grey's Anatomy*, *Desperate Housewives*, and CBS's *CSI* "trio" plan to return to air remaining episodes in the spring. However, many shows, such as *Heroes*, *Pushing Daisies*, and *Friday Night Lights* have tentatively planned for a fall return.

The walkout generated a huge backlash on the entertainment industry and according to Jack Kyser, chief economist for the Los Angeles Economic Development Corp., lost an estimated \$3.2 billion in direct and indirect costs on the Los Angeles County economy.



THE WRITERS' STRIKE OF 1988 THAT COST THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY A HALF-BILLION DOLLARS.  
PHOTO COURTESY: GOOGLE IMAGES

## High Tea

MATTHEW CONNOLLY & SAMPADA NANDYALA  
Co-Editor-in-Chief & Staff Writer

Here in North Brunswick, students are far removed from the rolling European moors and antiquated Chinese mansions where tea is stereotypically prevalent. Every year in the English as a Second Language program, however, a tea party takes place with more cultural worth and educational significance than any of Queen Elizabeth II's tea times could ever hope to muster.

High Tea, the brainchild of ESL teacher Marcelino Garcia, offers foreign students a chance to enjoy good tea and even better conversation. Teachers and students who stop by the all-day tea party get a chance to speak one on one with the ESL students.

The students gain vital English language skills in a personal environment, and visitors get a chance to learn the ins and outs of each student's foreign culture.



PASTRIES ARE PROVIDED FOR VISITORS.

PHOTO COURTESY: MATTHEW CONNOLLY

Pamela Makadsi, an ESL student from Lebanon, expressed appreciation for the High Tea event. She said it is often "difficult to adapt" because of "language problems, accents, lifestyle, and slang," but the conversation with students and teachers alike has really aided her development.

This is a sentiment shared by many of the ESL students who participated in High Tea. "Students are reluctant at first," said ESL teacher Ms. Bromwich, "But they get more and more enthusiastic once we begin."

Mr. Garcia got the idea for High Tea from his time working in the Bronx, New York. It is the fourth year the event has been run at NBTHS. Tea was chosen as the backdrop because of its status as an international beverage. "It allows for cultural exchange," said Garcia.

The annual tea party is a tremendous aid to ESL students and gives teachers and other students around the school a chance to learn about other cultures. This year's event ended as a success, and all involved will have to wait until next year, when, according to Garcia, it will again be "high time for High Tea."



ESL HOSTS A HIGH TEA PARTY.

PHOTO COURTESY: MATTHEW CONNOLLY



ESL STUDENTS MAKE CONVERSATION WITH VISITORS.

PHOTO COURTESY: MATTHEW CONNOLLY

## Raider Robotix

STEPHANIE SOLIS  
Staff Writer

For Team 25, the new season brings new challenges. Raider Robotix kicked off their playing season on February 28 at the 2008 FIRST Robotics New Jersey Regional. In this year's game, FIRST has turned the playing field into a mini-racetrack, the type of show one would see from NASCAR. The Raider's Team 25 managed to win the NJ Regional for its third year in a row, but not without a few issues. They still have the Hawaii Regional and Nationals ahead, but to come out on top, they need the passion and dedication that has been exerted in the past.

Every year, FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) creates a new and distinctive game in which participating schools compete. Team members spend five weeks learning the game and making the robot from scratch. The programming and building that goes into it, as long as it follows certain restrictions, is encouraged to be as effective and innovative as possible. This year's game, FIRST Overdrive, places robots in a racing field in which they complete laps for points. An overpass crosses the center of the field, with trackballs that a robot can use to gain extra points. Rolling under the overpass gains points for a team, and throwing over the overpass gives even more. It is a game unlike any previous competition, and because of this, strategy and determination is key.

Team 25 faced 63 teams from all over the country and Canada. The team had a rough start, due to a number of design issues and poor performance. Raider Robotix lost a match and tied another, leaving them low on the ranking list. By eliminations, they were in 5th place and ready to join forces. Luckily, they were picked by team

103, the first seeded alliance team; Raider Robotix had worked with them before, and had won several competitions with them. Team 381, Trenton's The Tornadoes completed their alliance. The alliance battled Team 25's sister team 1089 in the Quarter Finals, but they lost. Determined to start winning, the alliance strategized, and won the following two matches. Their winning streak continued throughout the remainder of the eliminations rounds. Team 25 regained its motivation and despite the tenacious attempts of their opponents in the finals, teams 11, 1980 and 2590 were no match for 25's alliance. Raider Robotix once again faced the challenge, but not all went as smoothly as planned.

Since 1997, the members of Raider Robotix have striven to innovate and triumph through science and technology. Greatly supported by Bristol-Myers Squibb Company, the team has been able to develop over the last 11 years. The team wins several awards each year, but its highlighted achievement was coming in 2nd place at Nationals in Atlanta, Georgia. However, to do well this year, members need to take full advantage of their strengths, particularly their way with strategy and their passionate dedication. In competition, scouting and scoring are most significant in terms of winning or losing a round. The NJ Regional allowed the team to assess its current strengths and weaknesses. Members were able to correct design problems that affected their performance in the regional competition, and they have realized that speeding up in the field to increase scoring and keeping scouting "on edge" can make or break the entire competition.

The New Jersey Regional is only the beginning for the team; the team is also participating in Hawaii's Regional and in

the National Competition. Final outcomes are too early to predict, but if the team ultimately improves using what they learned in their first competition Raider Robotix has a slim chance of coming home empty-handed.

Morgan Gillepsie, Team 25's driver and head of animation, believes that it will take some shaping up for the team, but that victory not yet out of reach. "For both Atlanta and Hawaii, who we will be partnered with and knowing how our opposing alliances scores will be crucial."

Passion, Dedication, Excellence and Gracious Professionalism, all values that guide Raider Robotix, are what make the FIRST experience more worthwhile. Team 25's strategies and principles can guarantee success if its members keep those ideas in mind. If they can recover like they did in the regional competition, there is no doubt that they can prove that Team 25 is still strong.



THE ROBOTIX TEAM DISCUSS IDEAS REGARDING THE PROTOTYPE ROBOT

PHOTO COURTESY: ALEXA STOTT

## SOLE SURVIVOR

SADE WILLIAMS  
Staff Writer

"Sneakerfiend, Sneakerfreaker Sneakerhead." These are just a few names for those who consider themselves collectors in the sneaker world. Sneaker collecting has turned into a world of pop culture. From the bright colors to unique designs it's seems to be one of the most unique trends yet to come.

To many people the art of sneaker collecting may seem costly and time consuming, but sneakerheads consider it to be an artistic expression of feeling. Young people today are taking up this trend in drastic numbers. In the hip-hop culture sneaker collecting has become a status symbol; a way to represent a certain unique style.

For many sneakerheads buying limited sneakers is somewhat of an accomplishment for them.

The main thing about this phenomenon is having your own creative style.

"Collecting sneakers is fun because you can have certain sneakers for certain occasions," says Christine Semple, a fellow senior at NBTHS.

Along with collecting limited edition sneakers, sneakerheads enjoy collecting sneakers with the most unique styles. Some of the sneakers that are backed by famous people include Jordans, Nike Dunks and various other styles that Nike has produced over the years.

Collecting sneakers is cool because of the sense of individuality that it provides. Today, many sneakerheads collect sneakers for a sense of status.

