
**Voices of Joy**

By Alex Gomez  
Midway reporter

Singing red polyester blazers, the eight U-Highers in the Chicago Children's Choir stood behind light projected snowflakes as they sang Francis Poulenc’s “Mass in G” during a December 10 concert at Millennium Park. The “Songs of the Season” performance incorporated African, Latin American and Motown era music.

Many U-Highers began singing in religious choirs as children but became uninterested as they grew older. But those who wanted to continue singing joined the Children’s Choir.

The Reverend Christopher Moore founded the Choir in 1996 to unite young people from different backgrounds by making music together. Headquartered in the Chicago Cultural Center, 78 East Washington in the Loop, the Choir offers after school programs and neighborhood choirs. About 3,200 children participate. This month, the Choir is traveling to private homes and business parties singing Christmas carols.

“The CCC is not religious-affiliated, but the most famous choir songs are Christian religious songs,” Senior Beanie Meadow said. “We sing about a lot of things that I don’t believe in. But I like the songs because they’re pretty and if you let yourself enjoy the song, you can have what we call a ‘Magical Musical Moment.’ Whether or not you believe in it, the beauty of the song helps you understand the meaning of what you’re singing.”

Beanie and Sophomore Addie Epstein started singing in the Children’s Choir at KAM Isaiah Israel Temple in Hyde Park, where the choir would sing on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

“It was a very big difference to go from the kids’ temple choir to the CCC,” Beanie said. “It is a concert choir, a top group, which means that everyone has at least some talent. The music is better and the execution and conducting is more professional.”

The Choir has released two world music CDs in the past two years, “Sita Ram” and “Open Up Your Heart.” It has sent many members around the world for concerts and volunteer work.

“Last year we went to Prague for a week and it was a wonderful experience,” Senior Nick Fedder said. “You see how music is universal and how it's appreciated wherever you go. Music is important regardless of any cultural conflict. Through traveling I learned how music can bring people from different backgrounds together. In the choir, we’re diplomats of peace. To have young children going to different countries to sing, it's just so true.”

The music U-Highers learn in the Choir unites them with others when traveling in and out of the city, Addie feels.

“A lot of my closest friends are in choir and we hang out a lot,” she explained. “I travel all over with them, so we spend less of time together. One time we were walking under an underpass on the North Side and we stopped and Nick started singing. The sound made an echo and we all knew the different parts of the piece, so we were all singing. It was so beautiful and cool too. It’s fun to always be with people who are so musical.”

Bringing her singing talent to U-High when she transferred from Lincoln Park High School last year, Senior Courtni Brown has sung in U-High assemblies and the national anthem for sports games. Courtni used to sing in Lincoln Park’s Advanced Girls’ Chorus and Gospel Choir as a 4th-grader she sang in the Chicago Children’s Choir.

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**Voices of Compassion**

Volunteers reach out to serve

By Rohini Tobacowala  
Associate editor

A 16-year-old girl looks herself in her bedroom to escape an abusive father banging at her door. Frightened and with nowhere else to turn, she picks up the phone and dialed 1-800-RUNAWAY. On the other end, Senior Rachel Hannessian answers the call.

Many U-Highers volunteer at community service sites outside of the Community Service Learning Program after serving their 20 hours as sophomores. Along with Senior Emma Lantos, Rachel volunteers as a crisis line worker Tuesday nights in Lincoln Park at the National Runaway Switchboard, the country’s only 24-hour hotline for runaways and homeless youth. Guidance Counselor Will Dix is one of many members who train crisis line workers. The 16-year-old’s call was one of the organization received that night, Rachel said.

“I answered a phone call from a girl who was locked in her room,” Rachel said. “She was still on probation for stealing a car when she was 14. Her mom had just died, too. Her dad was pretty hard on her and he would say awful things to her but she would just have to listen. He always threatened her that if she didn’t do what he told her to do, he would send her back to a juvenile detention center. “As we were discussing this, she stopped talking and I could hear her dad yelling in the background, saying he was coming in and then we got disconnected. I’ll really bad after that and I couldn’t stop wondering what could have happened to her. I just have to accept it. After that phone call, I feel like the hotline has helped me mature as a person and it gives me a fulfilling feeling that I helped out someone in need.”

Rachel learned about the Switchboard as a Peer Leader during last year’s March Community Learning Kick-off, when Community Learning Program site coordinators talked to freshmen about specific volunteer sites. She said she wanted to volunteer at the Switchboard because she loves giving advice to peers.

“To be a crisis line worker, I had to go through 36 hours of training, where a group of us were taught to handle different phone calls in unusual situations,” Rachel said. “In every phone call, there’s a five-step process. First, we have to establish a rapport and learn about the situation. We explore facts and feelings. Once we’ve heard enough, we focus on the main issues. Then, we see what we can

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Students, faculty ready to take a break away

Philippines, Lebanon among destinations

By Julie Carter

Crowning down on fried pork and singing old boy band songs, Sophomore Jaya Sah and her family plan to stand by through the Philippines to Manila, Cagayan de Oro and Malapascua during this two week winter vacation, starting this Saturday.

Vacations for other U-Highers and faculty include jetting to exotic countries, unwinding at home or traveling to other states with family.

Locals colorfully costumed at Mary, Jesus and Joseph parade past as Jaya, with her extended family, plan to cheer in their finest clothing Christmas Day, continuing an annual Philippine tradition.

"We have a huge amount of extended family in those places, so we have been gathering there each year of my entire life," Jaya said. "There's a Christmas mass that we go to, which is a big deal. You dress up for it and in the past there have even been parades with people acting like the Virgin Mary, carrying a baby and stuff.

"But what I'm most looking forward to is just hanging out with all my family. Even if we're just sitting around and talking or having meals together, it's a lot of fun to be with them. We usually eat rice and a lot of meat." "It seems weird, but we even have a pig with fried skin, which is similar to a Hawaiian Kalua pig. I don't sing much karaoke, but my family sings a lot of "We pop songs like the "Titanic" theme and stuff by the Backstreet Boys."

Spicing up the break's second week, Junior Symone Buckner will attend a Michigan winter sports camp after extended family comes for Kwanzaa celebrations.

"I'm going to winter camp for the first time," Symone explained. "It's at Camp Pinewood, where I have been going every summer for five years. I'm really excited to go snowboarding and hang out with all of my friends from camp who I don't see during the school year."

The perfect recipe

Sophomore Sophie Ortel knows just the right place to get some holiday cheer.

Find some holiday cheer at the University of Chicago Bookstore!

Looking for a new recipe to bring some holiday cheer this season or maybe a gift for a friend? Just a few minutes from U-High, the University of Chicago Bookstore offers a large selection of books, board games and magazines.

There's something for everyone! Make a trip to the University of Chicago Bookstore for some holiday cheer today!

Helping at holiday time

Plastic bags and cardboard boxes, bursting with canned food, were collected in October and November for the Black Students' Association drive aiding the Hyde Park Food Pantry. With the drives ending Friday, the Jewish Students' Association and Service Corps are collecting clothing and gifts for Brand New Beginnings Women's Shelter and La Rabida Children's Hospital, respectively. BSA President Alexa Rice, center, joins Antonio Robles and Gabrielle Knight in sorting the nonperishable goods.

People of Color delegates return with ideas for U-High

By Sarah Fischer

"I went to the University of Chicago for the Color Conference and the Student Diversity Leadership Conference November 30-December 2.

Marking its 19th anniversary, this year's Color conference, with the theme "Uptown, Uplift, Up to Us: Focusing on the Challenge Ahead" brought together students from independent schools around the country.

U-High delegates include Juniors Melissa Gracia and Artis Lewis and Seniors Melanie McClain, Alexa Rice and Tara Summers. Guidance Counselors Asia Ahmed and History Teacher Charles Brinham served as faculty delegates.

Discussions, led by students who had been to the conference before, took place in groups.

In small groups, we did trigger games to get discussions started," Alexa said. "One game had posters on opposite sides of the room, one saying I agree and the other saying I disagree.

"We were asked questions like 'Do you think gay marriage should be legal?' and were supposed to stand representing how the winter time, at night, you hear nothing.

"We bring up a lot of books and just read and sleep. It's a good rest. The road trip is nice because my wife and I get to spend five hours alone.

"I never thought I'd say this as a grown man, but I'm perfectly happy walking around little shops with her, looking at stuff. It's very picturesque up there, it is quaint towns between Green Bay and Lake Michigan.

"Especially when there's snow, it's really beautiful."
**What is a block schedule?**

By Dana Alfasa

A reaching over to turn off his alarm clock at 5 a.m., Ted begins his morning routine of last-minute cramming before his 6 a.m. calculus test. But, what if Ted did not have math so early the next day? Or what if Ted did not have math that day at all? These are possibilities being considered by a six-faculty member Scheduling Committee with Principal Matt Horvat as changes to U-High's daily schedule.

Honed by Science Department Chairperson Doug Housinger, the Committee gave an in-depth questionnaire to faculty members in November, including questions about likes and dislikes of the current schedule and a black diagram, where teachers were instructed to draw out their ideal schedule. Following departmental discussions of the survey, responses are due back to Ms. Housinger by February 1.

Noting the lack of change in U-High’s schedule, Mr. Horvat says U-High is the first school he has worked at where classes meet at the same time every day. Looking at a variety of schedules, the Scheduling Committee aims to have recommendations submitted to other committees throughout the school by March, according to Mr. Horvat.

"We plan to look at a 4x4 more schedules from other schools," he says. "We don’t want to create an entirely new schedule. By March, the committee should have given to many other committees throughout the school for feedback. Part of the complexity is that we have a Lower School and a Middle School to coordinate with. Ultimately, the decision will reside with me, but I want to make that it is as accessible to all constituents in the school as possible."

Pending approval of high school schedules from both Dallas and Chicago, Student Council led an open forum November 15: 40 U-Highers attended.

"The first open forum was Student Council’s attempt to get conversation going," Dean of Students Larry McFarlane said. "The faculty has to know how the students feel and I don’t think the students can be ignored, but they also should not think they are the ones driving what is happening. It could turn up in the end that the schedule we have now is the one that works best.

"One issue I would like to see addressed is the upper level A.P. courses. A lot of teachers say that the instructional level of minutes is simply way too low and both students and teachers go nuts at that last part of the year because of it. I have three kids who went to U-High, who at times were stressed out of their minds. There have been all of these studies about sleep deprivation and the fact of the matter is that teens do not sleep well at eight in the morning. I am amazed at how little sleep the kids get and it reaches a point where you can’t produce no matter how hard you try. I do not know if changes to the schedule or a new schedule would really change that."

One option researched would limit the number of classes U-Highers can take from eight to six, putting many elective programs such as art, drama and journalism at risk. Journalist Adviser Wayne Bresler feels that changes to U-High’s daily schedule would not affect its journalism program.

"The same schedule where block type schedules have been implemented, the journalism programs have usually crumbled," Mr. Bresler said. "At other schools, they have continued to thrive. At U-High, journalism has survived having no newspaper, no office, no budget, being kicked out of Pine Arts, attempts at censorship in the early days and everything else that has come along. We will always find a way to keep it going, which includes making journalism outside the school day available for credit. I would not want the school to not try something different because of journalism."

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**Principal, faculty try new finals schedule to ease student pressures**

By Tom Stanley-Recker

As Winter Break approaches and tests civil students’ minds in the final days of the quarter, Principal Matt Horvat is looking back and evaluating the effectiveness of a new quarter end schedule.

After Mr. Horvat arrived at U-High last summer, one of the first topics students brought to him was the finals schedule at the end of the quarter. Students said that faculty deviated from last year’s finals schedule, so Mr. Horvat devised a new schedule incorporating students’ suggestions.

Smaller than this quarter’s final schedule, a tentative arrangement for the end of winter quarter is also being considered. Now each teacher can choose between three pre-selected days to administer tests, except Music and Computer Science teachers, who have two choices.

"There is a hysteria during these weeks," Mr. Horvat said. "The Curriculum Committee felt the new schedule would reduce stress. The problem last year was testing days didn’t always correlate with class meetings. Now, faculty can decide among the allotted days. This will also hopefully clear up teachers feeling pressed about doing grades on the last day of the quarter."

"I want students to know when their testing days are. Under the schedule, they won’t have to deal with everything at the same time. The understanding is the tests aren’t final but have the same value for grades and cover the same amount as tests at any other point in the year."

Though he hopes students and faculty will benefit from the schedule, according to Mr. Horvat, the finals schedule remains a work in progress.

"My whole idea is to be consistent," Mr. Horvat said. "No universal agreement yet exists among departments about homework during test weeks. At least the new schedule will give students and faculty a break between test days. However, if it causes problems, I’m open to further suggestions."

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**Parents will get access to grades**

By Marissa Miles-Coccoaro

Associate editor

If all goes well, parents will be able to access test scores, grades and attendance records online by the beginning of next year. Mr. Horvat announced, "We want to open a system called Apple Companions’ website, more than 7,800 schools nationwide use PowerSchool, a large database program used to organize attendance, medical, test and grade records.

After the introduction of PowerSchool here, administrators have been suggesting that PowerSchool be used for parents’ benefit. A student membership Technical Committee, which has examined and evaluated faculty websites, are investigating those suggestions, according to Math Teacher Joe Canright, chairperson.

