

# THE Banner

January, 2006

Volume 23, Issue 04

North Brunswick Township High School  
North Brunswick, NJ 08902

## Better than the Card? Keypads at Lunch

Dameian Narine  
Staff Writer

After winter break, students at NBTHS came back to school to find a different process for purchasing lunch. In the past, students receiving free or reduced lunch would show the cafeteria workers a card, which would get hole-punched according to their purchases. But due to power of technology, this system has been upgraded. The simple card has been replaced by a number keypad, which students now punch in their ID number. After which, the computer will pull up that student's name, grade, and lunch status. It will then show if the student receives free, reduced, or full-pay lunch.

But will students respond to this new system well? Freshman, Samantha Subramani, has commented, "this new system in the lunch room is a hurdle, and I don't like it at all!" Samantha represents many who think the new system is not the best idea.

On the other hand, there are students who feel that this new idea is a great idea. They feel that it makes the whole lunch system faster and better. Meghan Hayden says, "The lunchroom is always hectic during my lunch... At the end of the lunch time there are still people on the line, but I think that this new system is really helping to get people to get there lunch and have time to eat it!" Meghan also believes that the new lunch keypad will make the lunch ladies' job easier.

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## NFI Wins the Battle

Alyssa Bongiovanni  
Staff Writer

Battle of the Bands is an event held annually by the Student Government Organization. This year, five talented bands competed for a prize, but ended up winning more than that. The clout and honor won by the band members overshadows the material prize. This year the honor was awarded to Never Fits In, a "ska band that likes to listen to ska."

The participants in the 2005 Battle of the Bands were selected from eighth graders. They included Long Distance (comprised of Ashley Petrusek, Ryan Wydrinski, Steve Dwarkin, and Justin Link), Guano (Shoham Bhadra, Ryan and Kyle Shook, Adrian Hamovich, Henry Yeh, and Chris Bell), Never Fits In (Henry Yeh, Mike Maroney, Amol Parekh, Steve Santoro, Jeff Drew, and Andrew Moulder), Neptune Falls (Tim Lanza, Eric Shwager, Jason Astel, Devin Gillespie, and Steve Bliziotis) and Maybe More aka The Gum Drop Buttons (comprised of Chris Blanco, Adam Gladstone, Dave Sampson, Kevin Blanco, and Matt Rivera). Each band was given roughly 35 minutes to play their set.

According to SGO President, Mi-



WINNERS OF THE 2006 BATTLE OF THE BANDS



NEVER FITS IN: (LEFT TO RIGHT) Members include Dave Kim, Jeff Drew, Mike Maroney, Henry Yeh, Amol Parekh, Andrew Mulder, Steve Santoro.

chael Padovano, Battle of the Bands was extremely successful this year. He said, "This is the most successful Battle of the Bands we've held in years, thanks to a great turn out and the impressive bands!" SGO Executive Board member and attendee Danielle Wager echoed his statement, saying that she "really enjoyed seeing the talent that exists among my peers." And although his band was not able to claim the ultimate prize, Chris Blanco of Maybe More aka The Gum Drop Buttons remained positive, stating, "I had a great time being able to play with this talented group of guys. We had a great time practicing, and even though our efforts were not fruitful, we worked hard and had fun and that's all that matters!"

The Battle of the Bands is a chance for young bands to be able to

## The Fate of Israel: The Recovery of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon

Frank Panico  
Features Editor

On January 5th, Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon, suffered a massive stroke at his home in Jerusalem. He was rushed to a local hospital, where doctors soon determined that he endured a massive stroke, which resulted in brain hemorrhaging. He immediately underwent three emergency surgeries, totaling over 13 hours to stop the bleeding in his brain. For three days Sharon laid unconscious in his hospital bed, surrounded by friends and family who wondered how long Sharon would remain in this condition. Many speculated that Sharon might possibly stay in this vegetated state for the rest of his life, but fortunately the Prime Minister awoke from his coma two days later and began to show small signs of improvement.

After two days the 77-year old premier was able to move his right hand and right leg with more strength than he had in the past. However,

significant progress came when Sharon was able to move his left hand, a sign that the injured right side of the brain is beginning to recover. Doctors originally felt the brain damage to the right side of Sharon's brain was so severe that he would ultimately become completely paralyzed on the left side of his body, for the right side of the brain controls the movement of the body's left side. With the movement of his left hand Sharon proved to doctors that he had within him a strong fight for recovery.