Anthony Matlock, a senior at NBTHS, explains why the sneakerhead community is growing so rapidly. "People collect sneakers to show of their



SHOE COLLECTING IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY POPULAR.  
PHOTO COURTESY: SADE WILLIAMS

heat and also because its a joy to be able to stack boxes of kicks."

The art of sneaker collecting has become an international trend among young people today. From Japan to America the sneaker community continues to grow and evolve.

## Confessions of a Stereotype Victim

SAMPADA NANDYALA  
Staff Writer

*High School. People. Different. Groups. Cliques.* These words wafted in my mind, forming a jumble of fear and confusion as I took the first steps into the sacred building called high school: a building known for shaping the lives of students.

*Cliques.* I knew that high school was usually connoted with the grouping of people: Goths, Jocks, Preps, Nerds, etc. I was not sure whether I would be grouped too, but if I would, in which clique?

Honestly, I was pretty confident that I would not get categorized, but I was wrong. Eventually, I became one of the invisible people, joining the poor students who have so much potential in them, but are too quiet to be noticed.

A wise person once said looks are not everything, if only the people of our time still believe that. Actually, they base their first impressions on more than just looks, but appearance does play a big part in stereotyping. For example, somebody who constantly wears black is immediately thought of as Emo or Goth. What people do not realize is that maybe the person just likes the color black, or just owns many clothes in that color.

Likewise, glasses and braces are popularly known as the icons of Nerds. That, of course, is the biggest misconception, because they have nothing to do with one's personality, but their physical needs.

I was once a victim of stereotyping. I was ignored since I was too shy and quiet, and because of that, I was thought as weird and unapproachable.

That is until people began to realize I had some mental capabilities: intelligence. Soon, I found myself talking to others, but little did I know, these others were using me and relying on me to help them with their academic issues.

So, I went from being a Nobody to a Nerd, or a vulnerable, smart kid.

Then, one day, I got so sick of being grouped into a "social category" that

I had to do something about it. However, my shyness did not leave me, so I could not physically rebel against the practice of stereotyping.

So, I began to write. I wrote poems, dark, serious, depressing poems, poems that let my feelings out. In fact, I wrote so much of those sad and twisted poems that I eventually had heaps of them overflowing from my folders.

Unfortunately, somebody caught sight of my writings, and read them. Finding that most of these poems were about anger and hatred towards the community, I was grouped once again, but this time into the category of Emos.

This made me furious. According to the society of high school, Emo people are defined as depressed, suicidal, angry, and are thought to cut themselves. This may be right or wrong, but I definitely did not fall into that group.

To redirect the peoples' thoughts about me, I decided to use my writing for a good cause.

Thankfully, I was a part of the school newspaper, and so instead of writing sappy poems, I began to write articles. This way, I could voice my opinion through written words, which can sometimes be more powerful than speech.

I wrote articles about issues I was strongly opinionated on, and I wrote about other interesting things I thought our school ought to know, one of them being that stereotyping is not a good habit.

True, it comes as second nature to humans, but we should be more careful about what we say, because it can always offend others.

Being a victim of stereotyping, I know how hurtful it can be. Just because one characteristic makes a person seem like they are a part of a certain stereotypical clique, it does not mean they are completely like that. So, remember, not everything is what it seems!

## Tools for Local Bands

MATTHEW CONNOLLY  
Co-Editor-in-Chief

The dreams of becoming a rock star are strongest among the passionate youth of America. Pop culture is rife with exciting portrayals of the rock & roll lifestyle. Many follow through on these dreams when they are still young, hoping to erase a void in life that can only be filled with music.

It can be said that student musicians have varying degrees of success, but that is really determined by one's definition of success. Some start high school bands in hopes of "making it big," pushing for local gigs and vying for publicity. Others do it for the love of making music, often forgoing public performance for art's sake.

The majority of high school bands, it seems, choose the former. This does not mean they are not interested in the music; playing in local battles of the bands hardly qualifies as "selling out." It simply means that, given the chance for publicity, most young musicians will take it and run.

There are many tools at students' disposal if they wish to get their music heard. The Internet is probably the easiest and most popular. Websites like PureVolume allow bands to create a free account and upload their music, as well as pictures, tour dates, and blog entries. "PureVolume is great," says local bassist John Moroney, a senior at NBTHS. "Every one of the bands I've been in used it."

Social networking websites like Facebook and Myspace give bands a similar opportunity. Other sites are useful for getting gigs; many bands use tools like Craigslist to find potential shows.

As helpful as the International Superhighway is, some prefer the personal feel of live publicity and on-on-one contact. Local venues like Tumulty's in New Brunswick and The Stone Pony in Asbury Park have open mic nights during which high school bands can showcase their music. Other events, like North Brunswick's Heritage Day Festival, often feature young musicians. Many bands still send press kits and demos through the mail to restaurants and other locations hoping the manager will find that their music suits his or her fancy.

Finally, word of mouth is incredibly important to musicians in a high school setting. As unfair as it seems, a band whose members have the most friends will often initially get the most attention. There is no substitute for talent, however, and popularity will only carry a band so far.

There are many tools available for students to create or further a musical career. Local bands that fail to use such tools often fall by the wayside, while those that embrace them have a better chance at finding success (no matter how you define it).



JOHN MARONEY PLAYS WITH HIS BAND, OVERFLOW.  
PHOTO COURTESY: JOHN MORONEY

## Sudoku

Elijah Yarborough  
Staff Writer

		6	5		4	3		
4		2		3		6		8
	1							
		5	1		7	4		6
7				4				5
3		9	2		5	8		
	2						6	
5		7		2		1		9
6		8	3		1	2		4

\*answers on page 12\*

## What is the biggest challenge for teenagers today?

JASON HABERMAN  
Staff Writer

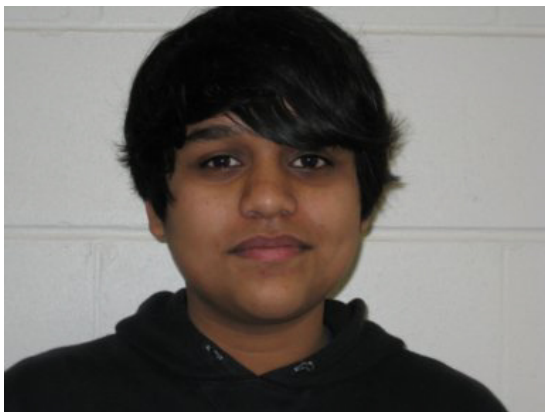
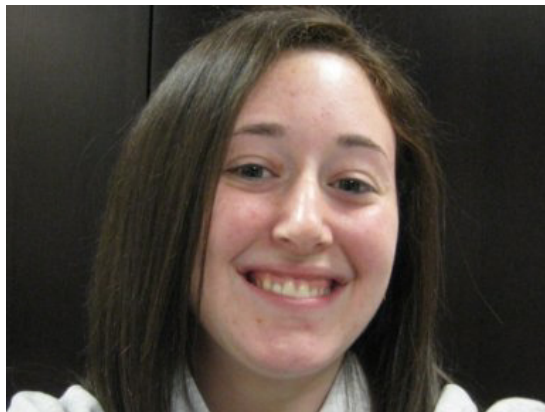


"Living up to the expectations of others, I think, is a big challenge for teenagers."

Alex Herbst '11

"The biggest challenge is not to give in to the pressures of society."