"Many parents have been asking why we are using PowerSchool for their benefit," Ms. Canright said. "But we have not started making a demo available to parents because we still have to show the teachers how to use PowerSchool effectively. We are trying to show a demo by February, but that may not happen."

Though some students interviewed believe making PowerSchool available to parents represents an invasion of privacy and will not help students at all, Junior Jason Rowley said, "I wouldn’t very likely parents for you his grades so they can stay informed.

"That’s the way it was at my old school, Lyons Township High School in Western Springs," he explained. "It isn’t a bad thing because it allows parents to track you, so if you start slip, they can catch you.

"At my old school, it was part of my daily routine to see if my teachers had updated my grades. It made things easier because I didn’t have to continuously ask my teachers what I was getting."
On library board, senior selects books, meets authors

By Graham Salinger
Midway reporter

It’s a Wednesday in November and Senior Jacqueline Claussaid walks through rows of brown shelves stacked top to bottom with books.

She makes her way to her monthly Teen Advisory Council meeting where she meets with eight other high school students from the city to select books that should be added to the Chicago Public Library’s collection of young adult literature.

Members of the Council discuss books with their authors and work with authors to organize book discussions.

Funded with a grant from the McCormick Tribune Foundation, the Council meets at the Harold Washington Library, 400 South State Street, which was designed by Thomas Beeby, parent of U-High graduates Markus Beeby ’95 and Johannes Beeby ’98.

The books selected come from a list created by the Literary Committee of the Chicago Public Library, 13 librarians.

Members of the Council are nominated by librarians from public and private schools. Candidates then fill out an application and interviewed with the Council.

Asked in March 2005 to recommend a Lab Schools student for the council, U-High Librarian Shirley Volks decided on Jacqueline.

“I knew she was a big reader,” Ms. Volks said. “She came here as a freshman and asked for suggestions on what to read. She even gave me a few suggestions. I think Jacqueline is really cool, the way she can balance Model UN and still have a passion for recreational reading.”

Jacqueline believes that with the help of the Teen Advisory Council, the library’s collection has improved.

“The collection seemed to have a lot of classics, like ‘Pride and Prejudice’ and ‘Jane Eyre,’ but it didn’t have any contemporaries or books by young adult authors like John Green,” Jacqueline explained.

Jacqueline hopes that by exposing teenagers to new authors such as John Green, who recently appeared at the Chicago Public Library to discuss his latest novel, “The Fault in Our Stars,” the library can serve the needs of teenagers so they can be more thoughtful.

“I think it is hard to balance the needs of the different parts of the city,” Jacqueline said. “The main focus of our program is to promote teen literacy through author visits and teen discussion groups.”

“Discussing books with authors changes your perspective. With young adult writers especially, you can identify with their ideas,” John Green’s writing, for example, seems close to what teens feel.”

Twenty-four get Merit program commendations

Twenty-four seniors have received Commended honors in the National Merit Scholarship program for high standardized test scores.

The scores were just under those required to make semifinalist status among high school seniors in Illinois.

The Commended students are as follows: Marcell Babai, Alicia Brzezinski, Leo Carson, Dan Engel-Hall, Zach Feldman, Evan Graff, Max Cusano-Grazzini, Rachel Haarsieck, Zeno Harlit, Phil Jacobson, Helen Jin, Adina Levin, Noëlle McGuire, Delney Nichols, David Orliff, Elisabeth Parker, Namrata Patel, Ello Popko, Claire Redfield, Jennifer Ronner, Amalia Roth, Mac Routhier, Scott Weis, Ross Waugh.
New Language Lab leader forges future
...using technology for best learning
By Gretchen Eng
Midway reporter

Speaking through the microphone of his bulky headset while hovering over his corner computer station in the new World Language Lab, U-High 207, Technical Assistant George Pezzon Dyer explains to students occupying three rows of shining white iMacs how to use the software to record themselves.

With the previous Foreign Language Lab more than two decades old, the Parents’ Association raised more than a quarter of a million dollars through its “Connections” benefit last year for a new lab.

The lab incorporates several methods for teaching four World Languages. Resources range from 28 Digital Language Lab-based iMacs to six conferencing stations with large presentation screens for groups. Construction was completed last summer.

Six-hundred-thirty-six miles away, Mr. Dyer was searching for Chicago job openings from Charlotte, N.C. “I saw there was a job opening and I put in an application. I remember I waited until after we moved,” he said. “I ended up going in for an interview later and then I was hired. I was working well before the construction was completed.”

“This job really interested me because I have a background in language and technology. I worked as a computer programmer and taught Spanish. I speak Spanish fluently and some French. But I don’t speak French perfectly. My wife speaks it.”

Previously a Spanish teacher at the McGillie School, a Tennessee boys’ academy, Mr. Dyer found a different way of teaching.

“It’s like comparing apples and oranges,” he said. “I would say that the mood here is a lot more relaxed. I haven’t gotten to know too many of the students here but from what I’ve seen it’s more casual. There was a dress code at McGillie.”

“I used technology there a lot but there was no lab dedicated to just language. There was no ability for students to record their responses on a computer. I was very interested in this job because it combined both language and technology.”

Once hired, Mr. Dyer chose DllL, or Digital Language Lab, as the program the World Language Lab would use once construction was complete.

“Makes this lab indescribably unique in the DLL software because it extends what experiences using evaluations and Science and English teacher Shauna Houghton presented further endorments for the idea.

“The student teacher evaluations have proven to be very valuable to teachers at other places, including the University of Chicago.”

“Mr. McGill told the Midway. “A few teachers at our school have even done this on their own. If students give serious, thoughtful responses, teachers can really benefit. Who could provide better feedback to a teacher than a student?”

For ‘Beloved,’ teacher turns class to blogs
By Linda Huber
Midway reporter

Surprised? That is how students of English Teacher Carolyn Walter said they felt when they learned that they would be writing blogs as part of studying Toni Morrison’s “Beloved.”

This quarter, “Beloved” was studied in Mrs. Walter’s “If Memory Serves” English elective, featured in the October 13 issue of the Midway. Mrs. Walter incorporated blogs, or web journals, into her daily homework. She divided the book into 10 to 15-page assignments, and students were required to respond with two-page responses.

Mrs. Walter posted the responses on two class blogs for other students to comment on and work toward a nightly assignment.

Amateur writers began using blogs in the late ’90s to post their work and now everyone from high school students to professional journalists use blogs, as numerous newspapers and magazines have reported.

“I think the main reason I chose to do this project was because it provided a venue for continuing discussion outside the classroom and it really drew people in, I think started the conversation for the next class,” Mrs. Walter explained. “I liked the idea that the students could do work even when absent from class and catch up on things when they had missed them, that sort of thing.”

“But it was helpful for me because I was absent one day. I still was able to go and read what the students were thinking and able to jump right into discussion the next day. I got the idea during the first week of school, Planning Week. I had heard that the school would have in-house blogging capabilities and I was interested in that as a possibility for a teaching tool.”

“I decided to do it for ‘Beloved’ because that was the most challenging text and I would be spending the most time on it. I don’t know if I will continue to do it next year. I will see World Language Lab Technical Assistant George Pezzon Dyer with Tara Summers and Peter Hepplewhite.

“Usually get listening assignments for the day,” Tara said. “I think DLL’s pretty cool and I guess it’s a good tool for learning language because you can actually record yourself and do other things with it.”

This lab is a lot different from the one we used to use because of the program and the technology. We used to only be able to listen to things, but now we can do a lot more.”

Teachers to try student evaluations
By Stephanie Stern
Principal editor

U-Highers may find their teachers inviting them to evaluate instruction methods, curriculum material and courses soon.

Lab School Director David Magill brought up the idea of evaluations last year. During the faculty’s meeting November 7, English Teacher Darlene McCampbell described her experience using evaluations and Science Teacher Sharon Houghton presented further endorments for the idea.

“The student teacher evaluations have proven to be very valuable to teachers at other places, including the University of Chicago,” Mr. Magill told the Midway. “A few teachers at our school have even done this on their own. If students give serious, thoughtful responses, teachers can really benefit. Who could provide better feedback to a teacher than a student?”

“The department chair and principal already evaluate teachers throughout the school year, but it is my experience that the best and most valuable feedback comes from the students themselves because they are the ones who see the teachers every day.”

“We are attempting to make the students feel as if they are part of the teaching-learning process and that their voices count. I’m sure some students will use the evaluations as an opportunity to unload issues with a teacher, but those who take it seriously and give real feedback are helping to improve the school and give themselves a better environment to learn in.”

Among teachers already using evaluations, Mrs. Houghton believes student evaluations help point out what works and what doesn’t work in a course.

“My course has changed dramatically from...” (continues on page 20)

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Academic teams stockpile resources

Science squads aim to repeat top placings
By Marissa Miles-Coccaro

Facing four competitions in a three-month period, Science Team's 14-member Olympiad squad is building machines and studying old tests for their first try at the Loyola University Olympiad Invitational, February 3.

The 13-member squad Worldwide Youth Science and Engineering squad is preparing with weekly practice for Regionals, February 8 at Kankakee Community College, and State competition last year. The team also placed 1st at WYSE Sectionals, State and at Science Olympiad Regional last year and placed 6th in the Olympiad State competition. With 19 returning and eight new members, the U-Highers aim to reclaim 1st places at both Science Olympiad Regionals, March 3 at Benedictine University in Lisle and WYSE Sectionals, March 15 at U-High and State competition, April 18 at the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana. Science Olympiad squad also plans to attend the Prospect Invitational, February 17 at Mt. Prospect High School and State, April 21 at University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana.

“The team has been preparing since two weeks before school started,” said Senator Andrew Sugiy, co-captain of the Olympiad team with Senior Rebecca Resnick. “We are more prepared that most years and that should pay off. We also have new members that show promise and are motivated. They especially like building robots, though I wish they had interest in more areas of science.”

WYSE members led by Presidents Katherine Zhou and David Xu, juniors, individually take tests on Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Math, English and Computer Science. Both squads are helped by Sponsor Sharon Hoisington, Science Department chairperson, when studying for tests and building machines.

Eager Math Team revs up to resume competitions
By Marissa Miles-Coccaro

Using a two-month break, Math Team has been preparing for the North Suburban Mathematics League Conference, February 1 at Walter Payton and Illinois Council of Teachers of Mathematics Regionals, March 24, place to be announced.

Last year's team placed 11th in the NSML and scored 1st place in ICMT Regionals and 2nd in State. Placing 16th of 14 schools with 481 points, this year's team has competed in two NSML meets, September 27 at Conant High in Hoffman Estates and October 30 at Proviso West in Hillside. Willowbrook High School's men's team in Villa Park followed last Thursday, after MIDWAY deadline.

Math Teacher Jane Carrington sponsors the 30-member team, evenly split between 15 returners and 15 new members.

“Our biggest strength is that we cover the math topics in depth for competitions during regular class, while other schools have to teach their students new things for just the team,” Ms. Carrington said, “Our weakness is scheduling problems with other class events. The freshmen were not able to attend the third NSML, because they had Band and Choir commitments which took away from our cumulative points.”

Returning for 4th year, Senior Katherine Lauterdale became the team's representative, solving problems and explaining her answers to judges. Katherine scored 31 points of 50 at the September 27 meet and tied for 1st place with 44 points at the October 26 meet.

“The first meet was nerve-racking,” Katherine said. “But between the first and second meet I improved a lot. The first meet all my competitions were busy studying but during the second meet we all had a conversation and it was very relaxed.”
Character Sketch

Renaissance man enjoys multiple talents, interests

It’s THE KID that comes to his Middle School Orchestra concert in full tuxedo. He’s the one doing grueling physical exercises in the school’s weight room, working for that extra edge that allowed him to break U-High’s triple jump record by a foot. He’s the charming, academic wonderboy seldom seen without his shiny black loafers, khaki and signature Hawaiian shirt. He’s Andrew Sugaya.

Moving to Chicago from Florida in 3rd grade, the senior has developed a variety of talents. He excels in track, is an accomplished violinist and devotes much of his time to scientific research. And on top of all that, he’s managed to become a skilled magician.

“My father moved back to Florida four years ago to take a new job,” Andrew said. “My mother stays here in Hyde Park with me during the year to take care of me so I can go to the Lab Schools, but we visit my dad regularly during breaks and birthdays. After I go to college, we plan on selling our place here so my mother can move back to Florida.”

During those visits, Andrew conducts research at Central Florida University in a lab run by his father, Dr. Kiminobu Sugaya. There he runs tests and experiments to find solutions to health and environmental problems.

“It started when I was bored while visiting my father’s lab when I was 8 years old,” Andrew said. “Now I’m working on multiple projects. Working with embryonic stem cells is unethical so I used adult human cells in my research. Embryonic stem cells can change into anything, so after we implement certain changes to adult human cells, we can use them in the same way.

“Using a special treatment, we then change bone marrow cells into neurons by implanting dormant genes in the brains of Parkinson’s rats. They usually show signs of improvement.”

A modern day Edison, Andrew has strived to invent innovative natural light sources and develop super healing capabilities.