Sharon is still kept on a low dosage of anesthesia, so that doctors can keep him in a semi-comatose state. This way they can slowly ease Sharon out of his coma without doing further damage to his brain. He is also kept on a respirator however he is now breathing on his own. Doctors have stated that even if Sharon recovers as planned, his brain damage is too severe and he will no longer be able

to occupy his position leading the Israeli nation.

Acting Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has been presiding over Israeli government Cabinet meetings, leaving the chair Sharon usually occupies empty. Ehud Olmert, who is the Deputy Prime Minister, will likely take over once it is formally declared that Sharon is resigning as Prime Minister. Sharon had made significant steps in improving the relations between Israel and Palestine and his sudden illness couldn't have come at worse time.

The prayers of leaders from all over the world are with Sharon, a truly great man who was able to lead Israel to great things. We can only hope he is able to recover from this unfortunate condition.



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ISRAELI PRIME MINISTERS: (TOP) Prime Minister Ariel Sharon a few weeks before his stroke. (BOTTOM) Current Acting Prime Minister Ehud Olmert stepping in for Sharon



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## GOLDEN GLOBES DOMINATED

### By BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN

Jael Davis  
Staff Writer



**HONORED ACTORS:** (Top Left) Golden Globe Nominee Heath Ledger (Top Right) Golden Globe Winner Joaquin Phoenix (Bottom) Jake Gyllenhaal is *Brokeback Mountain*

On Monday, January 16, the 63rd Golden Globe Awards ceremony took place. It was a triumphant night for homosexual and transsexual films such as *"Brokeback Mountain"*, the leading winner with four Golden Globes, *"Capote"*, and *"Transamerica"*.

*"Brokeback Mountain"* reveals the story of two cowboys in the 1960s that are best friends, but also become lovers. Ang Lee won "a Globe" for Best Director, while also winning Best Motion Picture Drama, Best Screenplay for writers Larry McMurtry and Diana Ossana, and Best Original Song for "A Love That Will Never Grow Old". Along with *"Brokeback"*, Felicity Huffman was awarded for his role in *"Transamerica"*, as a man preparing for sex-change surgery, and Phillip Seymour Hoffman won a "Globe" for portraying the gay author Truman Capote in *"Capote"*.

All the same, the gay movies were not the only ones whom triumphed during the Golden Globe ceremony. The motion picture, *"Walking the Line"* tells the lifelong story of country musician, Johnny Cash, and his courtship with his enduring love, June Carter. The film racked up with three "Globes", Best Musical or Comedy, while star actor Joaquin Phoenix and actress Reese Witherspoon won titles in their respective areas for the movie. While accepting the award, Phoenix paid tribute to the lost country singers by thanking "John and June for sharing their life with all of us."

For their daring plots and remarkable acting, both *"Walking the Line"*, and *"Brokeback Mountain"* are suspected of nominations for the Academy Awards. The nominations are to be released on January 31, and the awards are set to be bestowed upon their rightful owners on March 5.

Other films to grace the stage were *"The Constant Gardener"* with Rachel Weisz winning Best Supporting Actress, and George Clooney winning Best Supporting Actor for the political thriller *"Syriana"*. The foreign language and Original Score honors were also granted to the Palestinian film *"Paradise Now"* and John Williams for *"Memoirs of a Geisha"* correspondingly.

Winners for their television roles included Geena Davis for Best Actress in a Drama Series as the first female president in *"Commander in Chief"*— Best Actress in a Drama Series was awarded Hugh Laurie for his role as a unhelpful and unethical doctor in the show *"House"*—Steve Carell for the Best Comedy Series in *"The Office"*— Best Actor in a Miniseries as Elvis was Jonathan Rhys Meyers in *"Elvis"*—and lastly S. Epatha Mererson was awarded Best Actress in a Miniseries for playing a caring woman who takes in social outcast in *"Lackawanna Blues"*.

Due to the fact that they usually have some revelation on the Academy Awards, the Golden Globe winners may become shoe-ins for the Oscar nominations and winners.

## Top Ten Grossing Films of

Frank Panico  
Features Editor

As the year 2006 is upon us, we can take a look back on "Top Tens of 2005." One of which is the Top Ten Grossing Movies of 2005, based on movies' success in theatres for last year. All of the movies listed were well anticipated and attended by many in theatres across the United States.