Amanda Haasz '09

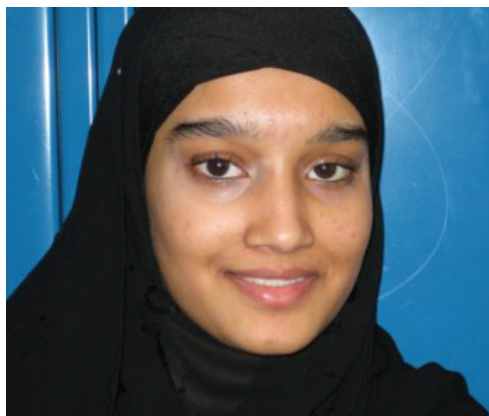


"I think it is challenging for teens to balance everything that is going on in their lives."

Anil Mathews '11

"Definitely peer pressure."

Shamama Siddiqui '10



"Trying to measure up to what they think society expects them to do is a difficulty for teens."

Becky Riemann '11

# TEEN ISSUES

## Teen Pregnancy Surge

TIFFANY KILMURRAY  
Staff Writer

Annually, over one million teenagers become pregnant. That's an average of roughly three hundred each day. Most teenage girls do not intend on becoming pregnant, but unfortunately, many do. It is exciting for a baby to be born, but it can be a frightening and uncertain time for a teen that was not planning on becoming pregnant.

Adolescent sexual behavior plays a large role in teenage pregnancies. In a recent study, 29% of teens felt pressure to have sex, and 33% of sexually active teens reported "being in a relationship where they felt things were moving too fast". It was also shown that drugs and alcohol encourages unintended sexual activity, which can ultimately lead to pregnancy. At such a young age, ways to prevent pregnancy may not be widely known.

Although some may responsibly take action and use contraception methods, there is always a chance that it will fail. Condoms are often used incorrectly and have the chance of breaking, while girls may forget to take oral contraceptives.

Rape and sexual abuse were also shown to be common causes of teenage pregnancy. In a 2007 study of 535 teen mothers, 62% had a history of being sexually abused or raped. There are many downsides to teenage pregnancy. Several health risks can be carried to the mother and the baby during pregnancy. Many teenage mothers experience premature births, in which their newborns are underweight. If a teen does become pregnant, they can help themselves and their child by taking vitamins to stay healthy and prevent birth defects, and by avoiding smoking, alcohol, and drugs.

Most teenage girls find that they cannot care for a child. In numerous cases, they do not have support from their par-

ents, family, or friends. Others simply are not ready to care for and maintain another human being's life. Teenagers are still children and it can be a terribly difficult task for a child to care for another child. Furthermore, it is complicated for a teenager to afford raising a baby. New mothers don't always have financial support, and without a job they are not able to pay for their child's necessities, as well as their own.

Society can get involved in assisting the prevention of teenage pregnancy in many ways. Schools can teach sexual education courses which encourage safety rather than abstinence. No matter how much abstinence is stressed, teens will have sex regardless of what they are told. It would be smart rather than leaving them unknowledgeable and more likely to end up pregnant. Contraceptives can also be improved, and in addition, parents should be encouraged to have more discussions with their children.

For teenage girls with children, the downsides of raising a child at such a young age can also be prevented. Mothers should receive better support. They should be encouraged to return to education and get a job. Better childcare and decent housing should also be offered to girls who are not supported by their parents or guardians.

With the release of popular movie "Juno", about teen pregnancy, and the recent news of teen icon Jamie Lynn Spears' pregnancy, the media has begun to wonder whether teenage pregnancy is becoming more ordinary and socially accepted. Spears said, "I can't say it was something I was planning to do right now. But now that it's in my lap and that it's something I have to deal with, I'm looking forward to being the best mom I can be". The media, as well as society, has started to reflect pregnancy as a more commonplace for teens in America.



PHOTO COURTESY: LISA  
MATHEWS

## Hitting the Sack, Hitting the Books

LISA MATHEWS  
Staff Writer

Any student in the American public education system can dutifully recite the age-old wisdom given out preceding testing: "Get a good night's sleep and eat a healthy breakfast" in order to "perform well." But as the National Sleep Foundation has recently found, this may not help teenagers.

28% of students nationwide are dazed or sluggish during first period, essentially making it worthless, and it is not because of last night's caffeine (though that may be another factor).

Dr. Jay Giedd, chief of brain imaging at the Child Psychiatry Branch of the National Institute of Mental Health and colleagues have been compiling a study on teenagers' sleep habits since 1991. Their results show that dozing during the day and being wide-eyed at night is "the result of a shift in the sleep/wake cycle as growth hormones kick into high gear."

Unlike adults, who feel sleepy around 10 P.M., teenagers' bodies do not produce the sleep hormone melatonin until 1 A.M.

Dr. Carlisle Smith, professor of psychology at Trent University in Peterborough, Ontario, believes that the average teen needs about 9.5 hours of sleep every night. The average ninth grader, however, sleeps less than eight hours

Teenagers, in the middle of the messy business of puberty, experience the second largest surge (after the toddler stage) in brain development during the teens

and into the 20s, when the brain grows immensely and so needs more sleep.

Avi Sadeh, a psychologist at Tel Aviv University, studied the long-term effects

of extra or lack sleep. Studies revealed that sleep deprivation is linked to obesity, attention deficiency disorder (ADD), and hyperactivity. It also increases the risk for teenagers to be involved in careless car crashes.

Lack of sleep also affects teenagers psychologically, causing depression, poor decision-making skills, and lack of concentration.

In reaction to these findings, a few states have actually made an effort to adjust for their youth.

Districts in Massachusetts, Virginia, Kentucky, and Minnesota have pushed back the start of homeroom in their high schools. Schools begin at 8:30 or 8:40 A.M., extending the school day to 3:30 P.M.

Schools in Minneapolis and Edina, Minnesota and Fayette, Kentucky saw a marked improvement in students' attitudes and grades, a decrease in tardiness, dropout rates, and teenage driving accidents.

Though these changes are easy and very effective, school administrations are reluctant to deal with the amount of work, money, and organization required to make such adjustments. But a paltry matter like money can hardly compare to the future of America's youth.



LACK OF SLEEP OFTEN CATCHES UP WITH STUDENTS DURING THE SCHOOL DAY.

PHOTO COURTESY: GOOGLE IMAGES

## The Link Between Substance Abuse and Homelessness

AMANDA MEAGHER  
Staff Writer

An individual who is considered homeless can be described as one who lacks proper stable housing or someone who resides in a homeless shelter due to inability to pay for proper living conditions. When their income reduces or they do not receive the proper money, many people are forced into a life of homelessness.

Often spending time in places such as city parks, train stations, and homes of their friends and family, it is estimated, with the varying identifications of homelessness, that there are about 230,000 to 3 million homeless people residing in the United States.

While the homeless are affected negatively by a countless number of health problems, many people without a permanent living situation develop a number of mental diseases, and substance abuse as a leading issue.

In many cases, people living with a low income who are addicts have an increased chance of becoming homeless. As an individual begins to be taken over by an addiction, money is spent towards an addictive substance resulting with inability to pay for proper housing. Unfortunately, after this person is taken over by a homeless life, chances of recovery are very slim because of the costs of treatment.

Although substance abuse cases are common before homelessness, frequently, some cases develop after a person

becomes homeless. For these people who are addicted and homeless, alcohol and drug use brings immediate relief from their circumstances, but prevents them from recovery.

Among these people suffering with addictions, many of whom would be willing to seek recovery, are left untreated with many factors not being in their favor.