“I’m doing a project putting firefly genes into plants called bioluminescence. The final goal is to have plants that will shine bright enough to replace lights. Another project, I can’t really explain anything, but we’re working on a project to enable people to regenerate body parts, like Wolverine from X-Men. If someone’s finger gets cut off the final goal with this project is to allow a person to grow that finger back after an hour or so.

“Ultimately I want to make some money as a researcher. I would like to impact the world and I know that’s what everyone says, but if I could find the cure to Parkinson’s disease that would actually be amazing. Stem cells are one of the hottest topics in research right now and Harvard has a great new stem cell program, so with my background I think I would really fit in well there.”

Nine years ago, Andrew began playing the violin for school. Unlike many U-Highers who stop playing when they satisfy a requirement, Andrew stuck with it.

“I’ve been playing since I was 10, only because we had to pick an instrument in 3rd grade. I started taking lessons after two years and I’ve been playing in the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra for four years. I like playing concertos and romantic music.

“My violin is a romantic French violin made in 1720 which fits the music well. One of the coolest experiences I’ve had was my one week tour of central Europe. We toured through Prague, Vienna and Budapest.

“The violin is a nice way to express emotions but the best part by far, is that you get to wear a tuxedo.”

With his natural ability to communicate with small groups of people, Andrew quickly mastered skills of illusion, says senior Marcell Babai.

“I started teaching magic to Andrew freshman year and within a year he learned what it took me two years to figure out,” said Marcell.

“Just like he plays the violin, Andrew knows how to perform. He loves impressing good-looking blonde girls.”

-Marcell Babai, senior

Angry sophomore by Eric Cochrane

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U-Highers get taste of legend troupe in memorable ‘boot camp’ experience

By Kyle Brunke
Midway reporter

For your chains. A cold, barren stage. Lights. Powerful lights. U-Higher stands before an audience and begins a comedian, one to give sounds of laughter within the cavernous walls of "The Second City Junior, Gretchen. Eng. Eva Jaeger and Tom Brewer have all undergone the same daily routine of Summer Boot Camp.

Second City, 1626 North Wells Street, jump started both Saturday Night Live and the film, "Animal House." "They're in comedy heaven," said "Groundhog Day." Growing from theater groups within the University of Chicago during the late 1940s and early 1950s, The Second City soon evolved into an international phenomenon.

"This is a two week intensive program," Youth Program Coordinator Jeff Gandy said. "From 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. it is lean improvization and sketch writing techniques to develop a show. Our method is based on: we play, we have fun. The students can redo a scene and improve on it. This is a group activity where working together is a key part."

Interested in joining Second City because of its sterling reputation, Gretchen yearned for the experience.

"My friend overheard me doing an impersonation and she thought it was funny," Gretchen explained. "She recommended Boot Camp. Last summer I took both classes and had a wonderful experience in the sketch writing class. Improv is a little more difficult. It feels awful to deliver a bad joke, but part of improv is the recovery so I don't often think about it while I'm performing. The camp was something fun on the side. I really enjoyed it."

An elusive dream propelled Eva to join Second City.

"For a while I wanted to pursue acting and therefore pursued an acting camp," Eva said. "It was tough to find a particular place that suited my brand of comedy, but I finally found it in Second City. Although I no longer attend, I learned a lot about the art of comedy. I know this will serve me well later on in life."

Particular words can manage to stun and amaze an audience, Tom explained.

"A friend knew I was interested in comedy and told me about Second City," Tom said. "It was a real edifying and exhilarating experience. This is in a place where you feel comfortable. I learned improv like a pro. Gretchen leads a touring company and I'm part of it."

Improvisation provides the proper solution to describe the connection between a performer and a spectator, Gretchen believes.

"Improv is the ability to establish a relationship quickly with the other people on the stage and to present a character to be able to play off the other people," Gretchen explained. "The audience plays a very important part in the scene because their reactions can change the direction you want to go. Improvisation is entirely about playing to the top of your intelligence."

Second City program participants Gretchen Eng, Tom Brewer, and Eva Jaeger, joined by Nathaniel Worcester.

Photo by Yostine Lee

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Fresh incentives push history programs into future

Classroom makeover encourages discussion

By Nathan Bishop
Midway reporter

Light reflects off the thick lenses of History Teacher Chris Janus’ glasses. His mouth curves into a satisfied smile as his booming voice exquisitely describes new wooden tables for his classroom.

He gets the idea for the tables from Middle School Humanities Teacher Jan Yount’s room. Then at a seminar over the summer at Exeter Academy in Pennsylvania he became inspired by a teacher who used student-made wooden furniture around large wooden tables participate more in class discussions.

Mr. Janus got help from Mrs. Amy Stanley, parent of Sophomore Tom Becker. Mrs. Stanley arranged for carpenter Osvaldo Morales to fashion six wooden tables on rollers for $2,700. The school covered the cost.

Mr. Janus “Principal Matt Horvat really came through,” Mr. Janus explained. “I’m very happy with the tables. I like the idea of a space that makes it easier to put books on and aesthetically they’re much more pleasing than the desk. They promote a semi-classroom-like environment. I enjoy when the room is changing. I think a lot of classrooms are sterile, so that’s important to have visual change, it may seem stupid but it really helps. The tables have also created this new space in the center of the room, and I’m very keen on the idea of building a map of Europe there.”

Students like the change, too.

“I think the tables will help discussion, and it just nice to have more space to put your books,” said A.P. European History student Paul Eissenseam, sophomore. “I also think it will help because people hide in the back when they have not done the reading. For one thing, it is easier to lead discussion when you can see everyone in the class. If it were up to us, we’d put these tables in every classroom.”

Tables are not Mr. Janus’ only innovation. He has also introduced new speakers and a lecture series. Lectures by professional economists are given during lunch.

In his A.P. European History class Mr. Janus invited Eric Truffaut of the Art Institute to give lectures. Aspiring history teacher Christie Grist and A.P. Testing Coordinator Chris Harper assist Mr. Janus in his A.P. Economics classes.

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Teacher works to improve standards for all schools

By Namrita Patel
Editor-in-Chief

Contacting Illinois congressmen and department of education, History Department Chairperson Diane Pulkkin, Illinois coordinator for the National Council for History Education, plans to start a campaign to improve the standards on teaching history education.

Mr. Pulkkin has served on the National Council for History Education since the organization formed in 1992. Through this nonprofit organization, state representatives discuss curricula with school policymakers and help connect schools with history-focused conferences.

After Illinois’ Board of Education members lowered the passing score required to become a history teacher on the Illinois state certification exam to 55 percent from 65 percent, Ms. Pulkkin saw the need to push for a change in state minimum score requirements.

“They are robbing students of important lessons of citizenship,” Ms. Pulkkin said. “It is a terrible disservice with this new impound of history. Today’s generation focuses on math and science and the No Child Left Behind Act focuses on reading and math. Meanwhile, history is suffering all around the state.”

“I plan on contacting Illinois’ state representatives and department of education when I get the free time.”

After observing history teaching around the state as part of her NCHS duties, Ms. Pulkkin said she realized few teachers had history knowledge past the high school level. To improve this problem, she plans to coordinate statewide educational conferences at libraries around the state for teachers.

“There are teachers in history classrooms who have had little coursework in history college,” she explained. “The State’s qualifying grade to teach history essentially pun people who have earned an A into history classrooms. I am hoping to plan professional development conferences, where less qualified teachers can ask more about their knowledge from experts in lectures and discussions.”

Already creating a connection between her students and the University of Chicago graduate students, Ms. Pulkkin said she established a collaboration with the Center of Middle Eastern Studies because standard textbooks do not provide sufficient coverage of the history of the rise of Islam. The collaboration was also encouraged by the Center itself, as they received a grant to do outreach.

“Graduate students work with the information in the Center. Our collaboration provides the opportunities for our students to learn from the experts,” she said. “It’s great to see the students care about their little charges, giving them writing tips over the Internet.”
I care too much about my friends to let them drink and drive.

—David McAlpine, junior

driving under the INFLUENCE

Liquor, drugs, cars, teenagers producing fatal national epidemic

By Robin Shapiro

Loud hip hop music rattling the tall, frosted windows of a townhouse breaks the silence of a quiet residential neighborhood in Lincoln Park. Kicking off his four-day weekend, a junior girl's costume party without her parents home. 6 p.m. Wednesday, November 1, a junior boy, without costume, walks up the steps and rings the doorbell of a unlocked front door into a crowded room filled with the stench of marijuana and more than 50 other U-Highers.

Receiving a beer can from the hostess, a girl dressed in a white, tight-fit nurse's costume, the junior boy looks around and sees some friends taking shots of vodka and stumbling around.

With a still closed beer can in one hand and his keys in the other, the junior boy now wonders, before he takes his first sip, if he should be a designated driver for the night although he has managed to drink and drive before. He releases the beer cap and drinks the beer.

Fatal figures

U-Highers likely know the consequences of driving under the influence but they may not know that teenage drunk driving is the leading cause of death for 15- to 20-year-olds, claiming 5,000 to 6,000 lives each year, according to the website onlinedrivingsource.com.

Talking about a different occasion where he decided to drive drunk, the junior boy expresses no regret.

"One time, after a party, I was so drunk I accidentally drove myself all the way to Wisconsin," he said. "I was paying tolls and I had no idea where I was. When I realized that I was in Wisconsin I called my mom. She didn't ask how I got there but she directed me home. I don't think my mom knows I drive drunk but I guess the 'key words' I drive high. I don't think she cares. I don't think she's ever thought about it."

"I always have my own car and no one ever will drive for me. I know when I should and shouldn't drive. I know my limits and I always tell people that I'm drunk when I drive them. I drive high about three times a week. People always try to hold me down and not let me drive. I've only been in a car once where the driver was drunk and I'll never do it again because we almost got into an accident. I trust myself driving, but not other people."

A senior girl said she drives a friend's car for him on Thursdays during double lunch, Fridays, Saturdays and some Sundays so that he won't drive under the influence.

"My friend will be sitting in the passenger seat of his car waiting for me by the time I get downstairs to the car," she said. "I drive his car because I won't let him drive himself. When there's a specific time my friend has to be home he will come to my house before to recuperate. I'll make sure he does a test drive around the block before he leaves to make sure he's okay to drive."

"I like being in the responsible position. One time two of my friends were getting drunk in the back while I was driving. They got the beer and tequila from a friend that had a fake I.D. They apologized, but it wasn't a big deal for me."

Driving under the influence of marijuana doesn't pose a serious safety hazard, according to the senior girl.

"I have driven high. It's not much different from driving normally," she explained. "It isn't really a big deal. I feel more in control, although it only happens once in a while when there's nothing else to do. We'll jump in the car and go to a hookah bar after."

Some U-Highers know personally a few teens affected by driving under the influence. When North Suburban Deerfield High School '06 graduate Daniel Ross was driving intoxicated after the school's October 13 Homecoming, he lost control of his car killing himself and Senior Ross Trace.

Far-ranging tragedy

According to a fellow classmate and close friend to both Daniel and Ross, Deerfield Junior Josh Riegelsburg, the crash deeply affected daily life at Deerfield.

"When I heard about Ross and Danny I was in shock," Josh said. "Ross and I were track teammates and good friends. Danny had been in my math class. I used to see them all the time. When it happened, I was so confused. They were so likeable and outgoing."

It's a shame that fun becoming a bad decision had come to this.

"The Monday after the crash, school was completely silent with the exception of those who broke into tears in class and in the hallways."

"You could feel the sadness in every classroom. Teachers would excuse students from class when needed. It brought everyone together in such a sad time. People at Deerfield still do drive under the influence. They are slowly learning to be more cautious, but not quickly enough."

Unrealized impact

Without a drug counselor at U-High presently, Mrs. Courtney Francis, principal of Learn Charter School who served as U-High counselor two years ago, said she believes teenagers continue to drive under the influence because they misunderstand the full impact of intoxicated driving.

"I think kids under estimate the power of a vehicle," Mrs. Francis said. "It's not the kid's desire to be irresponsible, they just have poor judgment. Kids think they can get away with it because the impact isn't as direct right away. I think kids misunderstand that marijuana isn't that much harder from alcohol."

"They think with drugs they have more control, particularly in some societies where drugs are very accepted. Part of the problem is that parents think that when their kids do academically well, the rest of their lives are fine without thinking about the other piece of their kids' lives. What kids see on TV makes them think it will never happen to them. Young people like to think they are invincible."

Designated driver

As a designated driver, Junior David McAlpine said he enjoys being the sober, responsible one of his friends and would prefer to drive anyone else home than allow them to drive with someone he believed to be intoxicated.

"Without any questions asked, at parties and in any social situation, I will take the role of looking out for everyone," David said. "I would want someone to do the same for me."

"When I hear one of my friends has driven drunk or driven with someone drunk it really scares me. I understand that it has to happen in extreme circumstances when there isn't an alternative and the kid doesn't want to call the parents, but I think that U-Highers would make smarter decisions than that."

Aware of David's role as a designated driver, Mrs. Kathy McAlpine, David's mother, said that although she dislikes David being around people drinking, she has confidence that he will not drink and get behind the wheel.

"I don't think anyone should ever drink and drive," Ms. McAlpine said. "I never drank in high school. I think parents should set examples of themselves very carefully around their kids because that's who they're kids learn from."

