Gangs hover in community challenges

By Gabriel Bump
Associate editor

Leaving footprints in the freshly fallen snow while walking home from a South Side school, a 16-year-old Hyle Park Academy student can’t appreciate the beautiful Christmas decorations adorning his South Shore street because he’s worrying about getting shot.

Just this school year, six Chicago Public School students have been killed in gang violence. Despite a decrease in gang-related violence since 2000, Chicago remains one of the most dangerous cities in the country, according to the anti-shooting initiative CeaseFire located on Chicago’s near Westside.

Identifying gang members before they come to school is the only way to reduce violence, according to Mr. Tio Hardiman, director of gang mediation and community organizing for CeaseFire.

“School officials have to get these kids before it happens,” Mr. Hardiman explained. “If they don’t, they’re always going to be too late. They have to identify the guy that has the most influence. Gang violence is very visible and prevalent. Most kids that go to school in gang-ridden neighborhoods know how to avoid getting into trouble.

“There are many levels of involvement with gang members,” Mr. Hardiman continued. “You have the guys that are in the gangs because it’s the cool thing to do, then you have the drug sellers.

“Finally, there are the people that take oaths and dedicate their lives to the gang. If you don’t have the backbone of a gorilla then you have to get out of the gang, because you got guys that will do whatever by any means. People get snatched into jails because they have the wrong belief system.”

For Nick Rott, commander of the Chicago Police Department gang intelligence unit, the public’s perception of the crime rate rising in Chicago isn’t reality.

(continues on page 3)

Untraditional Traditions

U-High families give the best gift, concern and time for others

By Robin Shapiro
Editor-in-Chief

Women dressed in blue wait passively in folding chairs on a basketball court while tan dressed men sit in bleachers. These 500 inmates, segregated by gender, sit under the ceiling of a windowless gymnasium. Shaking the reachable hands down separated aisles of the Cook County Jail Gymnasium, Senior Victoria Rogers and the Reveshad Jesse Jackson meet the peaceful faces.

Working with Mr. Jackson and People United to Serve Humanity, an organization working with African American communities in Chicago to stay out of trouble, Victoria serves at the Cook County Jail every Christmas day to inspire the inmates.

“This WILL be my fifth year in a row,” Victoria said. “Jesse Jackson’s Operation PUSH gives inspirational talks to the inmates. I help support the people who are speaking.

“Sometimes I get to meet the inmates. I find that really interesting. I guess it just became a tradition. I keep doing it because I think it’s really important to give back. It’s a great opportunity to see something different, with a new kind of people.

“When I go, there’s usually a choir that sings. It really brings joy to the people in jail. Jesse Jackson gives an inspirational talk to inspire the prisoners to get out of jail, and to not come back. Last year, Jesse Jackson and I met and shook hands with almost all of the inmates.

“I GOT TO introduce myself, and I think it really makes them feel like they are not forgotten on Christmas. Especially since a lot of the inmates don’t have a lot of family because they’ve done bad things in the past, Jesse Jackson really makes them feel like someone cares about them. I think that it helps them have a reason to get out. There’s usually an auditorium where all of the inmates sit and the people who speak stand in front. They also all have the option of getting tested for AIDS or HIV if they want to. And, if they can, they can get registered to vote. It’s also televised.”

Similarly keeping the act of service a part of tradition in his own family, Senior Van Miner takes a day a week before Christmas, preparing food at the Ronald McDonald House Charities on 55th Street and Drexel Avenue.

“My FAMILY and three other families with kids close to my age go to the Ronald McDonald house every year,” Van explained. “We make dinner for the people staying there. While we wait, we usually get to sit and talk to them about how their kids are doing.

“The Ronald McDonald house is a place where families who can’t afford hotels for long periods of time stay while their kids are in the hospital. They aren’t from the neighborhood but come to the University Hospitals to get the best treatments. These kids are really sick.

“It’s become somewhat of a tradition in my family. I definitely think it’s important to go there every year because the foods the families usually eat are donated, or are cafeteria food.

“When we make the meal they get really (continues on page 4)
Holidays travel will explore distant lands

By Denise Akumoe
Midday reporter

S
plunging at her favorite stores Harajuku for hand bags and teenage outfits in Tokyo and visiting Buddhist temples in Japan and in Kyoto, Sophomore Yoko Koide looks forward to celebrating the New Year’s Eve. During the two week winter vacation, starting this Saturday.

On New Year’s Day and will give friends and students, including those in the dormitory, a New Year’s Day celebration.

Natives dressed in fancy animal Japanese costumes parade through the streets of Tokyo during the traditional New Year’s festival, which dates back to the Japanese New Year.

The trip is really important to me because I go every year and it's the only time that I can really practice speaking Japanese, learn about traditions and eat traditional Japanese food," Yoko explained. "I'm excited to celebrate New Years. It's a bigger deal than what Americans do. We'll have our own celebration close including gas stations and drug stores.

At midnight all the people around are basically given a chance to hit this massive bell that rings about 110 times every New Year's Eve. That's the Year's Eve all the temples in Japan hold festivals; which is pretty much a local custom.