Usually, homeless people are left without health insurance, causing them to be unable to find the necessary resources to pay for their treatment. Also, with an extensive waiting list for treatment centers, these people are often dropped due to the fact that they are difficult to contact.

Furthermore, lack of transportation, lack of documentation, lack of support services, scheduling difficulties, daily contact requirements, and ineffective treatment methods prevent many homeless people from seeking proper treatment. Substance abuse programs also lack the resources needed to provide treatment for thousands of low-income people.

Consequently, for those struggling with addiction while living without a stable home continue to face difficulties with their substance abuse. Until proper treatment is available for the homeless or programs are established to aid them in recovery, substance abuse issues among the homeless will resume as a huge struggle.

## Depression Among Teens

ANGIE O'DOWD  
Staff Writer

In our modern world, many teens suffer from depression. Whether it be breaking up with your boyfriend or girlfriend, failing at school, or having low self esteem, teenage depression is found all around.

Unbeknownst to most, there is not a single known cause for depression. Factors of depression include both genetics and medical conditions, along with environment, life events, and the ways people react to things that happen in their lives.

Research shows that most cases of a severe depression are caused by genetics. In some cases, children inherit certain genes that are more likely to get them depressed. Not everyone who has this type of gene gets depressed though. Some just have more grief and sorrow in their life which makes them highly susceptible to getting into a state of depression.

Medical conditions, such as hypothyroidism, are known to cause a person to become depressed as well. The main purpose of thyroid hormones is to "run the body's metabolism" according to Richard Romando of *EzineArticles*. If you stop or slow down the metabolism, you gain weight, and this tends to make a majority of people depressed. However, when treated by a doctor, for hypothyroidism, the signs of depression usually disappear.

For some teens an unhappy family atmosphere can also lead them to depression. Whether it be fighting

with a family member, a friend, or going through a difficult divorce between parents, the emotional changes can lead teens to lose confidence in themselves and in their lives, subsequently, causing depression.

Substance abuse, like alcohol and drugs, can cause chemical changes in the brain that can affect our mood.

Research has shown that use of drugs can have an immense impact on teenage emotions. The negative and social consequences of using these drugs can also add to teens having severe depression.

Whether parents and affected teens want to admit it or not, teen depression is becoming a huge problem and is hindering the full development of American teens into happy, well-rounded individuals.



DEPRESSION HITS MANY PEOPLE IN THEIR TEEN YEARS.

PHOTO COURTESY: YAHOO IMAGES

# 35 Years Of EXCELLENCE

FARNAZ MANSOURI  
Co-Editor-in-Chief

If you haven't heard, *Grease* is the word. This spring the Alchemist Theatre Company is putting on a production of one of the most popular musicals and movies of our time, "*Grease*." This spring also marks a huge milestone for the Alchemist Theatre Company; however the club is celebrating its 35th spring musical production.

With the guidance of director Mrs. Deborah Suchocki, student director Hannah Letbetter, and choreographer Ms. Rebecca Cahill, the cast started rehearsals mid-February. With daily afterschool rehearsals until five o'clock, and Saturday rehearsals from eleven in the morning until five in the afternoon, the Alchemists are working harder than ever to make their 35th show a show to remember.

"I really wanted to be a student director for a show, and helping to direct *Grease* would

be the perfect way to end my senior year," says senior Hannah Letbetter, "but what makes this show special is that it's the 35th musical, and I am so happy and excited to

be a part of it." Junior cast member Ally Selvaggio adds, "The choreography rehearsals have been really tiring, but I know the ending results will be very impressive."

Directing her thirteenth Alchemists production, Mrs. Suchocki has had the privilege of watching the Alchemists

Theatre Company grow in front of her eyes. Mrs. Suchocki explains that the group was created when the school first opened. "Last year we lost a large group of very talented Alchemists, and although the group's spot has been hard to fill, the seniors this year rose to the occasion," Mrs. Suchocki says. She continues by pointing out the main reason this year's musical production will be special, the dedication of the cast. "Putting together the shows this year have been easier than I expected; instead of a group of stars, we have a group of hardworking, dedicated, and talented actors putting a show together."

Students can support and celebrate this milestone

with the Alchemists by coming out to see *Grease*, which will be performed in the auditorium on April 24, 25, and 26 at 8 o'clock pm.

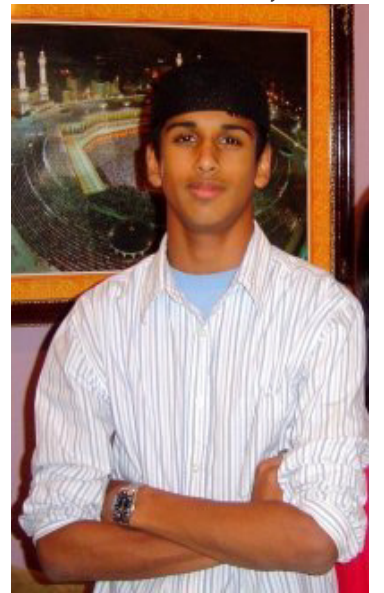


THE ALCHEMISTS REHEARSE THEIR MOVES FOR  
*GREASE*.

PHOTO COURTESY: KRISTI BERRY

## Still Muzz

MATTHEW CONNOLLY  
Co-Editor-in-Chief



DJ FUZZY MUZZY STRIKES A POSE.  
PHOTO COURTESY: MUZZAMIL SYED

When one thinks of high school musicians, the image that comes to mind is often that of the stereotypical garage band. There are many artists, though, that don't fit this hackneyed perception. Junior, Muzzamil "Muzz" Syed, also known as DJ Fuzzy Muzzy, certainly breaks the mold as a unique musician and performer.

Syed, a junior at North Brunswick Township High School, records rap parodies as well as comedic original work. His most recent CD, the self-produced *Still Syed*, sold dozens of copies even with its steep (for high schoolers) five-dollar price tag.

Syed wrote and recorded all of the album's songs using programs on his home computer. Many are spoofs of popular mainstream raps; "Crank that Raider Bird," for instance, lampoons Soulja Boy's ubiquitous "Crank That (Soulja Boy)." Others, like "I Own NB," are originals that reference facets of growing up and attending school in North Brunswick. "I like to put my experiences in my music, even if it's all for comedy," says Syed.

The young rapper is certainly well known among those around him. In addition to album sales, DJ Fuzzy Muzzy performed at the NBTHS Battle of the Bands in December and put up a personalized PUSH anti-drug poster. Outside of music, Syed dons the Raider Bird costume to act as mascot for a number of NBTHS sports teams. He has appeared at events ranging from football games to swim meets to academic challenge tournaments. "I do what I can to give back," he says. "I have a ton of school spirit."

Unbeknownst to many buyers, however, Syed has overcome a lot to be able to simply put out an album. He suffers from Tourette's Syndrome, a neuro-psychiatric disorder that causes accidental physical movements and vocalizations. Syed takes medication to alleviate the symptoms, but his condition still affects his daily life. "It's something I have to live with," he says. "There's no use sitting back and feeling sorry. I fight it and I win."

As much as he enjoys it, rapping is not in Syed's career plans. He hopes to one day become a surgeon, an idea some would dismiss as impossible due to his Tourette's. When confronted with this mindset, Syed is adamant. "It can't stop me from being who I want to be."