"I have a strict parental rule that I don't condone drinking in front of my kids. I think kids drinking is bad generally because if they get in trouble it could ruin their lives and they don't even know it. They don't think anything bad could happen, but why risk it? There are so many other things you could do."

"It's easy to go along with things but it isn't always easy for kids to make the right decisions. When something is popular it doesn't always mean it's right and the things that are right aren't always popular."

"There's a code of ethics that's hard for teens. It's a little easier for adults although even for adults it's sometimes hard because everyone wants to be liked. I think David has his own mind and I think it's good, but like rules, they make me feel safe."

(Diabtico's note: Sources were permitted to remain anonymous if they requested.)
*Shooting professional and vivid photos with an intriguing depth of field Evan's photography always blows me away.*

—Jeremy Laccoque, senior

**Nature-ally**

With his camera, birder captures awards, too

By Jeffrey Bisska-Aykul
Associate editor

Passionately recounting an October trip to London for the BBC-Shell Wildlife Photographer of the Year Awards ceremony, Senior Evan Graff thoughtfully describes the grand settings and experienced photographers which characterized the event.

“I went to London for the awards ceremony, and that was from October 17 to 19 this year, because that’s when they officially announce the images,” Evan explained. “Once I got there the first night, we attended a big banquet at the Natural History Museum in London. The ceremony is probably the greatest concentration of skilled nature photographers every year and it was fantastic to meet people like that.”

Evan won his award as a highly recommended photographer among 18,800 entries from 60 countries for a photo of a Double Crested Cormorant he shot in the Everglades.

The previous year Evan received a scholarship to attend the February 2006 North American Nature Photography Association summit, a weeklong conference featuring several professional wildlife photographers and nine other high school amateurs. Evan developed an interest in photography amidst quaint family settings.

“My family has always had a camera that we bring along on vacations,” Evan said. “I first got interested in our trip to Costa Rica. Once we got home, I just went around the city just trying to find things to photograph and it grew from there.”

Back in Chicago, Evan’s father’s interest in bird watching helped form a fascination with photographing wild birds.

“Almost three years ago, I went with my dad bird watching at this place near our North Side house called North Pond. I just decided I’d go along, as I had nothing better to do. At that time we had a decent little camera that didn’t do much, but I took pictures of the birds I saw. It was incredibly difficult and all my pictures were awful. Still, it was fun and challenging and I wanted to see if I could try and get good pictures.”

Evan uses the city’s parks and lake location to photograph an abundant amount of wildlife.

“It’s surprising to most people how much wildlife can be seen in the city, especially in term of birds,” Evan explained. “Lake Michigan is a natural flyway for birds. When they see the city it looks like a terrible place to rest. But then they see parks and little green areas, so these parks along the lakefront get huge concentrations of migrating birds.

“You get very common stuff, but also very rare things. There’s this park I go to a lot called Montrose Point. Over 300 species have been sighted throughout the park’s history.”

These birds may be easily found in Chicago, but according to Evan, photographing them requires care.

“It works best to move really, really slowly,” Evan explained. “Think about how you want to approach them and then approach them with a third of that speed. The style depends on the bird. You can get really close to shore birds if you crawl up on your stomach, but if you walk up they will fly away instantly.”

(continues on page 20)

This sandpiper on Montrose Beach on the North Side proved difficult for Evan to photograph. “This was actually pretty challenging to take, because shorebirds in general are difficult to approach,” Evan said. But Evan felt his labors were well worth the effort. “One of the things that I think is really successful about this image is that the bird is entirely sharp while the background and foreground are completely out. This happened because the objects in the foreground and background were both distant from the actual bird.” Evan’s photographs can be found in full color on his website, www.philzworld.com/evanzworld.
Blossoming areas bring revitalized atmosphere

By Amanda Pappas

Spectacle of bold green and red accents with white, sophisticated duplets featuring rusted iron windowed balconies and unique shops beneath characteristically Little Italy, one of the Near South Side's many burgeoning neighborhoods. Enjoying the sunny yet crisp Friday afternoon, Junior Liz Messina and Sophomore Joe Boivert walked and enjoyed the alluring smell of warm pizza and pasta, later joined by Senior Amanda Fiascone. Spanning 12 blocks across Taylor Street bounded by Roosevelt Road on the north, 11th Street on the south, Ashland Avenue on the east, and Racine Avenue on the west, Little Italy is known for its great restaurants and abundant pizzerias.

Now a quarter of its original size because of the controversial expansion of the University of Illinois at Chicago, Little Italy houses many family-owned landmark restaurants such as Roswell's, Pompeii, Franzese's and Toscany. Interested in Italian culture, Liz said the food was right on target.

"After driving around for about 20 minutes looking for parking, we finally parked in front of one of the most famous lemonade stands called "Mario's Lemonade Stand," which was closed for winter," Liz said. "At 1 stopped feet out of the car, I instantly felt like I was back in Italy. It's Italian and very fun. Seeing Little Italy for the first time just made me feel at home in a sense. On my visit there, we checked out several restaurants and shops. Many of the storeowners spoke Italian but I don't necessarily think they were born in Italy. The price ranges varied with each restaurant making it possible for all sorts of people with different socioeconomic classes to find an appropriate restaurant for them."

Although already packed with pizzerias, Little Italy always seems to have room for one more. Joe Maggioni, a short man with bright eyes and a kind smile opened Franco's Pizza, 1132 West Taylor Street, last March. Speaking enthusiastically with a heavy Italian accent in his casual jeans, a black polo and a black adidas cap, Mr. Maggioni said he loves working in the small community.

"I'm originally from Italy and moved to America 20 years ago," Mr. Maggioni said. "Owning a restaurant is hard work but I love the industry and especially love the people who come. I previously owned a pizzeria near Midway Airport, but decided to change locations because the business near UIC is more profitable. There are about 10 pizzerias in Little Italy but they are all fairly spread out, so there is not much competition. Ever since I moved to Chicago, I've lived in downtown but never in Little Italy. Even though I have never lived there, I have always been to time there and have noticed a change over time. When I first arrived, I noticed that many Italians who had just moved to Chicago from Italy lived there, but now most of the people who live there are Italian who were born in America.

Several blocks east of Little Italy lies University Village, a 1990s housing development. The area covers the old Maxwell Street neighborhood, which just five years ago consisted of boarded-up buildings. Now Maxwell Street has many bustling people.

Just 10 minutes east of Little Italy in University Village, Caribou Coffee on the corner of Maxwell Street and Halsted Street, one of the city's longest and best-known streets creates a cozy atmosphere. Liz and Joe drink their hot chocolates before walking into the brick air towards their next destination. They notice the brand new UIC dorms and elegant single family homes, ranging in color from natural brick to shades of yellow and green. Liz and Joe pass by various pubs and restaurants before finally reaching the very popular and visible from the Dan Ryan Expressway, Maxwell Street Polish on Union and Maxwell.

Even further east, Dearborn Park I and II lie on opposite sides of the Chicago River, separated by the Roosevelt Road Bridge. Though Dearborn Park is mostly residential, nearby Printer's Row beckons with its variety of shops and restaurants. It is also known for its stylish brick townhouses and occasional apartment building, all accessible by the Red, Orange and Green line of the L. The area is home to many U-Highers, including Freshman Oliver Ellenbaum, who said he feels like he lives in his own separate community.

"My parents moved to Dearborn Park II in 1984," Oliver said. "It's kind of a like a suburban town within the city. There is so much to offer and it is a good way to meet other kids. Separating complexes are huge parks, which are always occupied by people playing sports or children playing in the playgrounds. Dearborn Park is a comfortable place to live in with many kids and adults ranging in all ages."

Finally settling on a pizzeria Franco's Pizza, photos from top, Liz Messina and Joe Boivert munch on warm pizza while enjoying each other's company.

Deciding where to enjoy their lunch, Amanda Farone and Liz stopped in multiple restaurants on their visit to Little Italy.

Sharing a bag of crispy Maxwell Street Polish fries to top off the day, Liz and Joe add salt and ketchup to their delicious snack.

Photos by Emma Lantos, Midway photo editor

Happy Holidays to U-High!

-From BSA
not hungry and I haven't eaten since yesterday." The<br>conversational tone continues.

For the next three days, the senior girl sits with the<br>same friends. When asked why she is not eating, replies<br>the same way every time: “I'm just not hungry.”

Two years before, her psychiatrist had diagnosed the<br>senior girl with bulimia nervosa, an eating disorder<br>consisting of binging and purging, something she says<br>she never thought she had.

“When I binge, I was in my own world,” the girl said in a<br>Midway interview. “It was like an escape from everything<br>wrong in my life. It was a source of numbness. There was<br>absolutely no emotion involved. All of my problems at<br>home with family and anxiety with people at school just<br>disappeared. I stopped thinking about whatever I had<br>with my mom that morning before I left for school, or<br>whatever my boyfriend said to me the night before, I<br>just became unaware of everyone and everything.”

“I thought that in order to have an eating disorder, you had to throw up every day, a couple of times a day. I didn't realize that doing it every so often was such a big deal, nor did I think it was such a serious eating problem. I thought I was a girl who had to take a couple extra steps to stay as thin as I wanted to.”

The media glamorize eating disorders instead of addressing them as a serious health issue, the girl believes.

“The media has seemed to turn the whole idea of eating disorders into this glamorous lifestyle, when it's not at all,” she explained. “They're portraying girls as if you tap a wand on their head and they're magically thin and beautiful. They don't show the gory, ugly side or anything like that. Eating disorders are selfish and destructive; they hurt everyone and everything you have. People with this affliction are helpless and the fact that the media exploits that is disgusting.”

Anorexia nervosa, a disorder where one eats minimal<br>amounts of food, is the most common eating disorder,<br>affecting 65 percent of women with eating disorders ages<br>14 to 22 according to a 2005 Department of Health and<br>Human Services study. A less common and more severe<br>eating disorder, bulimia nervosa affects 10 percent of<br>young women. A study by a juvenile girl showed that<br>in 1999, 39 percent of girls had an eating disorder.<br>“I had anorexic and bulimic tendencies for<br>about a year,” the junior girl said. “A year<br>ago I just didn’t care and doctors and doctors but none of it seemed to help. I knew what I was doing was wrong and unhealthy but there was always a little part of

me that either thought or hoped that it was. I just kept<br>thinking that there was always a little more fat on my<br>body that I could and wanted to get rid of.”

“A year later, I had a conversation with a friend and I<br>just became aware of it. I was something that I was able<br>to hold onto it defined my comfort zone and then to find<br>that same comfort with a friend allowed me to get better<br>and I'm thankful that happened.”

Teenagers in high pressure social and academic<br>environments tend to breed perfectionist attitudes that<br>often lead to the development of eating problems, according to U. of C. Assistant Professor of Clinical<br>Psychiatry Dr. Elizabeth Steinhauser.

“The fact is that eating disorders are really common<br>in today's culture, especially in girls and women, who<br>account for 90 percent of all eating disorders,” Dr. Steinhauser said in a recent phone interview. “Twenty to<br>25 percent of college women have a diagnosable eating<br>disorder, with many more having subclinical, milder<br>conditions. Body image concerns, anorexia nervosa<br>and bulimia nervosa often begin in middle or high school. They tend to occur in high-achieving, perfectionistic people. They may feel that their weight is one of the few things they can control. Since many U-High students are driven, perfectionistic people, a place like U-High can be a danger zone for this type of behavior. The risk is even higher if someone is<br>genetically prone to anxiety disorders, because they can<br>start to obsessively worry about their weight and body<br>image. Most of the people who have these disorders<br>often feel troubled and ashamed and frequently don't<br>want anyone to know, which makes it that much harder<br>to reach out to them.”

Many fashion magazine editors have noted a recent<br>extreme decrease in the body mass index of some models.<br>Dr. Steinhauser believes this development has contributed<br>to increased media attention on thinner celebrieties,<br>but this phenomenon was not the first evidence of the<br>media’s pressure to be thin. She explained,

“We live in this bizarre culture where exalted models<br>look like concentration camp victims.”

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"There are huge psychological aspects to getting plastic surgery that need to be addressed in anyone."

--Courtney Conners, senior

"I'm probably really good for a kid to just go and talk to a counselor about what they're eating habits. Maybe there could be some sort of open support group where kids can go to get together to talk with counselors or coaches, so it's not as scary."

"THE MOST important thing the administration can do is to make sure that these issues are frequent topics of conversation. The more students are educated, the more they will learn how to recognize signs of a problem within themselves or their friends. The more aware students are, the more likely they are to seek help."
Plastic surgery attracts younger enthusiasts in ever-earlier quest for physical perfection

When U-Highers sit down to think about what new gear and gadgets to ask Santa for this year, do not be surprised if some brand new curves for around $4,000 tops a wish list or two.

So, 20 professionals of recent minor are undergoing plastic surgery, with 175,000 procedures performed on the age group last year according to the American Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery.

Liposuction, a procedure where fat cells are removed using a suction tube, tops one junior boy's wish list this holiday season. "I feel like I'm constantly being looked down upon all the time because of the way I look," the senior said. "I feel really out of place in social events and even in small groups of people because I keep comparing myself to everyone else. A lot of people tell me I'm not fat or whatever, but honestly feel like I'm 300 pounds in certain situations and I don't want to feel that way anymore.