10. *Mr. & Mrs. Smith*, the action comedy thriller starring Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt, came in last place, bringing in a total of \$186,336,103. The movie was directed by Doug Liman and written by Simon Kinberg. Actors Pitt and Jolie play a couple who find out they are both assassins hired by competing agencies to kill each other.

Fans were interested to see the chemistry between the two in this film, who became a couple shortly after filming, which resulted in it landing a spot on the top ten grossing movies of the year.

9. *King Kong*. The film, starring Naomi Watts and Jack Black, brought in a total of \$186,336,103 and is still currently in theatres. The movie, set in 1933 New York, is about a movie producer who brings his cast and hired ship crew to travel to mysterious Skull Island, where they discover Kong, a giant ape who falls in love with Ann Darrow, played by Naomi Watts. The film came in as one of the most expensive movies ever, sur-

passing *Titanic* and *Spider-Man 2*, with an estimated budget of \$207 million.

8. *Eric Darnell and Tom McGrath's Madagascar*. The animated film, featuring the voices of Ben Stiller and Chris Rock, totaled \$193,136,719 in theatres. The movie about four animals who escape from the zoo and end up in Madagascar, is targeted for younger audiences but can also capture adults' attention as well.

7. Reaching the \$200 millions, *Batman Begins*. In this prequel to the Batman series, directed by Christopher Nolan, main character Bruce Wayne goes through a transformation to become Batman himself. The film stars Christopher Baile, who plays the role of Batman, and Michael Caine, who plays Alfred. With excellent special effects, including a high-tech "Bat-Mobile," the film was a success, grossing \$205,343,774.

6. One of Tim Burton's latest films, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. The film stars actor Johnny Depp, who plays an interesting and creative version of the character Willy Wonka. Thirteen-year old Freddie Highmore plays the role of Charlie Bucket. The film raked in approximately \$206,456,431. It is about a young boy, Charlie Bucket, who wins a tour of the most outstandingly bizarre chocolate factory in the world, led by the

most unusual and eccentric candy maker, Willy Wonka. Based on the book by Roald Dahl, and the screenplay written by John August, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* is sure to take fans of Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory by surprise.

5. *The Wedding Crashers*. The film has a star-studded cast, which includes Owen Wilson, Vince Vaughn, Christopher Walken, and Rachel McAdams. It is a story of two best friends who crash weddings to meet women and end up meeting their soul mates. The film collected \$209,218,368 altogether. With a surprise cameo by Will Farrell, the film is filled with comedic twists and turns.

4. Steven Spielberg's *War of the Worlds*, making \$234,280,354. The movie, starring Tom Cruise, Dakota Fanning, and Justin Chatwin, is a look at what the earth would be like if it were invaded by an outside force. As alien tripod fighting machines invade the planet, the Ferrier family, as well as the rest of the earth, struggle to survive the attack.

3. Totalling \$247,777,824, and still currently in theatres, comes *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. From the director of *Shrek* and *Shrek 2*, Andrew Adamson, comes a film

of adventure as four children travel through a wardrobe to of Narnia, and learn their

destiny. Starring Georgie Henley, Skandar Keynes, and William Moseley, the film is filled with fantasy and action. Based on the novel by C.S. Lewis and the screenplay by Ann Peacock, this film is sure to entertain.

2. The fourth book and film of the series, comes *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. The film, based on the book by J.K. Rowling, stars Daniel Radcliffe, Emma Watson, and Rupert Grint. The story for this film is about a dangerous multi-wizardary school competition that Harry finds himself selected as an underdog competitor. The movie, which includes adventure, fantasy and mystery, brought in \$281,516,498 in theatres.

1. Finally, the top grossing movie of 2005, is George Lucas's *Star Wars: Episode III- Revenge of the Sith*. The film is the last of the Star Wars series, connecting all of the pieces together. The film stars Ewan McGregor, Natalie Portman, and Hayden Christensen. The Action-packed film about Anakin Skywalker concluding his journey after fighting for years in the Clone Wars and eventually turning to the dark side to become Darth Vader, raked in \$100 million more than *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. Lucas's *Star Wars: Episode III* brought in a massive \$380,262,555 in theatres to become the top-grossing movie of 2005.

## 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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## Restrooms: A Lesson in Etiquette

Matthew Goldstein  
News Editor

Ah, the trip to the bathroom. A time for self-reflection and relief. A time to conduct your private business in near-private conditions. Recently, as seen by most NBTHS students, a time to observe both vile conduct and offensive comments. For those brave souls who seek to enter the often unsanitary realm of the stall, a new "trend" has begun to take place. Whether it be the defiling of the wall with coarse words or the destruction of equipment, it seems as though a breakdown in "bathroom morality" has swept through the ranks of certain rambunctious pupils.