Perhaps DJ Fuzzy Muzzy's next song can focus on Mort Doran, a world-class Canadian surgeon who has a severe case of Tourette's Syndrome. Or, perhaps, the rapper would rather keep the light-hearted mood of his last album. Whatever direction he chooses, and no matter what he is faced with, the listener can be sure of one thing: "I'm still Muzz."

# Rosa Parks

FARNAZ MANSOURI  
Co-Editor-in-Chief

During Black History Month, we remember the Black Americans who have had a badly positive effect on our country. Among the most celebrated is Rosa Parks. Known for the infamous incident, in which she refused to give her seat at the front a bus to a white passenger, Parks is credited as one of the founders of the modern civil rights movement. In fact, most historians consider this to be the first day of the civil rights movement. Rosa's courage has inspired the country for years, and continues to move us years after her death.

Rosa Parks, born as Rosa Louise McCauley in Tuskegee, Alabama on February 4, 1913, was enrolled in the Montgomery Industrial School for girls at age eleven. The private school was run by liberal-minded women from the north. The school taught its students independence, self-worth, and how to find optimism in situations; the basic ideas taught by the school can be summed up by the advice to "take advantage of the opportunities, no matter how few they were." Leona McCauley, Rosa's mother, gave her this advice during a time of despair, violence, and fear; it helped Rosa become a strong, bold woman.

Rosa later attended the Alabama State Teachers College while she settled in Montgomery, Alabama with husband Raymond Parks. During this time, Rosa and her husband became active members of the NAACP in hopes to improve the greatly segregated south. They did not have much success when she first became involved with the group, with graphic cases such as rape, flogging, and murder, but every effort brought the NAACP one step closer to reaching their goals.

On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks furthered the cause in a previously unimaginable way. Her bus confrontation raised a stir all over the nation, leading to the formation of the Montgomery Improvement Association. The Association, led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., boycotted the bus company for 382 days. African Americans walked everywhere they wanted to go, and although at times it may have been difficult, they knew that this action would make a huge statement. The boycott also had a disastrous effect on the bus company's revenue, since a majority of the company's clients were Black American. Rosa Parks's case became so controversial that it was sent to the Supreme Court, where it was decided that she did not have to pay any fine, and that racial segregation on public transportation shall be outlawed.

Parks continued to fight racism and segregation, and was rewarded on several occasions for her brave actions that December day. She created the Rosa and Raymond Parks Institute for Self-Development in 1977, in loving memory of her husband. The Institute holds an annual summer program where teenagers tour the country by bus, learning about the country and the civil rights movement. The program was named Pathways to Freedom.

Rosa Parks was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1996 by President Bill Clinton and the Congressional Gold Medal in 1999. On October 24, 2005, at the age of 92, Rosa Parks passed away. In her honor, her casket was placed for two days in the rotunda of the United States Capitol. Rosa Parks was the first woman to receive this honor.



ROSA PARKS

PHOTO COURTESY: YAHOO IMAGES



## Falling Behind in After School Activities

CHELSEA GLINCMAN  
*Staff Writer*

NBTHS offers its students a variety of clubs and sports, however, where does our school stand in comparison to neighboring high schools when it comes to activities?

NBTHS has been scrutinized by students for the difference in athletics and after school activities when being compared to larger high schools such as South Brunswick and John P. Stevens High School.

A major disappointment for female athletes is the lack of a field hockey team. The most probable reason for this is lack of a coach; nevertheless the school would be able to financially support this team if spending was to be reorganized.

In addition, South Brunswick has an ice hockey team while NBTHS does not. This type of team would be more difficult for the school to organize, however it is a possibility.

Other popular clubs that neighboring high schools have established include a ping-pong club, ski club, break dance, pop club, sewing club, and badminton club.

Probably the most popular activity that NBTHS no longer offers is a step team. This club is extremely popular in schools such as our neighboring high schools East Brunswick, South Brunswick, and New Brunswick.

Naturally, financial issues pose a problem for establishing these clubs in school, but small steps can be made toward the beginning of new groups.

NBTHS may be behind in the after school department for now, but with help from the student body the school can enhance student involvement.

## Rethinking Black History Month

ADITYA RAINA  
*Staff Editor*

As we progress through the month of February, our nation celebrates the rich history of African-Americans, a large minority in our diverse nation. However, after witnessing the apathy and disrespect at the annual assemblies put on in the high school to showcase the Civil Rights Movement and its leaders, it has become clear to me that a month designated to celebrating an ethnic history is a waste of time and also unnecessary.

Most of this year's presentation constituted songs and hymns attributed to the Civil Rights Movement, clips from Dr. King's famous "I Have a Dream" speech, and other such biographical accounts of the numerous providential events during the movement. During that time many of my peers were dozing off or intently chattering with their companions, ignorantly disregarding everything the presentation had to offer. The degree of ignorance and disrespect has reached an all time high in our youth; the presentation may not have appealed to all viewers, yet it is common courtesy to pay attention nevertheless, and respect the entertainers who have put in so much effort to convey the message of the Civil Rights Movement, a relatively recent life changing event in our history. Instead of teaching students the 'Three R's of Education', schools should perhaps be more concerned with instilling pupils with a respect for their freedom that they are taking for granted today.

The message underlying Black History Month has slowly begun to lose its significance and the image of our great civil rights leaders has either become inconsequential or else blurred since the Black History Month celebrations tend to be ignored in more ways than one by the youth of today. It is incredibly disrespectful and disturbing when a student fails to acknowledge the suffering his ancestors endured to gain freedom, something that he takes for granted today. It is sad that someone like me, who may not agree with the underlying message and methods of Black History Month, pays more respect than do other students,

to the memory of the freedom fighters of the Civil Rights Movement by being quiet and respectful during the Black history month assemblies.

If Black History Month has lost its meaning, then why do we celebrate it? Personally I feel that setting aside a month to celebrate an ethnic diversity is slightly absurd; why should we celebrate the rich history of African-Americans only in February, coincidentally the shortest month of the year? The history of the Civil Rights Movement is so critical not only as black history, but in the history of America and of the world at large. It was the movement that completely altered the social fabric of this nation from the bottom up and sent the oppressed people of the world a strong message of hope and freedom. The extent of the impact of the Civil Rights Movement itself cannot be completely understood and appreciated in a single month, not to mention the impact of black history as a whole. Through assigning a Black History Month we are paying lip service to appreciating diversity, and essentially encouraging apathy and ignorance toward something as fundamental as our need and respect for freedom.

Black History Month has once again put our society's ignorance in the limelight. I wholly commend the performance of the troupe that performed the Black History Month presentation at the high school and apologize for the lack of respect they received from many in the audience. As for Black History Month, we should not delegate remembrance to specified months because events that are as definitive and life changing as the Civil Rights Movement cannot be fully grasped and totally honored in a month. As we move along through yet another Black History Month, we will notice the forced appreciation of the rich African-American History and the resulting apathy, ignorance, and disrespect perpetrated by those who cannot appreciate the freedom they enjoy let alone the strife to acquire it; not even during a duration of some sixty odd minutes of a Black History Month Assembly!

## RAIDER RANT CURING SENIORITIS



MATTHEW CONNOLLY  
*Co-Editor-in-Chief*

Let's not mince words: at this point in our academic careers, my fellow seniors and I are useless.

We're more useless than a two-dollar bill. More useless than President Bush's high school English teacher. More useless than any John Travolta movie since Pulp Fiction.

I could go on, but I won't. You're welcome.