"If I can see for myself that I'm thin, or I can see by comparison that I'm normal or less than normal, I think I'll be a lot happier. Even though I'd have to be in bed afterwards for a week, I don't care. Once I feel good about myself, I don't think I'll keep comparing myself to everyone else." One senior girl, who calls herself self-conscious, said she also wants Liposuction but feels torn about plastic surgery.

"I have a very hypocritical view on cosmetic surgery. Generally speaking I think it's sick and reflects very poorly on our society," she said. "I don't mean to condemn those who do have it though because we live in a society that covets a certain type of beauty. I myself would like to make my nose a bit smaller, my boobs a bit bigger and have Liposuction, it's not that I think I'm particularly obese, just that my weight fluctuates, but I want to look in the mirror and not think that Liposuction would be a quick and easy way to get the results I want. It's not that I'm against working out, but it's very difficult to get to the gym regularly on top of school and everything else. "A lot of my friends are thin and beautiful. When we go out and they look stunning and I with them it's kind of awkward when they get more attention from guys. Also at school people treat them differently from how they treat me. I feel they get a lot more positive attention from people than I do," U of C Psychiatrist Dr. Angela Smyth, who has U-Highers among her patients, said that 15 to 18-year-olds are at a crucial developmental stage. "They're very interested in self-image and how they look to others." Dr. Smyth said get surgery are probably on the wealthier, upperclass end where it's available to them. There's always the risk that someone clinically depressed about their appearance gets plastic surgery thinking it will make them feel better and then finds out that in the long run it doesn't. Sort of like buying a new outfit thinking it will make your life better, but the way you feel won't change without addressing the underlying problems.

Teenagers should not have extreme cosmetic procedures because they are not secure enough with themselves, U-High parent and doctor's assistant Denise Alfsa said. "I think that for kids who know they are really unhappy with something, for example they hate their nose and they have a doctor's okay and the parents say fine, but it's not right." Ms. Alfsa said. "A nose job is one thing, but for a teenager to have a boob job or Liposuction I think is inappropriate. Do you really think a 16-year-old knows how she's going to feel about her body in 10 years? Parents should hear their kids' complaints and address them with understanding but also keep them from thinking what will be best for their kids over time." Three thousand and six hundred teens last year had Breast Augmentation, a procedure that enhances breasts with silicone or saline implants, according to the American Society. One junior girl, who feels extremely unhappy with her chest, said she would strongly like to have the procedure when she is 18. "Although I think that plastic surgery in general is immature and naive, I really want to have my boobs done," the junior said. "It's a constant conflict I feel in me because for anyone else I'd say 'that's ridiculous, they're fine.' I have a very unique opinion of what I consider beautiful. I don't like the fact that everyone tries to be this perfect picture of the ideal woman or man. But for me, I hate my chest so much that I'd be willing to pretty much go against everything I stand for in order to change it.

"By Cyndy Weiner

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GUIDE TO EATING DISORDERS
Eating disorders are obsessions with food and weight often causing physical and psychological problems. Five percent of young women and 1% of young men suffer from an eating disorder and as many as 15 percent have an unhealthy attitude toward food according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

ANOREXIA- Starvation, an obsession with dieting and being thin. Sufferers usually have low self esteem and fear becoming fat. Anorexia causes hormonal changes, amenorrhea (loss of menstrual cycle), osteoporosis (premature bone loss) and various kinds of organ damage including kidney and heart failure. One percent of women under 20 have anorexia.

People often turn to anorexia to deal with personal problems, according to U. of C. Psychologist Rence Riehnecke Hoste. BULIMIA- Overeating often followed by purposely vomiting, fasting or abusing laxatives. Bulimia causes long lasting, damaged teeth, gastronomical problems and chronic loss of bodily fluids resulting in muscle spams, kidney disease and heart failure. Four percent of young women under 20 suffer from bulimia and about 10 percent of people with bulimia are male.

"As people are starting to learn more about bulimia, they are becoming more medically aware. Media messages about beauty and thinness are being targeted towards women rather than men," Dr. Hoste said.

BINGE EATING- Eating uncontrolled amounts of food in a short time until feeling overly full and bloated. Sufferers are generally overweight and uncontrolably periodically to feel better, fill a void or deal with struggles. Binging is also associated as a form of purposeful self punishment.

COMPULSIVE OVEREATING- An addiction to food, often a way of coping with problems. The sufferer eats more than the regular "three meals a day" and uses food as a way to cope with problems and stress. Sufferers tend to be overweight and aware of their abnormal eating habits, compared to anorexia and bulimia sufferers, who often do not admit or realize they have a disorder. Risks include heart attack, high blood pressure and cholesterol, kidney disease, arthritis and stroke.

COMPULSIVE EXERCISING- Restricting or punishing the body by obsessive exercising. Frequently done to avoid feeling guilty where eating. Risks include dehydration, osteoporosis and amenorrhea.

BODY IMAGE DISTORTION- An unclear, false perception of one's body shape and weight. Sufferers are often embarrassed, uncomfortable and ashamed with his or her body, sometimes leading to the development of other eating disorders.

OTHER- People with irregular eating patterns who either have a mixture of disorders or who are a "healthy weight" but still suffer from anorexia.

"Compiled by Corina Stanton, Midwest reporter.

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**Say What?**
Compiled by Arts Lewis

If you only had seven dollars and a quarter and you had to buy a gift for your sister and your mother, what would you buy and why?

**SYMONS BUCKNER, junior:** If I only had that much to spend on my mother, I would go to Target and clean up the whole dollar rack and buy as many presents for her as I could. On Christmas Day, I think my mother would look at me and smile and be surprised that I was able to buy so many presents for only seven dollars and a quarter.

**DANIEL SIMMONS-MARENO, freshman:** I have never bought my mother chocolates for Christmas before and she and I both love eating chocolates. Especially Lindt Sprungli as chocolates with such a limited budget, I would buy her as many boxes of Lindt Sprungli chocolates as I could so that she doesn’t eat my own private stash of them.

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**As the Midway sees it**
Safety tactics getting used to

**Art by Eric Cookman**

U-High has changed. Since returning from Thanksgiving break, students may or may not have noticed the new rules and procedures involving safety at the Lab Schools. For many students, however, the changes are impossible to miss.

Introducing new rules at a Safety Assembly November 20 (see photo and caption page 19), Principal Matt Horvat explained their purpose. Then U-Highers had the opportunity to question University Police Officer Rudy Nimitz.

New procedures include only three school doors being accessible to the morning: the High School Lobby, Baisie Hall Lobby and Judi Hall Lobby, all opening at 7:15 a.m. The Senior Lounge will no longer remain open all hours but will be closed at a time to be decided after the school day ends. U-High 106 will be opened for quiet study after school to discourage students wandering in the cafeteria and on the 2nd and 3rd floors. School buildings will be closed at 8 p.m.

Faculty-supervised activities such as student publications and theater can continue their work in the school after 8 a.m. Administrators know these new procedures may represent a burden to some students but feel they are necessary.

Avoiding rush hour in the morning, many students who commute often get to school before 7:15 a.m. For these students, leaving even 20 minutes later may mean sitting in dense traffic for an hour or so. For other students who wait for rides home or sports practice to begin, a quiet study room can be helpful, giving them a place to work while they wait. But, for students who don’t want to work and are now dissuaded from going to the cafeteria, Senior Lounge and the top two floors, ending up outside of school is not an option.

These students may do exactly what the rules mean to avoid. They will wander around and do as outside the permitted school hall. It’s a hard balance to accomplish, but one must be found to keep danger out of school and students inside the school safely.

But U-Highers themselves can make the new safety measures work. Students who have to come early to school or leave late can try going to friends’ houses in Hyde Park or take advantage of the quiet study in U-High 106. Students with other situations can find solutions to them, working with friends or teachers.

U-Highers, after all, were the ones asking the school to make a swift response to the safety issues in the neighborhood and communicate clearly to them about what is happening and what response is being made to it.

Now that communication and that response has taken place, the ball is in the student body’s court. Inconvenience isn’t pleasant but it’s also not more important than safety.

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**U-High Midway**

Published nine times a year by journalism and photojournalism students at University High School, 3420 E. 36th St., Chicago, Illinois 60657. Copyright 2005 University High School, Chicago. Journalism Department. Printed by Metropolitan Press, Broxburn, Ill.

**EDITORS IN-CHIEF**

Sheri Fischer
Phil Jacobson

Nanuza Peltz
Henry Acciarro

MANAGING EDITORS

Jacqueline Lecoultre
Evan Dottman

(On-design master)

**PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR**

Tatiana Lambert

**BUSINESS AND ADVERTISING MANAGER**

Sahal Reidel
Community Rohini Tobaccoowal urban affairs Jacqueline Lecoultre

**ASSOCIATE EDITORS**

**INVESTIGATIVE EDITORS**

Politics: Stephanie Jiang, student government, Rohini Tobaccoowal, urban affairs, Jacqueline Lecoultre

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Character sketch: B.J. Arroyo, "Say What?" Artie LeCorps

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Opinion: Gobe Bump, Monica Danguiwa; Features: B.J. Arroyo, Amada A., Cinnamon Seabrooke; Entertainment: Daniel Simmons-Mareno; Jocelynn Lecoultre; Regional: Evan Dottman.

**STAFF REPORTERS AND WRITERS**

Tatiana Lambert, Alvin McEldowney, Jocelynn Lecoultre, Steven Jones, Nizar Peltz, Henry Acciarro

**SPORTS PHOTO EDITOR**

Eric Cookman

**FOOTBALL COACH**

John Stenmark

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE**


**ADVISORY COMMITTEE**


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**ARTICLES**

Highlights from the week of November 19-25, 2005. This edition features articles on the Midway’s new safety procedures, the Christmas season, and local arts and entertainment. The edition also includes a special feature on the history of U-High.

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**OPINION PAGE**

Alona Dasgupta

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**EDITORIALS**

U-High Midway • Tuesday, December 13, 2005

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**SCHOOL WON’T OPEN FOR AN HOUR? BUT IT’S DANGEROUS OUT HERE!**

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**CHRISTMAS TREES**

and plastic reindeer. Menchions and clay didelices. Ornaments are displayed in the corners with the manger on the mantel in the same house.

Many U-Highers look forward to celebrating more than one holiday even if it’s a holiday that isn’t celebrated in their religion. Yet I wonder, is it ethically right to celebrate a holiday that theoretically you don’t even celebrate in your religion? The answer is no. Yet I wonder, is it ethically right to celebrate a holiday that theoretically you don’t even celebrate in your religion? The answer is no.

My mother is Catholic and my father, raised in India, belongs to the Brahmo Samaj, a branch of Hinduism. My family celebrates Christmas as well as the Brahmo festival of Magh Bihu, a month later, which commemorates the founding of the Brahmo Samaj.

My parents raised me Catholic and as a result I firmly believe in Catholic teachings. But sometimes when I celebrate Brahmo holidays I feel it’s wrong to attend religious services for a religion I don’t practice. But simultaneously I struggle with the fact that being Indian is half of who I am.

Many U-Highers say they celebrate more than one holiday out of respect for a family member or just for presents. But when U-Highers celebrate a holiday outside of their own religion, they are also attributing to the beliefs of a religion they don’t believe in. When I asked Brijesh Ramesh, junior, about attending the festival of Dussehra, he said:

"I respect just like other U-Highers who celebrate Christmas even if they aren’t Christian. My friend, Junior Dana Alfonsa also celebrates a holiday outside the religion she practices.

"My mom is Jewish and I was raised Jewish," Dana says. "That’s why my Bat Mitzvah and I went to Amihe Emet. I’m very conservative and not super religious. I only go to synagogue on the High Holidays.

"However, my dad is Presbyterian. When I was growing up we would go for a tree over Thanksgiving and a new ornament every year. My mom and I would light my dad’s love of Christmas. After my parents divorced, I continued to celebrate Christmas for my mom and my dad’s love of Christmas.

"I also feel a deep connection to Judaism. Spiritually, I believe in the teachings of Judaism, I celebrate both my dad and his beliefs, I don’t think it’s disrespectful to Judaism."

Another friend, Junior Bhupinder Monthar Nair was also raised in a Jewish household but says he never celebrates Hanukkah and only celebrates Christmas.

"My parents were both raised in Jewish households and didn’t feel it was necessary to pass down Judaism to my brother and me," he says. "My family was very strict, all I knew was Christmas and when I was younger I would lay out cookies for Santa. On Christmas my extended family, even though they were Jewish, will come in and we’ll all celebrate together.

"Christmas to my family is not a day of religion. We don’t sing or pray Jesus. It’s not about the birth of Christ. It’s a time for family to get together, like Thanksgiving. I think Christmas is a commercialized holiday and I don’t think it’s wrong to celebrate Christmas because it’s a day for family.”

As Christmas and Hanukkah draw near, I haven’t yet come to a conclusion about celebrating Christmas. I don’t believe in. Even though I am one of many U-Highers who celebrate different religious holidays, I still wonder, is it wrong?