Although the motivation for these random acts of vandalism will probably remain unknown, those who

perpetrate the dastardly accomplishments must have a certain goal in mind. Although the reasoning behind the impulse to rip a soap container off the wall and spread its contents on the floor seems just beyond my level of comprehension, I resign myself to

the notion that I will never be able to understand the cryptic scabbling of words that is all too often found on the dividers separating one lavatory from another. Now, I do believe that I have at least a tiny understanding of the English language and its proper application. The degree of mystery surrounding these phrases may require a skilled linguist to finally decipher what these brutes truly mean to say. Maybe we as the studentry of NBTHS are just not meant to find out what exactly is so important that it requires the defacing of school property.

Besides the use of the bathroom as a personal bulletin board, I also find issue with those who feel it necessary to destroy everything that is not nailed down (or even that which is.) It seems as though it just isn't enough when our hard working custodians replace the amenities that are obliterated by a careless and presumably angry student. Maybe the school should invest in a bathroom attendant who can dole out the soap and water to those who can handle the awesome responsibility of hygiene. Or maybe kids should just learn to grow up.

Although I am not the confrontational sort, I would address the "potty-vandals" of this school with

the following comments: "Congratulations! You have proven your strength and maturity by kicking in the door to an aluminum stall. You have now made it impossible to have a moment's privacy without the fear of a boot crashing through the door and into your face.



**GRAFFITI:** Colorful choice words from NBTHS students

PHOTO BY JENNIFER PEREZ



**GARBAGE:** The garbage in the upstairs girl's bathroom

perpetrate the dastardly accomplishments must have a certain goal in mind. Although the reasoning behind the impulse to rip a soap container off the wall and spread its contents on the floor seems just beyond my level of comprehension, I resign myself to

Besides destroying your own restroom, you have proven that the most basic functions of a human being can now be restricted due to your own senselessness. Rather than respect one of the few privileges that we are allowed, you have purposely tried to become a nuisance to the school community. Learn some common courtesy and take pride in your facilities."

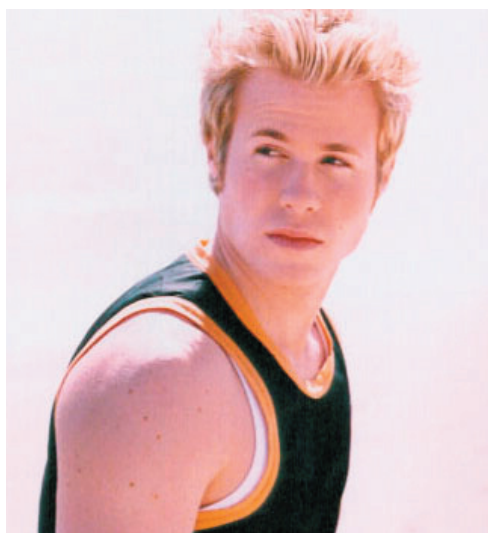
Putting aside my anger, I will most likely never be able to say those things to the defacers of the washroom, and my anger will have to reside in this column. I do hope that one day all will be able to use the restroom in peace, without having to bear witness to a berserk student who needs to spoil something that they will eventually have to use.

## There And Back

Frank Panico  
Features Writer

Imagine selling millions of albums, selling out the world's largest venues, and having the love of thousands of adoring fans. This was the life of Ashley Parker Angel, designated heartthrob of the late boy band O-Town. Sadly his rock-star lifestyle came to an abrupt end and in 2003 O-Town disbanded. The blond haired pretty-boy cashed in his profits and immediately moved to Los Angeles to launch a solo career.

Less than two years later Ashley Parker Angel was completely broke, living on the couch of his pregnant girlfriends mother. Angel later



**THEN:** Ashley Parker Angel as a member of the popular boy band Otown.

explained that it was not frivolous spending that placed him in this unfortunate situation; it was the binding contracts that the made-for-TV boy band was forced to sign. After years of touring and number one singles, Parker was left with barely enough money to support him and his girlfriend for one year. After that year Angel began to seriously contemplate what he needed to do to revive his career and support his family.