The point is that most of the seniors in this school have more to offer than clogging up hallways and taunting stressed-out juniors. Plus, once college acceptances are made, what incentive is there for students to learn? (All the first-year teachers answered "thirst for knowledge." Feel free to chuckle at their naivety). I know from experience, for instance, that once Advanced Placement exams are over, almost every AP class turns into Film Analysis. What we need is a change.

This is why I am calling for a program in which seniors are able to essentially skip the last month of school. The students, who would have to apply and be accepted to such a program, would instead do approved work around the community. This system is modeled after South Brunswick High School's "Senior Society" program.

What South Brunswick lacks in football (they were felled by our Raiders 21-14 last season) they make up for in creative academia. As Mr. Farrell (who previously served as Director of Guidance at South Brunswick High School) told me, seniors who met a minimum GPA requirement and were free of discipline problems were able to spend the last three weeks of school volunteering regularly. Many went to local businesses, nursing homes, and preschools; others did work for the township. The employers, in turn, would update the school so the administration could be sure the students were attending.

Setting up a similar program at NBTHS would work wonders. Students would get an opportunity to give back to the community before going off to college, and the promise of leaving school early would be an incentive to keep grades up and discipline problems down. Teachers would have less work, and finals exemptions would become a moot point.

Unfortunately, it is too late to put a program in place for the current seniors. The school can take the initiative, however, and take steps to get one running smoothly and quickly. First, the administration should get in touch with potential volunteer organizations. Local businesses, charities, and the township government should all be contacted to ensure that they are on board for such an endeavor. It would be bad to have tons of seniors willing to volunteer with no places to send them.

Second, students, teachers, and parents should be able to provide input. I know what you're thinking: haven't I already outlined a flawless plan here in my column? The answer is yes, the school could title this the Connolly Initiative and send the column verbatim to the Board of Education for approval, but sometimes it's nice for people involved to feel like they have a say in the decision-making process.

Finally, underclassmen should (if they haven't already) start thinking about their grades. There aren't many things worse than being stuck in school while your friends leave early because they met the required GPA and you failed gym.

I strongly believe a program like the one I've described would be a positive for the school and for the township. After all, it's hard to feel useless when volunteering and giving back to the community.

In closing, I want to congratulate Principal Brotschul on his new permanent position. I kindly ask the reader to recall that, in this very column, Mr. Brotschul was interviewed extensively about becoming the full-time principal of NBTHS. Another beneficiary of the coveted "Banner bump?" I think so.

## Adding Fuel to the Animal Overpopulation Crisis

AMANDA MEAGHER  
Staff Writer

In our daily lives many people are looking for ways to help those in need and make decisions that result in more beneficial outcomes for the disadvantaged. Therefore, why not start with the dog, cat, or pet you adopt?

These days when adopting an animal as a pet, the only compassionate choice is to receive an animal from a shelter. Purchasing the "perfect" dog or cat from a breeder just does not cut it. Every time an animal is purchased from a breeder, a needy shelter animal loses its chances of finding a home which often results in death of innocent animals.

Many people do not realize the negative effects that surface when an animal is acquired from a breeder. Although most people are aware of the harm from puppy mills and "backyard" breeders, people support so-called "responsible" breeders because it is believed that these people handle their business and animals with compassion. Still, it is not realized that as long as animals are left without homes in shelters and pounds, no type of breeding or breeder can be considered responsible or compassionate.

It is commonplace to see proud breeders displaying and selling their dogs and cats for an immense amount of money after a certain look and characteristic is achieved. Many times, animals purchased from breeders live a life focused around dog shows where they are altered and conformed to fit a standard of perfection. While dogs do not possess a care for how they look, they suffer as their owners strive and manipulate their dogs to fit the desirable physical appearance. Too often, these greedy owners receive too much money resulting from the appearance of their purebred.

Any dog produced by a breeder and anyone who deliberately buys from a breeder is only adding fuel to the animal overpopulation crisis. Simply put, while someone may be enjoying the company of a purebred bought from a breeder, an innocent shelter dog or cat suffers and dies

in a shelter or pound.

Producing animals for money is a greedy business and there are too many homeless animals to even consider buying from a breeder. There is nothing "responsible" about a business that leaves so many animals dead and without homes.

When trying to help a living being in need, the only humane option is animal adoption from a shelter. Many of these poor, suffering victims have waited too long to be placed into a comforting home where they can receive the love they are worthy of.

Just imagine the excitement experienced by adopted animals. As they peer through their cage and see you approach them, their tail begins to wag or their purring begins. Some much hope and joy fills their heart as they encounter a person to love and who can love them. Isn't it worth it to be a hero to a deserving, needy animal?

Not only is a life being saved when



ADOPTING A PET OFFERS A HOME AND STABILITY.  
PHOTO COURTESY: GOOGLE IMAGES

adopting from a shelter but a deserved second chance is given. Obviously, if one wants to benefit lives, adopt from a shelter, instead of a breeder or pet store.

## Big Brother's Watching

LANNA KARUPEN  
Staff Writer

"Are the cameras really working?" asked Ms. Debbie Kouras an aid and security worker. This is a question you may wonder yourself as you wonder the halls of North Brunswick High School.

As students hug their friends and hangout in the halls with others, usually you don't think about anybody or anything watching you. But, would they believe that some of your actions are captured on tape?

Believe it or not they are. The cameras that you see up on the ceilings of

the hallways are working in full force without most of the student body being aware of it. It is almost like the school is in the plot of the novel 1984 and 'Big Brother' is watching them.

These cameras may seem to be a violation of privacy, but in a way they are protecting the students.

Details about the cameras in the halls are given in the student handbook with many reasons as to why they are used.

One of the statements made in the handbook is that "the cameras are a tool in order to research incidents as well as to accurately confirm management issues that take place during the school day." Therefore, from this statement students can conclude that video surveillance is used for their safety.

The forty cameras placed in the hallways are not out to get you so to speak, but rather are there as a measure of security that may help you one day. These cameras are able to capture many incidents that could harm NBTHS students and staff if the perpetrators were not caught.

Recently, some school property was badly wrecked or destroyed and because these cameras were working, those who destroyed the property were caught. If your chief concern involves the issues of

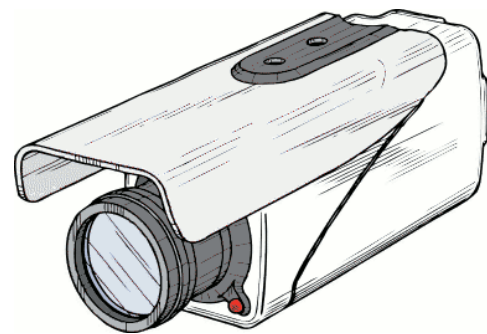
privacy, the student handbook assures you that should not be a problem.

"Any information obtained by way of video surveillance systems may only be used for the purposes of continuing to ensure student safety," this statement sums up the issue of privacy in a very clear manner.

The one and only reason for video surveillance usage is to ensure the safety of the students and staff.

The footage taken will not be used other than for security purposes. Unless there is an issue with privacy, the video surveillance is not something that should be a problem.

Those who have something to hide should be the only people opposing the use of cameras in NBTHS. So rather than having an issue with what the school has provided, students should be grateful in a queer way that they have protection that many other schools do not have.