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Sheri Fischer, Alvin McEldowney, Steven Jones, Nanuza Peltz, Henry Acciarro

**MANAGING EDITORS**

Jacqueline Lecoultre, Evan Dottman

**EDITORIALS**

Alona Dasgupta

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**PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR**

Eric Cookman

---

**FACULTY ADVISORS**

Photography: Ms. Lisa Scribner
Business and editorial: Mr. W. Eugene Brower
A world citizen spins entrancing tale of growing up

WITH A KALEIDOSCOPE of different lives, forced into the harsh reality of adulthood and the world that accompaniments them, two Karen Desai spins the timeless story of coming of age in "The Inheritance of Loss." Published this year by First Grove Press, "The Inheritance of Loss" won the Ethel L. Parker prize, a contemporary fiction award.

Born in New Delhi, India in 1971, Desai lived there until she moved to England at age 14 with her family, where she lived for a year before moving to the U.S. in 1986. Desai, 35, also wrote the 1998 novel, "Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard."

"Loss" takes place in the 1980s during the Nepali revolution in India, when the Nepalese decided to fight back after years of being mistrusted.

Opening with Sai, a 16-year-old orphan, living with his grandfather, a retired judge, his dog, Must and their flocks, the novel takes place in a tiny house in the Himalayas.

Desai introduces readers to multitudes of characters in this small mountain town, so many characters in fact, they are hard to keep track of. She weaves past and present together, finally ending the novel with Nepal attacks on Kolkimpal, finally taking over the town.

Desai writes with such detail that readers can see the plot unfolding in a movie like scenario. She describes troubles of three young children, Sai, the story’s narrator, and Sai’s friends who are trying to find their purpose in life and dealing with the pains of growing up.

Living in America trying to make his father proud, make money and find out who he is and what he wants to become. Sai has a chance unavailable to his father, going to America and he wants to honor his parents, sell his father by becoming successful.

Unfortunately, Sai is not treated equally in America and goes from one low-end restaurant job to another, trying to save money to send back home.

Since Sai never knew her parents, attending boarding school until their deaths in a car crash, she has never had a place to call home or known true love.

When Sai falls in love with her first boy friend, Gyan, she doesn’t know what to expect as he confuses her, sometimes tender and loving, other times ignoring her in the streets.

Gyan doesn’t know who he wants to grow up to be. His grandfather was Nepalese and Gyan feels that he should be true to the Nepalese cause; being treated equally in India. Gyan believes that by fighting back is hurting Sai, his girlfriend and his own family.

Desai elaborates the mental and physical journeys Sai, Gyan and Gyan go through, sometimes including the judge’s memories of his first time going out in the world and losing his parents’ protection.

Unfortunately Desai does not explain the history between India and Nepal and I had to look it up online to clearly understand the history behind the book, but overall I truly enjoyed this novel.

Desai addresses timeless issues, such as growing up and learning to make one’s own adult decisions, events that force one into adulthood and first times in the world trying to find ones self. They are topics, I believe, many U-Highers can relate to.

Books

Anna Kafia

Zibkowski

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School again schedules Friday night events

From Adina Levin, senior

Jewish Students’ Association president: SHABBAT is the single most important Jewish institution. It occurs every Friday at sundown, and its observance is a commandment required of all Jews by the Talmud. Observant Jewish families attend synagogue services or remain at home for family celebrations. Even non-observant families are conscious of the flow of the week as defined by God’s day of rest.

As representatives of the Jewish community at University High School, we are particularly disappointed that “Connections” this year has been scheduled for a Friday night. This unprecedented decision will affect Jewish families, which comprise approximately 20 percent of the School’s community, to choose between their religious identity and obligations and their commitment to the Laboratory School.

“Connections” is the most important fundraiser of the year and Jewish families have always been enormously generous in their support of this project, but this choice of date is profoundly offensive to our families and we believe it may have an unintended impact on the success of the event.

At a time when the Schools are examining their highly touted “diversity,” this sends the message that the Schools’ definition of diversity to diverse peoples stops at the Jews. This affront to the Schools’ Jewish families comes on the heels of a similar incident with regard to the Senior Prom.

Two years ago, Prom was scheduled for a Friday night. This week, the date was changed to a Saturday night. This was done to provide Jewish students with the time to observe Purim, the most important religious holiday for the community.

Unfortunately, the change was made without any discussion regarding the important cultural and religious differences in the Jewish community. This decision was made in the face of a petition signed by over 90 percent of Jewish students and faculty.

This year, Talm has once again been scheduled for a Friday night and, despite our best efforts, the date will not be changed. Once again, observant Jewish students are being asked to compromise their most deeply-held religious beliefs for the convenience of a thoughtless majority, with the explicit approval of the supervising administrator and the support of the highest levels of Schools administration.

Although the dates for Prom and “Connections” will not be changed from Friday nights this year, all U-Highers need to be aware of this unfortunate situation. Not only does it directly affect many of us, but it is an issue that goes against the integrity of our school and should end immediately.

Opinion

Donavan Mitchem

Opinion

For Obama, taking Presidential path requires caution

I THOUGHT THAT I was going to be the first black President, but it’s looking more likely that I thought wrong.

November’s election are over and many Americans are now looking forward to the 2008 Presidential race. No potential candidate has received as much attention as Hyde Park’s prodigal son, Senator Barack Obama (D-Ill.).

Since his speech at the 2004 Democratic National Convention, Obama has gained national popularity. Obama certainly will seek the Democratic nomination for the White House, especially after the party’s astonishing victory in last month’s midterm elections.

Obama claimed he would not run for national office in 2008 after winning the Illinois Senate seat, vacated by Peter Fitzgerald in 2004.

In recent weeks, however, Obama has taken the necessary steps towards a run, including a speech about the United States’ policy regarding Iraq to the Council on Foreign Relations and trips to Iowa and New Hampshire, the first two stops in the primary Presidential elections.

Polling over 1,014 Americans in late October, the Opinion Research Corporation posed the question, “Who would you support for the Democratic Nomination for President in 2008?”

Competing against the likes of New York Senator Hillary Clinton and Massachusetts Senator John Kerry, Obama took a strong 2nd place, with 17 percent, trailing Clinton, who received 38 percent.

Despite Obama’s recent popularity surge, I cannot help but wonder whether or not the time is right for him to run for President. More than anything, I am skeptical of Obama’s experience.

Outside of eight years as a state Senator and two inactive years as a U.S. Senator, Obama doesn’t have the experience to match the other potential candidates in ’08. This would serve as an exploitable weakness along the campaign trail.

Obama’s accomplishments in the Senate leave a lot more to be desired. Since his initial election in 2004, Obama has worked on only three bills, one dealing with immigration remains log jammed in the Senate because of the lack of compromise between Democrats and Republicans.

But simultaneously Obama has found the time to jet set all over the world as the spokesperson for democracy, taking trips to the Middle East, Russia, Eastern Europe and Africa on goodwill missions.

Also running the risk of getting caught up with the wrong crowd, Senator Obama has just barely avoided a major political scandal.

Last month, Chicago Tribune reported Obama purchased property and accepted campaign contributions from Tony Rezko, a Chicago area businessman charged with exchanging political favors for payoffs.

If he hopes to not only compensate for his lack of experience but also make amends for the mistakes that he has made Obama has to do so softly.

He should also reconnect with his constituency and focus his attention on the job that he was elected to do. Senator Obama doesn’t need to give all of his presidential aspirations, he just needs to remember that good things come to those who wait.
WHERE THERE'S a Will, there's a way
Directed by Mack Foster, "Stranger Than Fiction" brings together a wonderful cast with amazing chemistry. The plot keeps the audience engaged by the thoughts and actions of David Crick (Will Ferrell) and Eiffel (Emma Thompson). In theaters since November 10, "Stranger Than Fiction" has remained among the top 10 movies for more than three weeks.

In this imaginative comedy/drama, Eiffel uses an exquisite vocabulary to convey the thoughts and life of Crick in her story but cannot, after 10 years, write his death. Eiffel falls into a depression when faced with potential failure and starts to picture the future instead of Crick's. Though Eiffel continually ignores her assistant Penny Escher (Queen Latifah), she still opens her soul to Escher through gracefully digressing monologues.

The submissive IRS agent, Crick begins to hear his life narrated by the mysteriously eccentric voice of tragic author Eiffel. Led by her voice, Crick finds love and companionship for his friends and baker Ana Pascal (Maggie Gyllenhaal), who he is assigned to audit.

Trying to find the author of his story, Crick recruits the help of College Literature Professor, Jules Hibert (Dustin Hoffman). After hearing Eiffel plotting his death, Crick transforms himself from a boring walking calculator to a doing and thoughtfull human.

I went into this film hoping to see another typical Ferrell movie, with him naked and running around making jokes that had long expired. I had concluded from advertising that it would be cute and funny but did not expect the powerful climax to hit me so hard that I was near tears. Ferrell's performance was extraordinary; I had no idea that he could convert from stupid humor to intelligent, sophisticated films but he did. Ferrell was able to keep this dme-a-dozen film fresh and sharp.

"Stranger Than Fiction" exemplifies Ferrell's development into this sophisticated role. He amazed me with his ability to show his transitions from sadness in the face of death to loving life without bringing melodramatic clichés to the screen. Ferrell throws away any assumption that he will be typical just by keeping his character real with getting extravagant. His honest depiction of his character's awkward confrontational behavior helps the audience understand Crick better than any words spoken by Thompson.

Dark and twisted, Thompson exemplifies her hardline character in a raw and open light. Playing this fantastically sickening author, Thompson does it without embarrassment. Wearing no makeup, she makes her character believable. Thompson's gesticulations and turns on tone her distasteful monologues into beautiful views of her dilemmas.

Of course, Ferrell and Thompson do not do it alone; Gyllenhaal and Hoffman help them. Gyllenhaal is one of those girls who can be serious, sensitive and cute all at the same time, and showed that ability ten fold in this film. Her adorable tantrums against Crick also show her serious side, but she maintains her sensuality within her confrontations. As common as the nudity

He's back and he's (really) bad
He flaunts the most prolific low in the game. He runs the game. He is the game. And he has lost his mojo.

"Kingdom Come." Jay-Z's ninth studio album, marks the end of a short-lived retirement and the worst Jigga album to date. It's not all Jay's faults, though.

Producers prove the greatest obstacle in the Kingdom's Coming. The album lacks fine-tune beats standard to any Jay-Z album. The beats are so repugnant, not even Jay-Z's flow can save tracks such as "Dig A Hole," produced by the ever-disappointing Swizz Beats.

Keep in mind, however, that Jay-Z's album is still better than virtually anything in hip-hop today. "Kingdom Come" disappoints partly because of the soaring expectations coming with any Jay-Z album. Coming from anyone else, this would be a great album. But this is the "Mike Jordan of record." On second thought, he truly is the "Mike Jordan of record." build a legacy as the greatest in the game, retire on top, return from retirement as a mediocre pseudo original oldie.

Throughout most of the album we get a recycled Jay-Z rapping about nothing new, pathetically name dropping Gwyneth Paltrow on the truly execrable "Hollywood." A small handful of tracks, however, reveal a new Jay-Z where "Kingdom Come" shines. On the startlingly introspective "Lost Ones," Jay spits three compelling vignettes over Dr. Dre's jazzy stannin' drums driven beat. Jay-Z pushes the envelope even further collaborating with Coldplay front man, Chris Martin, on the album's closer, "Beach Chair." Surprisingly, the satisfying product forms an interesting juxtaposition of Jay-Z's whiskey intensity and Martin's dreamy crooning.

But for every hit there is a bigger miss. Tracks such as "30 Something" leave me wondering. Do you even want to return from retirement Jay? A streak of seven medicos, half-hearted tracks in the middle of the album leave me longing for the spirit behind "The Blueprint" or the intensity underneath "The Black Album." Next time reach a little deeper into your bag of tricks, Jigga. Push yourself to something new. I'll still be waiting for the kingdom to come.

He incorporates fast paced action scenes followed by silent deliberation that keep increasing the meaning of the film.

Keeping their sharp wit, Ferrell and Thompson keep the movie lighthearted, taking away from the darkness of the plot. Even with the chemistry between he cast, the character's own death grabs the audience's attention and reflection and serious thoughts that are not the audience.

"Stranger Than Fiction" seems to be something of an intellectual film but with the direction of Foster and the exquisite performances by Ferrell and Thompson, the audience stays excited by the characters' daunting future. Unlike redicatable films, the ending conclusion will not disappoint anyone.

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Fast food off the beaten track (the L track, in fact)

WHEN FAST FOOD cravings strike, they strike hard. If such a craving hit near the Fullerton Red Line stop, the glaring McDonald's at the corner of Fullerton and Lincoln might look like the perfect place to relieve it. Don't be too hasty, though, because sharing a wall with McDonald's sits Allende, a tiny Mexican fast food restaurant that's worth a visit.

I must have walked past Allende a hundred times without seeing it; nothing seems to distinguish it from the dozens of mini burrito stands sprinkled throughout the neighborhood.

After a parking hunt (suggestion: take the Red Line), my guest and I arrived Tuesday evening to find a familiar setup: white red and white walls and a mirror along the wall above yellow wooden booths, parallel to an ordering counter on the right. Only when we saw the menu above the counter did the restaurant begin to distinguish itself.