So Angel went around Hollywood from meeting to meeting, armed with an acoustic guitar, playing his own tunes for executives. Angel, who now sports Kurt Cobain-esque hair, eventually found a taker in Blackground Records, Aaliyah's former label and home of JoJo and Toni Braxton. Around that same time last year, MTV also tracked Angel down and, compelled by his riches-to-rags story, began following him with cameras.

His show, appropriately entitled "There and Back", airs every Monday night and chronicles the struggling artists attempts at reinventing himself while dealing with the everyday pressures of starting a new family. "My only reservation at first was like I'm coming from a reality TV show and I don't want to be looked at as a one-trick pony," An-

gel said in a recent MTV interview. "I want people to know that I'm the real deal and I was able to go out and get a solo record deal without the power of a television show ... and one of the things that [the show's executive producer, Rod Aissa] said that really made sense to me and is, 'What better way to show people how much you've grown and how different you are now as an artist and personally than to do a show like this?' And ultimately I completely agreed with him."

The first season of "There and Back" chronicles the making of Angel's debut solo album and all the struggles he must overcome in the process. Angel co-wrote all the tracks, working alongside top producers like Clif Magness, Soulshock & Karlin, Max Martin and the Matrix. Many times producers and Angel suffer minor creative differences and these segments make for great "in the studio" drama. The cameras also follow Angel to his first solo gig in which viewers will experience a complete departure from what many might think to be a stereotypical boy-bander. Angel's career is filled with triumphs and failures and gives audiences an interesting perspective to the life of a struggling musician.

Along with following Angel from studio to studio, "There and Back" goes home with the singer, getting up close and personal with his pregnant girlfriend, Tiffany. The show gives an intimate look into the couples sometimes-rocky relationship while also giving a real life glimpse into what is like to become a young parent. "I won't lie:



**NOW:** Ashley Parker Angel is trying to recover his career on the show *There and Back*

When I found out I was going to be a dad I was so scared," Angel added. "It was at a time when there was like so many unknowns ... but I embraced it and I'm so glad that I did because it's a miracle. And everyone says that, but people will get a chance to see on 'There and Back' my baby be born. We were open and honest. We let the cameras into every aspect of our lives. They're in the delivery room with us. And I'm pretty sure this is the very first baby actually born on MTV."

"There and Back" is completely original reality TV. The show is sure to strike a chord with all kinds of audiences. Ashley Parker Angel had been there and he will surely make it back.

## The Way I See It

Byron Goundrey  
Editor-in-Chief



### Can You Hear Me Now???

I live in what many people would call a "technically challenged household." Many of the things thought of as necessities, such as video games, cable TV, and cell phones were always thought of as frivolous luxuries by my parents.

When I was in elementary school, I remember kids telling me about all the fun shows they were watching on Nickelodeon and Cartoon Network, only for my parents to tell me that cable TV fries your brain. They gave me a library card instead. And, it wasn't until last year that my parents traded in their 18 year old Toyota for a new one. But even the new one still has the manual crank windows and locks.

I never had any game consoles, and I was the last person I knew to get a CD player or a DVD player. Even when everyone I knew had hi-tech cell phones with camera and video capability, I still had one of the first Nokia phones, with its most noteworthy feature, the game Snake. Because of its thick, bulky shape, I was not only embarrassed to use it around my friends, but could barely hold it.

This all changed Christmas Day. When I thought I had opened all my gifts, my mom plopped a big, heavy package in my lap. Given my parents fondness of academic pursuits, I first expected the package to be AP review

books. So, naturally, it came as a great surprise to see "Verizon Wireless" written all over the inside of the box. I pulled out something I'd only seen in commercials: a sleek, brand new, color flip-phone.

This gift surprised me for two reasons. Not only did I think my parents would have been unwilling to buy such a phone, but I never would have thought they'd have the technical savvy to pick out a good one. It pleased me that my parents would think enough of me to buy it and it gave me hope that maybe they're finally moving out of the Stone Age.

The new phone makes it much easier for me to keep in touch with people. The speakerphone feature and the Bluetooth earpiece let me talk for as long as I like without having to hold a heavy phone. I therefore find myself calling people I have not spoken to in a long time. And of course with the phone's sleek design, I look cool doing it.

I think my parents may be starting to realize that technology is not so satanic after all. It might not be as intellectually stimulating as a subscription to the New York Times, but it could benefit in other ways. Plus, if a new cell phone makes me more social, just think what cable TV would do!

So in this blessed New Year, there is definitely hope for us all!