CAMERAS ARE PLACED STRATEGICALLY THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL.  
PHOTO COURTESY: GOOGLE IMAGES

## Animal Testing

MARIA SGROI  
Staff Writer

"An experiment to study head trauma requires a pet's head to be strapped down and receive high impact blows to the head resulting in severe brain damage.

To demonstrate there is no difference in eye protein levels of the site deprived, pet's eyelids are sewn shut then later compared to normal protein levels," reported geocities.com.

These are only a few ways animals are affected from animal testing. The cruelty of animal testing manifests itself in the reaction of its observers; still people do not take action. It is obvious to see that the destruction that is being done by animal testing must be stopped.

Companies such as Johnson and Johnson, Cover girl, Clorox and Neutrogena all take part in animal cruelty. Although a large portion of animal testing is performed by cosmetic companies.

What exactly is animal testing proving? That question still remains in the head of many people trying to save these innocent creatures. It is proven that drugs that pass animal tests end up harming or killing humans about 61% of the time which results in issues in the companies profits.

"Animal produces inaccurate and dangerous results and wastes

enormous amounts of precious time and resources, while promising new techniques are ignored." stated geocite.com. The use of animals to better understand human anatomy and human disease can be avoided.



ANIMALS ARE SUBJECTED TO EXTENSIVE TESTS.  
PHOTO COURTESY: YAHOO IMAGES

Human skin model tests such as the validated EpiDerm test, which has been accepted almost universally as a total replacement for skin corrosion studies in rabbits. Also the use of human skin leftover from surgical procedures can be used to measure the rate at which a chemical is able to penetrate the skin.

With the correct research and advanced technology we contain, animals can be free and safe.

## NBTHS SOUNDS OFF:

"They shouldn't use animals as testing subjects for medicine, but for some cosmetic purposes, it may be warranted."

-Channing Telfer 2010

"Animals should not be tested, I don't support it. There are also repercussions of animal testing that people have to think about."

-Ike Odimeuwu 2008

"I don't believe animal testing is ethically nor morally correct."

-Akanksha Kapoor 2009

"Animals are being as well, and shouldn't have to do something against their will. Also, we as humans should give beings their rights."

-Adeola Fagbewesa 2009

"Just because animals are not people does not mean that they have no rights. Their voice needs to be heard too."

-Nthabi Choma 2010

"I'm against animal testing."

-Griselda Rivera 2008

# star athletes get recruited

## Meghan Olmstead

WENDY CHEN  
Staff Editor

Over the summer, Meghan Olmstead and her T3 summer lacrosse team participated in various lacrosse tournaments in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Maryland. After many steady and excellent performances, little did she know that Elaine Jane, the head coach at the University of California Davis, would be recruiting her.

ethic to the team. "Hopefully I'll be able to stay on track and not get too overwhelmed by everything, especially because I will be in California," said Olmstead.

As a senior, Olmstead was relieved about her acceptance into UC Davis. "When I told her that I chose UC Davis, I had a huge smile on my face. I was excited, yet nervous because of the huge commitment this entails."

Her response was thrilling for both her family and the college. "After the phone call, I thought to myself, 'What did I just do?'" While other seniors were still worrying about college acceptances and financial aid, Olmstead was glad to skip the rest of the vigorous college admissions process.

Olmstead's high school lacrosse career has definitely helped her achieve her dream. For the past seven years, she has been playing

lacrosse with various teams and for the high school varsity team, since freshman year as a midfielder. Once college begins, Olmstead will "definitely miss the relaxed practices and fooling around with her high school teammates." She hopes that future lacrosse players from North Brunswick can excel past high school athletics and play for colleges. "Work hard and set goals for yourself," advised Olmstead.



MEGHAN OLMSTEAD CARRIES THE BALL AWAY FROM HER OPPONENT.

PHOTO COURTESY: MEGHAN OLMSTEAD

A scholarship to a Division 1 school is rare among high school athletes. Only five girls in the nation were recruited for UC Davis Girls' Lacrosse during the official November recruiting sign date. Among the five girls, Olmstead modestly admits that, "It still has not hit me yet that I will be in Division 1 lacrosse come September, especially in September." She hopes to bring her determination and worth

# Pushaun Brown

FARNAZ MANSOURI  
Co-Editor-in-Chief

The college process is always very tedious for high school seniors; after sending applications to various colleges, students have to wait weeks, even months, for responses. After receiving acceptances, one must make an imperative decision: which college to attend come fall.

However, for Pushaun Brown, the choice was simple. Earlier this year, Brown was offered a full ride football scholarship to the University of Maine. "I was so excited when I found out!" Brown says, "I knew that my mom would be so proud, and I was relieved that she wouldn't have to pay for my college tuition." During Christmas break, Brown went up to Maine to visit the university, and decided immediately upon returning that it was the school he wanted to go to. Soon afterwards, Brown, his mother, and Coach Zielinski joined Principal Brotschul in his office, signing papers confirming that Brown would attend the University of Maine on a football scholarship.

The ceremony, which only lasted about fifteen minutes, proved to be an incredibly joyous occasion for those involved. With a grin from ear to ear, Mrs. Brown watched as Coach Zielinski shared some moving words regarding Brown's performance throughout the years.

"I really noticed Brown's determination, dedication, and drive during his sophomore year; it was obvious he took his training very seriously, and has improved his performance tremendously. He has truly been silent force at this school, and I have thoroughly enjoyed working with him."

When asked about her initial reaction when she received the news, Mrs. Brown stated, "I was

actually sleeping, and Brown came in my room, woke me up, and told me the news. I remember feeling so relieved, and so proud that all of Brown's hard work had paid off. But before he decided anything, I wanted him to make sure that he felt comfortable at the school."

Brown was the only person on the football team this year to receive a full scholarship. When asked what advice he would give to underclassmen involved in sports seeking scholarship, Brown says, "It's important to stay focused, and devoted to the sport. Keep your eyes on what you want, and work hard for it. Devotion and practice are the keys to success."



SURROUNDED BY HIS MOTHER AND COACH ZIELINSKI, PUSHAUN BROWN SIGNS THE OFFICIAL CONTRACT WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF MAINE.

PHOTO COURTESY: KRISTI BERRY

# Karan Sarna

Karan Sarna is one of the region's bright young talents in cross country, and the college interest he's receiving mirrors it.

Sarna, a senior at NBTHS, has been receiving emails from colleges interested in adding him to their cross country teams. The University of the Sciences in Philadelphia, Pace University in New York City, and Drew University in Madison, New Jersey are among the schools that have contacted Sarna.

Bob Heller, head cross country coach at the University of the Sciences in Philadelphia, even contacted him personally. "If I take a scholarship anywhere," Sarna said, "It'll be at USP."

The process starts when colleges check runners' times and email potential candidates. The students need to sign up with the NCAA clearinghouse to be eligible for recruitment.

Karan Sarna has been one of the school's top runners since he started cross country freshman year. His time of 16:33 this year at Monroe is the second fastest time ever run on their course.



KARNA SARNA LEADS THE PACK TOWARDS THE FINISH LINE.