Price was the first standout. With Tacos $1.55, Tostadas (flat Tacos) $1.99, Tostas (a sort of Mexican sandwich) $2.25 and Burritos $4.50, the menu proves surprisingly economical compared to higher priced local Mexican restaurants.

My guest ordered Carne Asada skirt steak and Pollo (chicken) Tostadas while I opted for a Carne Asada Burrito. This satisfied the restaurant's "equivalent of" included lettuce, tomato, beans, cheese and a reportedly unremarkable flavor magnified by a salty aftertaste.

My Burrito, stuffed with an excellent blend of basic ingredients in bulkier and less healthy proportions, extended four inches longer than its plate; it seemed more of an epic task than a burrito.

However, the first bite proved otherwise. Remarkably well-wrapped and isolated ingredients didn't dissolve into an unpleasant juicy mess, which, apart from contributing to the taste, made it easier to eat and left few debris on my plate in the end. I did agree with my guest, though, that the steak contained too much salt.

Allende's sweet drinks finitely countered the salty food. A Coconut Lianado, thick and satisfying with a defined coconut taste, relieved the guest's thirst, while my lighter, sweeter Agua de Horchata's unique honey-like taste competed with the salt.

Though cheaper, more authentic Mexican food can be found in neighborhoods such as Lincoln Park and Gold Coast, Allende is just a few blocks away.

ALLENDE: 2408 North Lincoln, (773) 477-7714 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Sunday-Thursday, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. Friday-Saturday.

Dining
Elliot Polipo

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Film
Marrissa Mieloccaro

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Music
Evon Dorfman

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Dining
Elito Polipo

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Film
Marrissa Mieloccaro

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Music
Evon Dorfman

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Dining
Elito Polipo

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Film
Marrissa Mieloccaro

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Music
Evon Dorfman

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Dining
Elito Polipo

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Film
Marrissa Mieloccaro

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Music
Evon Dorfman

---

Dining
Elito Polipo
Wilco mixes classic, new for another crowd pleaser

EVE RY THANKSGIVING, while gathered around the table, each member of my family in a few words shows appreciation for something important in their lives. This year, friends and family gave heartfelt thanks to spouses, god and food on the table. But when my turn came, one thing deserved deepest holiday gratitude: the opportunity to see Wilco perform the following evening.

And the performance proved sweeter. Chipping away at the stage, the band, from the top to the bottom, made for one of the most exhilarating concerts I've ever experienced. As the audience made their way to the open house seating, the fact became more evident that this band's relentless strumming was shaking the concert hall and even their keyboardist's bizarre dance antics couldn't save the set.

After a short intermission, the lights dimmed eerily and a man disguised in a raging lion costume began to play a metalpianist, accompanied by Wilco's distinct electronic, playing drum who changed the stage as the crowd transitioned into electric applause.

Since its formation in 1994, Chicago-based Wilco, a country-pop-rock band, has received widespread critical acclaim. Their fans can't get enough of their sound. A few of their most popular songs include "I'm Not#8" and "Lost".

Surrounded by a sold-out crowd, Wilco's lead singer, Jeff Tweedy, began the set with a vibrant introduction. At some point during the show, Wilco joined forces with a local high school band, adding a musical element to the already electric performance.

Throughout the night, the audience was treated to a captivating display of music and energy, with Wilco's unique sound taking center stage. The concert ended with a thunderous applause, as the band took their final bows to an enthusiastic crowd.

The night ended with a feeling of pure exhilaration, as Wilco's music continued to resonate long after the concert had concluded. This was a night that will undoubtedly be remembered by all who were fortunate enough to witness the magic that Wilco brought to the stage.
YES...OR NO?

And so double lunch begins. Neither Kathy Hayes, nor Nina Massad, seniors, know where to dine.

Suddenly Kathy has an idea! “Let’s eat at your house! Your mother makes the best tuna and persimmon brulee.” “No!” yells Nina, “I would never do that!”

Soon, after a bit o’ thought, Nina has her own idea. “Drive me to Chinatown! Surely we’ll find something tasty there!” “No,” yells Kathy, “No way, Josel!”

Finally, Kathy crafts a brilliant plan! “Let’s go to the Medici.” “Yes!” replied Nina, enthusiastically. “Their famous pizzas, fresh salad and tasty Morrocan Ragout, are definitely enticing!”

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Safety session
Following a series of crimes in the school neighborhood, the school has stepped up security. At a November 20 Safety Assembly, Principal Matt Horvat outlined the changes. Students were also given the opportunity to ask terror University of Chicago Police Department Executive Director Body Nimonocks (in photo) about safety inside and outside of school.

On the First day of Christmas my true love said to me
"Head to Coconuts Music and Video..."

Heading out to Coconuts Music and Video, Ruqi Tang, Hannah Redleaf and Alex Bullock can't stop piling up three scary movies, four Justin Timberlake CDs and five boxes of movie treats. They just can't wait to tell their true loves!

ISL dance envisioned

Student government invites fellow schools to join in party

By Henry Africano
Editor-in-Chief

Our rivals are now potentially our colleagues. Student Council and Cultural Union, in addition to planning the Winter Formal Dance, are organizing an Independent School League dance, tentatively scheduled for Friday, January 12. According to Student Council President Donovan Mitchem, senior, U-High is collaborating through e-mail with Latin, Parker and occasionally Morgan Park Academy on a dance location.

"Our big project is the Winter Formal and also doing something with the other ISL schools," Donavan said. "So far all of our plans are tentative, but we have done other things before. We've had an art show, so a dance is definitely possible.

"Our first formal meeting will be over Winter Break. We expect to make some more concrete plans, come up with a schedule for the rest of the year, and delegate certain responsibilities to each school."

The dance could attract a lot of students, believes Cultural Union President Katherine Hayes, senior.

"We picked these three schools in particular based on the location for our ISL dance," she said. "We are hoping that because these schools are fairly close to each other and the kids live around the same neighborhoods, students will hopefully interact with one another. Out of the three schools that we have tried to keep in touch with, Latin is the most willing participant. They have even offered to host the dance at their school, which will make our job a little bit easier. I think this dance will be a lot like Homecoming and hopefully the variety of kids will attract more U-Highers to show up."

Back at U-High, Student Council and Cultural Union have been urging each grade to plan at least one activity a quarter and to have executive committees from each grade be present at steering committee meetings, Donavan said.

"We have stressed to each executive committee that if they participate in our meetings we can get the ball rolling on class activities," he said. "We've changed things up a bit this year and are now encouraging much more inter-class activity. We are also going it take a third of their budget if they don't plan one activity a quarter and add it to the all-school budget."
Jazz at the Checkerboard

At the famous Checkerboard Lounge, which moved to Harper Court last year, U-High's Jazz Band drew an audience of nearly 50, Sunday, December 3. The program included standards such as "Misty and Blue Bossa." The concert was the first band performed in public this year. Max Cuneo-Graff and Philip Yerma were among the appliance-generating musicians. Mr. Dominic Pine is faculty sponsor.

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Evan Graff

(continued from page 10)
As well as photography, Evan is a huge fan of wildlife.
"I enjoy photography by getting out and seeing wildlife and natural areas," Evan explained.
"I just find it amazing to see the variety of different species that you can see in the middle of a city like Chicago and then when you're traveling to other places, the variety you get even wider.
Photography Teacher Liene Rickets has worked with Evan on his personal website's design and considers his work very characteristic of him.
"I've taken time to look at Evan's work when I assigned him to designing his website," Ms. Rickets explained. "His work reflects a sense of peace and security. One can see Evan in all of his images. His love of nature and connection with the environment can be seen."
Forming a friendship with Evan his sophomore year, Senior Steven Jones admires Evan's photography techniques.
"We really met for the first time on golf team in sophomore year," Steven said. "I think we probably learn a lot from each other in terms of Photoshop use and shooting techniques. I think there is a lot of similarity in his style. Evan gets very clean, very smooth looking backgrounds; I think it's pretty characteristic of most of his shots.
Evan and I share their interest in photography with the U-High community, Steven and Evan helped jumpstart the Photography Club. "Last year Steven Jones and I had the idea to start a photography club," Evan said. "This year we were again talking about it and started the club with Jeremy Handrup and Max MacMahan.
"The club is in its infancy right now," Steven added. "It's not really until now that it's going to focus on. But I think something like critique work in the future."
Though unsure of specific future plans, Evan remains certain of his desire to work with wildlife.
"I don't know what kind of job I would like to do, but I will probably have something to do with the natural science," Evan said. "Whether or not photography is involved in my job, I will definitely continue it in my free time.

Student Evaluations

(continued from page 5)
when I first started teaching, in part due to what students have said on evaluation forms," Ms. Housting said. "One year I remember in particular, I hadn't given the students very much homework throughout the year because I didn't want to overextend them.
However, in most of their evaluations they highly requested homework, so they would be better prepared for the tests. So for the next year I tripled the amount of homework.
"I could see the improvement and that the students were learning the material better. Unless you get feedback from students, you might never know what really needs fine tuning in your course."
U-Higher see potential in the idea, given that the surveys are sent by the teacher alone.
"I first took Ms. McCampbell's student teacher evaluation at the end of spring quarter last year and I have her again for my fall quarter class this year," Senior Anne Wildman said. "For Ms. McCampbell there is not much to improve on, but I also think that even simply writing up the evaluations shows them a lot to the students.
"I think it should be the prerogative of the teacher. I don't think every class needs to have student teacher evaluations. I think they should only be done where there are several courses that would benefit from them.
In a vote at its monthly meeting December 3, the faculty approved the practice of student evaluations using forms "prepared and read and used only by the teacher of that class" and resolved that "teachers should give students in each of their high school classes an opportunity to provide written feedback for their teachers."
Whether students would provide evaluations anonymously or not was left to each teacher.

Voices of Compassion

(continued from page 1)
do and draw out possible options for the town.
Finally, we set up a plan of action.
Even though runaways are most of the calls we receive, we accept calls from parents of youth or just the youth who want to talk about their problems. However, if a child does want to run away from home, we have a messaging service where they can give us a message and we can call it in to the parent and vice versa.
If we hear about abuse, we can send a report to the protective service for investigation.
U-Higher have also continued volunteering at sites they began for their Community Learning Service Project. Taking children on field trips for North Side Housing Program Cabrini Green's "Saturday Dreams Program," Senior Jacqueline Chaldey said she feels a deep connection with the children.
"I've been volunteering at Cabrini Green since I was a sophomore for two Saturdays a month at the Saturday Dreams Program," Jacqueline said. "I wanted to continue volunteering there because I'm attached to a group of three girls who were cousins of kids I had worked with the first year I volunteered."
"We go on field trips to places like Navy Pier, the movies, or ice-skating. These are things they don't normally get to do because of where they live. I really like the bus rides because that's when I get to hear about their school day and what they had been doing."
"One of the girls, Monique, is just a blast. She's a very opinionated and strong girl. She's a lot like me I think. Her right, she's been teaching me dance moves from various music videos. She's like my little sister and I'm glad that I can be her big sister."
Volunteering with two other couples each Sunday, Senior Hugh Montgomery serves at Montgomery Place, the retirement home at 35th and Lake Shore Drive.
"The purpose of Montgomery Place is to make people live.
"I've been with this one lady, Ann Parks, for the two years that I've been there. I help her hang pictures and just talk to her.
"We talk about whatever comes to mind or what we are doing that day or how we've been. Sometimes she tells me about things that she used to do when she was young and how things used to be. It's amazing to hear how different she was when she was my age and how much things have advanced today.

Voices of Joy

(continued from page 1)
"We had a choral competition where they took groups from all over the city and we'd get together in a big choir," Cortini said. "With all the choirs and the directors, it was a big deal, like sports. The school I was in at the time was in the top five in the city. We would rehearse for weeks and weeks, but it was fun because all the students got to watch the choirs do their thing. I knew what it takes to make a good choir because I've been in one. I know who's mastered and who's shabby." Math Teacher Jane Carstigh began singing in a religious choir at the age of 7 in the Methodist Church in Chesterton, Indiana. Ms. Carstigh continued to sing in high school and currently sings in the same church's adult choir of eight men and 17 women.
"Being in a church choir takes some commitment," Ms. Carstigh said. "You have to know a little about music. There's an element of expectation that I think has turned people away. I remember a couple of younger kids joining the choir and then realizing that it was a bit harder than they thought."

The concert was a good chance for freshmen to get experience.
—John Swank, junior
There is so much hope in design.

— Sheetal, Coordinator of Public Programs, MCA, Chicago

Sheetal always thought design was compelling but never considered it a part of her everyday life. That all changed when she experienced the Massive Change exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art. Presented by Target, the exhibition immerses visitors in ideas that go far beyond what most of us think of as design.

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Swimmers lose, gain an Alex

By Namrata Patel

Editor-in-Chief

An Alex lost is an Alex found. With the loss of Senior Alex Canewell to Lincoln Park Junior Rowing team and addition of Senior Alex Gomez, the boys' swim team has been practicing timed mid-distance sprints and starts for the season's 3rd meet against St. Ignatius, 5 p.m., Friday, at University of Illinois at Chicago.

Placing 2nd of 6 in the Brownie competition, December 1, the Maroons performance wasn't a true indicator of the team's potential because only seven swimmers were allowed to attend, according to Senior Zach Sklja.

"We came into the meet and sort of knew who we were," he continued. "I see a lot more confidence this year. Won Hee has had this other group of freshmen had this competition going on throughout the race and this kid had continually been beating him. But Won Hee in the last heat in the last race beat him. He now officially talks about being better than Canewell."

"I think our young talent will come through this year. We have seven new freshmen this year. And at St. Ignatius, I see a lot of promise. Also, Paul, Homer and Won Hee having been training all yearround so we will probably see great things from them."

Competing in high school competitions since 8th grade, Alex said he has gone to Minnesota State competitions, once his sophomore year for the 400 free relay and again junior year for both the 200 and 400 free relays.

Missing his Minnesota lane brothers and traditional pre-meet dinners, Alex said he worries he won't find the same camaraderie.

"At my old school, I loved growing up with my team members," he said nostalgically. "I was so close with the coaches; they were like my big brothers or uncles. It's hard to go from brotherhood of the team to something that seems scattered and un-sided. Swimming doesn't seem as much as a part of their lives. I might be too focused and unable to open up to my new team members."
POINT/COUNTERPOINT

Which sports city is better, Chicago or Los Angeles?

Phil: I've been feeling a little sick lately.

Evan: Why's that?

Phil: It's all the Chicago sports I've been watching.

Evan: Frolicking from the uncoordinated arrayness of the Windy City wonder-squads?

Phil: Please, Chicago sports teams' so-called "raffiness" is far from unparalleled. At best, it's paralleled. And one might even go so far as to say that it overparallels.

Evan: Overparallelized? What?

Phil: Yeah, overparallelized, by the raging pit of fire known only as the City of Angels, La La Land, the Wild West, where the wind carries that special scent of victory that, although understandable to someone such as yourself—in

Evan: Sweet Sid Luckman, you are sick!

Phil: If you want to talk sick, then let's talk about the mental state of Bears Quarterback Rex Grossman.

Evan: He's the malfunctioning cog in the Super Bowl machine that is the Chicago Bears.

Phil: While at times fico can make you scratch your head, there's no denying the fact that the Bears are real. Stud or dud, Grossman has played well enough to keep the Bears atop the NFC. Sure all of Chicago is chanting Brian Griese's name, but at the end of the day don't burn the book before you get past chapter six. Grossman is the quarterback of the future and like it or not, you gotta have faith. Plus, Grossman is infinitely better than that Los Angeles quarterback... oh wait, you don't even have a football team.

Evan: Fish posh! Such a grotesque display of Neanderthal brutality is beneath the patients of the typical L.A. sports aficionado. Perhaps I can interest you in basketball, which requires a little more skill and finesse than that brutish "sport" Chicagoans so adore. Such a third class sport for such a third class town!

Phil: So Chicago, the city of big shoulders baby! And we can't even get those big shoulders to carry the weight of such a rich sports history. You want to talk basketball son? Walt Bellamy, Jerry Sloan, Bob Love, Artis Gilmore, Reggie Theus, Michael Jordan, Kirk Hinrich, the list goes on. While I can sit here and name legends all day long, let's restrict it to what really matters: great teams. I'd like to take you back to the golden age, the 90's, a decade dominated by the finest dynasty in the history of sports: the Chicago Bulls.

Phil: Please, that team only succeeded because of the dearth of NBA talent in the 90's. They didn'tHarvest real competition. Put that lackluster crew up against the prodigious poses of any other era and they get destroyed. The Showtime Lakers of the 80's, with Magic and Kareem, or the earlier wonder squads of Wilt Chamberlain, Elgin Baylor and Jerry West? Even George Mikan, the bespectacled behemoth who mano mano battled the Lakers to their first series of titles, would have wiped the floor with any Chicago team.

Evan: Oh! The web of hallacies you've so callously spun has finally revealed you for a fool! George Mikan actually played for the Minneapolis Lakers, before they moved to your so-called "first class town."

Phil: And one other thing, your boy, Georgey M, was born in this so called "third class town," Chi-City baby.

Evan: What, was that my phone's ringing, held on...Hello? Who? Jim Hendry?

General Manager of the Cubs Jim Hendry?

You sound terrible, what's wrong? Your team? It's the worst team ever? C'mon Jimmy, don't be so hard yourself, you've got some guys. What about Alphonso Soriano, he was a good...oh, you overpaid for him! What about Mark Prior? Isn't he supposed to be the future? Oh, he's been the future for the past five years? Gee Jimmy, I don't know what to say, maybe you should check out the L.A. Dodgers, they seem to know what they're doing.

Evan: Oh, oh, hold on, my phone's ringing too. Hello? Jim Hendry? What? You didn't actually just call Phil? He just made that up, because he has no real argument?

Phil: Well...that thinking, Eh, wild thinking. If you keep thinking like that, I'll be forced to go to the last two Herman Trophy winners, Matt Leinart and Reggie Bush.

Evan: You want to talk Herman? Let me introduce you to an old friend of mine that goes by the name of Jay Berwanger. He was the first to ever win the Heisman and, oh yeah, he happened to attend the University of Chicago. Nothing better than the original baby.

Chi-City made him pretty. When he was around, Chi town did not. Bruce Bush is a clown because Jay Berwanger was the first to wear the crown.

Phil: Real cute. Such simple rhyme schemes I've come to expect from a city that embraces mediocrity. Why don't you go to Mike Ditka's Restaurant and get yourself a plate of Chicago with a side of worst sports teams in western civilization.

Evan: You know, I am getting kind of hungry. I think I'll head on over to the Wiener Circle and grab a real meal; a Chicago style char dog.

Teacher keeps on track with running passion

By Harley Chang

Associate editor

During high school, Phys Ed Teacher Sonia Oravcova shined brightly in track and field. The brightest in Czechoslovakia.

Ms. Oravcova is here on a Fulbright exchange program, exchanging teaching positions with Mrs. Joan Vande Velde. Coming from the first independent school in Bratislava, Slovakia, Ms. Oravcova taught both geography and physical education.

Beginning track and field when she was only 8, Ms. Oravcova began seriously competing during her high school years. Sprinting the 100 meter dash, long jumping and competing in the heptathlon, Ms. Oravcova chose track and field for being an individual sport and attributes much of her love of the sport to her coaches.

"By high school, schools began competing with each other," she said. "Since I lived in a little mountain town, it was hard to travel to places. My coach was very good to me and allowed me to live with his family in the city. I think it was because he saw great potential in me and wanted to cultivate it personally."

Ms. Oravcova believes long jumping complements her running.

"I feel that sprinting the 100 meters is the best speed for me," she explained. "The fast pace makes it that much more exciting and all your effort goes down into those few seconds. I also feel that the short distance gives me the option to move more competition. Like sprinting, I feel the same freedom when I jump. When I jump, I'm flying" for those three seconds that she uses to parallel the single bolt.

By the end of high school, Ms. Oravcova had won the national championship for the long jump. Her talent and aspirations were cut short when she started having ankle problems during her college years and could not go on to compete internationally. Not one to take no for an answer, Ms. Oravcova tried repeatedly to get back to competing.

"By the time I heard that I could not compete, sports had become my life. It was very hard for me to accept and I tried to start my training again many times, only to have my ankle give me trouble every time. Eventually, I learned that I must respect my body's limits and I do a lot more relaxing sports now, such as hiking and skiing. There's nothing competitive in me when I hike or ski, I do it simply to make my body feel good."

Cross Country and Track Coach Bud James said that Ms. Oravcova fitting into her new school environment perfectly.

"Ms. Oravcova is a very nice person who is loved by both the kids and P.E. Department members," Mr. James said. "I hope that she'll be able to come to our track practices from time to time and offer her expert opinions on our kids' abilities. I know that she was very good at jumping; well over 20 feet. I look forward to seeing her get involved with our team, and I am sure she would enjoy it a great deal."
From court to rink, athletes shine out of school
Fall teams wrap up, size up what's needed next year

By Tom Stanley-Becker

Placing 4th of 9 in Sectionals, November 18 at the University of Illinois at Chicago, girls' varsity swimmers matched the previous year's finish despite their top swimmer, Junior Anna Schindler, not making the meet. Other fall sports teams have enjoyed success as well. Several squads advanced individual athletes to State tournaments, including Golfer Nick Kogelman, senior, and girls' tennis standouts Rebecca Renstich, senior, Alex Grynn, junior, and Gabby Clark, freshman.

Boys' varsity soccer and girls' varsity volleyball made solid showings as well, just missing Super Sectionals and Sectionals, respectively. Finishing behind St. Ignatius, Latin and Whitney Young, swimmers put in remarkable races, said Linnea Madsen, junior.

"Midseason we began to specify our workouts," Linnrea explained. "Swimmers swam faster for a shorter time and long distance swimmers swam longer but less fast. In Sectionals, people brought in amazing swims, such as in the first event, when Freshman Kaia Tammen had an amazing time drop in the 200 freestyle and both she and Junior Polina Ryshik row in places, inspiring us to duplicate their successes."

Ranked 349 of 633 nationally, varsity tennis star Gabby Clark, freshman, hopes for more rigorous practices next year. "If a player misses a shot, coaches should immediately point out how to do it better in the future and teammates should give her support," Gabby said.

"In practices, we could do more drills in serving, volleying and ground strokes, our weaknesses this year. Other schools are more focused on tennis and have tryouts. To improve on this year's record, the coaches and the team have to work together."

Playing for the first year in Class AA, a higher level of competition with teams from bigger schools, boys' varsity soccermen fell one game short of the Sectional crown.

"The fact that we got so far in the season was a great achievement and I was surprised that we did so well in Class AA," said Ben Picker, junior.

Da Bears! A team but also an addiction

EVERY MONDAY morning for the past three months, while completing unfinished weekend homework in the cafeteria, I have heard friends talking about what happened in the previous day's Bears game.

As a die-hard baseball fan, I dreaded the end of the World Series every November. I thought it was a lot like the moment after you've finished unwrapping your presents on Christmas morning. In the back of your mind you know that next Christmas is another year away. Yet, as I struggled to keep up with my friend's football talk, I had to wonder what all the hype was about.

I first turned to my friend Kai Smidt, junior, who regularly goes to Bears games and even wears Chicago sports paraphernalia to school, to find out what she likes about the Bears.

"I started liking the Bears when I was 10 years old as a way to bond with my dad," Kai said. "Every Sunday we watch the games together and yell and swear at the T.V. screen and I refuse to answer the phone. After games I talk about what happened with my friends online and then on Monday mornings I get the newspaper and read the sports section and all my friends know not to bother me when I'm reading about the Bears."

"My friends Sydney Marcus and Becca Foley go with me and we all wear our Bears hats and make fun of the other team and everyone high fives each other when the Bears score. This year our defense is on point and we have a really good chance of going all the way I always believe in my home team."

Slowly, the Bears have turned baseball-loving, closet fans like myself into rabid masochists. Or something close.

Even the most unlikely fans also became captivated by Bears football in 1985, the year of the dogmatic Mike Ditka, the gangbusters Defensive Linebacker William "Fridge" Perry and The heroic Runningback Walter Payton.

Though today's Bears team may not have the same personalities, what they do have is a mandate for winning that may make them even greater.

In the end, the Bears will always attract their core fans who come out to support them. Yet this team, like the '85 team, has captured the attention and respect of even the most unlikely Chicagoans such as myself.

Though I couldn't call myself a fan yet, I can say that I have a newfound respect for the game of football and the toughness of our Bears and I hope that their path to the Super Bowl remains clear as it is now.

Peanut Butter and Jelly...Again

Disenchanted with his daily lunch choice, Sophomore Nate Wise is disgusted at the thought of yet another PB&J. Lucky for him (and you!) University Market offers a wide variety of snacks, sandwiches and drinks for your enjoyment.

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"I really like Urban Outfitters. They have really cute clothes that are inexpensive and so many gifts."
– Tyne Alexander, senior

Festive fashions dress up the holidays in style

Neutral shades are the new brights. Browns, beiges and warm reds fill clothing stores this holiday season, ranging from inexpensive shirts for gift giving to pricey dresses on a wish list. Round-down colors predominate in high-end department stores, single brand shops and big chain stores. Searching for holiday outfits, U-Highers can find great choices in a range of prices. For dresses, Max Studio, 900 North Michigan Avenue, offers an array of options most around $100. Mostly in simple black, brown and tan colors, the dresses seem ideal for holiday parties.

Fashionable outfits for boys can be found at Diesel, 923 Rush Street. The Italian brand boasts attire ranging from edgy button-down shirts to distressed jeans. For girls, Diesel offers European styles. Simple sweaters and intricate coats characterize the brand’s trendy look. Prices range from about $80 to $300, making Diesel’s clothes applicable to top students’ wish lists this season.

On the less expensive end of the shopping spectrum, Urban Outfitters, 935 North Rush Street, proven great for personal shopping or gift giving. Striped sweaters and corduroy jackets offer a contemporary twist on a classic look for boys this holiday season.

For girls, surprising amounts of shorts and miniskirts fill the store, paired with leggings and boots for the winter. Urban also offers great presents for U-Highers looking to give this season, including quirky tee-shirts, satirical coffee table books, inexpensive jewelry and vintage turntables.

U-Highers, making Urban a one-stop shop for gifts this season.