PHOTO COURTESY: KARAN SARNA

# Ibrahim Kamara

LYNDSEY KEYTE & MICHELLE BARTHOLE  
Staff Writers

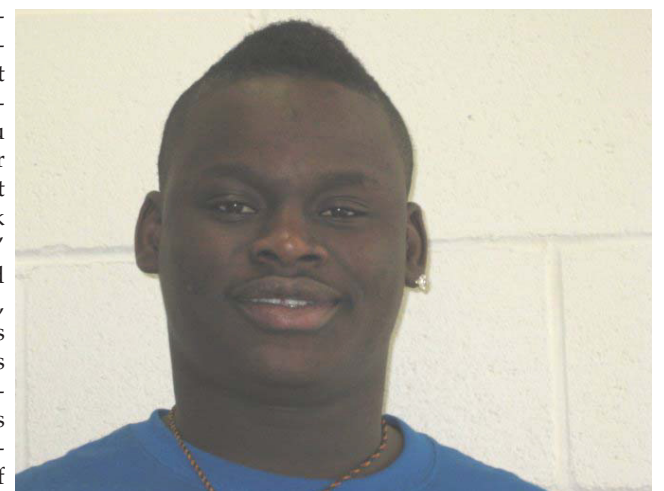
Soccer star Ibrahim Kamara has come a long way since first kicking around a ball on the fields of Sierra Leone at four years old. "Ever since I was little, all I wanted to do was play soccer," told Kamara. At age thirteen, he came to the United States with intentions of living his dream.

Like any newcomer, he struggled during his first few years, but his mother was a great inspiration through it all. She took him to pick up games and inspired him to be better through her encouragement. "The hardest part was the determination," said Kamara. "You have to set up a goal for yourself and fight for it. It takes a lot of hard work to get where you want."

In the end, the hard work paid off. Kamara, now eighteen years old, has received full scholarships at the University of California Los Angeles, St. John's University, Rutgers University, and the University of Maryland, all Division One schools. He has decided to attend Rutgers University to study ei-

ther physical therapy or criminal justice. To get to this point of accomplishment, he has been through a lot. "It took a lot of time, effort, and advice," explained Kamara.

To aspiring athletes, Kamara's message is that "you have to do all you can. Stay focused and hopefully it will pay off in time." Clearly, Kamara is living proof of his advice. His determination and hard work surely paid off!



TIME, EFFORT, AND ADVICE PROPELLED IBRAHIM KAMARA INTO TOP DIVISION ONE SCHOOLS

PHOTO COURTESY: JASON HABERMAN

# Lady Raiders' Season Goes Swimmingly

MATTHEW CONNOLLY  
Co-Editor-in-Chief

Vince Lombardi once said, "Perfection is not attainable, but if we chase perfection we can catch excellence." In light of the girls swim team's season, excellence may not be a strong enough word.

The Lady Raiders finished the regular season with a perfect 11-0 record and won the GMC tournament. They then made it to the semi-finals of state championships, their best finish since 1997 (when the team was in 'B' league; it has since moved up to the more prestigious 'A' league).

"This was probably one of the most successful seasons the Lady Raiders have ever had," said senior captain Angela Pagliaro.

Pagliaro, along with fellow captain Tanya Witlen, led a talented group of seniors that included Nicole Van Avery, Nikita Nadkarni, Lauren Castellucci and Yuri Moon. A group of talented freshmen also contributed to the epic season.

Highlights of the season included a win against Bishop Ahr, who the Lady Raiders had not beaten in three years. Bishop Ahr, who eventually took third in the GMC tournament, provided a litmus test early in the season; the win

proved this year's team could contend. Another big victory came against East Brunswick, the GMC's second place finisher. A physical stalemate, this meet was won on willpower: "It just came down to who wanted it more," said Pagliaro.

While team-oriented victory is always the goal, personal accomplishment

does not go unnoticed. Junior Gabby Alicino broke the school's eleven-year-old 100-meter butterfly record with a time of 1:01.19. She then proceeded to break her own neophyte mark with a 100 fly time of 1:01.15.

Indeed, this amazing season is one the swimmers in the graduating

class will never forget. The ability to end one's high school career on such a high note is a plateau most students do not reach. "Looking back on this season," said Pagliaro, "I wouldn't change a thing."



THE LADY RAIDERS PROUDLY SHOW OFF THEIR SUPPORT FOR THEIR TEAM AT GMCS.

PHOTO COURTESY: ASCIA JOHNSON

## Euro 2008

RYAN WINCHOCK  
Staff Writer

In the wake of 2006's World Cup, the time has come for Euro 2008.

Euro 2008 is the event in which the countries of Europe play each other in the sport of soccer. The beginning of the tournament is made up of qualifiers; otherwise, there would be 48 countries playing each other.

Since Italy won the World Cup, they are the favorite to take the championship, but they will have to deal with the powerhouse team England will be fielding.

England's squad is one of the best in recent memory. With the blossoming of superstar Wayne Rooney and the dumping of washed-up David Beckham, they are considered to be one of the top teams in the competition. If England is knocked out of this tournament, it is the equivalent of the New York Yankees not making the playoffs.

Euro 2008 also gives countries that are not among the elite teams a chance to steal games from the top tier: teams like Portugal, Spain, or France, who are among the favorites to win the whole tournament.

But when there are teams who are favored to win, there are teams who are looking to be the "cinderella" of the tournament. Those teams include Czech, Germany, and suprisingly, Iran.

Many Americans many not watch the tournament, but for those who enjoy watching good soccer, and enjoy wild European hooligans running onto the field, there will be few greater spectacles than Euro 2008.

## Going Pro

RAFIA BAIG  
Staff Writer

Gaming has taken the world by storm, absorbing more than 30% of today's youth into fantasy realms, racetracks and battlegrounds from wars of the past. With statistics like these, it is no surprise then that some gamers have taken it to the next step by going pro. Who wouldn't want to be paid for just pressing buttons all day?

But, as several gamers confess, life as a pro is not that simple. There is a severe amount of concentration and hand-eye coordination involved with serious gaming. Such skills are only built upon with immense practice.

Even once someone garners enough wins to get a title, many hours of daily practice must be accomplished to stay in shape. In a world run almost entirely by electronics, new prodigies have been known to arise. "There will always be someone better than you, someone who can press the necessary buttons faster than you," says one gamer.

Video games have been played competitively ever since their conception. Nintendo held one of the first ever competitions in 1990 dubbed "The World Cham-

pionships" which toured across the United States. The first contest ever televised was on Australian gameshow A\*mazing, which showed two children competing in various Nintendo games in order to win points.

Over time, electric sports (or e-sports) has seen an exponential growth in the number of competitors and the magnitude of prizes. In the year 2000, the first World Cyber Games event was held in Seoul, Korea. There were competitions for Quake III, Starcraft, FIFA 2000, and Age of Empires II. The competition initially had 174 competitors from seventeen different countries with a total prize of \$20,000.

In 2006, the reward rose to \$462,000, and the event grew to nine different competitions and 700 qualified participants from 70 different countries.

Gaming has garnered so much attention recently that many players are being offered scholarships and sponsors. For some, this is a dream come true, as gamers do something for a living that they genuinely love.

### sudoku answers

8	7	6	5	1	4	3	9	2
4	5	2	7	3	9	6	1	8
9	1	3	6	8	2	5	4	7
2	8	5	1	9	7	4	3	6
7	6	1	8	4	3	9	2	5
3	4	9	2	6	5	8	7	1
1	2	4	9	5	8	7	6	3
5	3	7	4	2	6	1	8	9
6	9	8	3	7	1	2	5	4

## THE BANNER

The Banner of North Brunswick Township High School is obligated to report all newsworthy events to the student body. The paper issues stories based on the interests of the school. Our newspaper will always be sure to report on time with the best coverage. It is our pledge to avoid statements that may offend others. We will strive to produce the best product we can.

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