"It's pretty insane and people pray at the temple and stuff because pretty much everyone in Japan is Buddhist and Shinto mix and then there is a lot of crazy, random stuff going on. For example, plastic dragons that chomp on your head for good luck, dancing monkeys, and so on.

Celebrating Christmas with family and friends during the vacation after living in Chicago for three months for his new job, A.P. Physics and Physics F. J. Brown awaits his trip to his hometown of Galeratta, Spain. "I will be taking a plane on December 10th and will spend the weeks with my mother, father, brother, and three sisters," Mr. Saer said. "I am looking forward to my trip because I have not seen my family since August. I want to see the beautiful area with the beautiful landscape. It will be a week till the hitch of the highest mountain of the Basque Region, the Sierra de Urquz.

On the family trip on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day and New Year's Day and New Year's Day are main events because of my brother. The only one I have for my sister will be in New Year's Day. We will eat paísa, a Spanish rice, turron, a mix of dried fruit and a cake made of an egg, and compota, a mix of dried fruits with cooled wine, apple, and sugar.

Indulging in big family dinners while visiting her parents' native country, Sophomore Lucille Benoit is excited for her trip to Belgium.

"I love going to Belgium for Christmas because all of my cousins, aunts, uncles, and other members of my family come to my grandparents house to celebrate," Lucille said.

"There are usually so many people all sitting around one large table so that it is almost impossible to talk to all of them. My grandparents cook an extravagant dinner for everyone, both of them being excellent cooks. "Desert is the best part because we eat a lot of waffles, chocolate mousse, meringue, and crépes. After Christmas, I go with a few family members to several cities in Belgium such as Brussels and Bruges. It is a very gratifying experience to be able to see so many members of my family since I only go to visit them once or twice a year."

Holocaust trip reveals reminders of other historical legacies, too

By Aaron Weiss
Midday reporter

Intrigued by the colonized stone wall that sits at one end of the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial, Senior spotted office during her four-year presidency. At the FDR Memorial, one spot particularly stood out to her. It had the word "sea" and "lives on land," and I have seen blood running from the wounded... war," Eva recited.

"The memorial was like a map that led you through his life and phases. You are metaphorically walking with him. It set the tone for a very political trip.

The class visited the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, which was filled with images of families captured and imprisoned in concentration camps, including him and the recreation of a torture chamber at Auschwitz, Poland. Senior Billy Stevenson said the torture facility shocked him.

"The torture facility was so Graphic," Billy explained.

"The stuff from there was unbelievable. They had the actual things they used to torture people with," she said.

On the trip, students had the opportunity to talk with Holocaust Survivor Helen Luxembourg, a volunteer enrolled by the Museum to tell her story to visitors.

"She told me about how her husband died," Eva said. "They met each other from the fence while they were in a concentration camp. He told her he would love to marry her. Well time went on and she kind of forgot about him. But after the camp was liberated, they found each other through furious search. She then pointed to the information desk and her husband was right there! It was so romantic.

"On her way back, a train would pass by," she added. "He had to pay money to buy a ticket and when I was on the train, he would see her and hand her a note. When I got off the train, I went to see how she was doing. "I heard he was doing well," she said.

Holocaust trip reveals reminders of other historical legacies, too

By Isabel Del Canto
Midway reporter

Conjuring up memories of the 1960s Chicago blues scene, Junior Kevin Brunko and Max Wagner are organizing an assembly that will feature a benefit concert in remembrance of Mr. Butterfield.

After the boys learned that Mr. Butterfield was not coming to be with them, all being native Hyde Parkers and students at U-High, their interest increased.

After graduating, Mr. Butterfield formed The Paul Butterfield Blues Band with singer-guitarist John Sebastian and lead guitarist Elvin Bishop, bassist Jerome Arnold, drummer Sam Lay, guitarist Doug Clifford, and former lead organist Mark Naftalin, all of whom became famous. The band signed to Elektra Records and released their first album, "The Paul Butterfield Blues Band" in 1965. Mr. Butterfield died in 1987 of a drug accident 18 years after performing at Woodstock.

Kevin and Max presented the concert idea to Dean of Students Larry McFarlane, Lab Schools Director David Magill and Principal Matt Horvat.

"After talking to them about the idea of a concert, we decided to plan on having an assembly first," Kevin explained. "Depending on how the assembly turned out, we would follow with the benefit concert after a year of planning to make it perfect.

"The assembly would be to honor Paul Butterfield and celebrate his life and music, but also amazing music by keeping his music alive. During the assembly Mr. Lacoque's class will perform and his band The Mississippi Heat will play, as will the U-High Jazz Band, according to Mr. Butterfield's family. A guest speaker also is being considered.

"The bands would perform any blues songs they have even some of his songs. We would also want people who knew him personally, like one of his brothers or maybe his son, Jim, as a guest speaker.

"The follow up concert would be a benefit concert for spring of 2009, to raise money for Gabriel’s organization, The Paul Butterfield Fund and Society. Along with other organizations like the Blues Heaven Foundation, founded by Willie Dixon to aid blues musicians. It would be on a Friday night, somewhere on campus, hopefully Mandell Hall, and people would pay to get in, and enjoy the performance of musicians."

One of Mr. Butterfield’s classmate and friends, Patricia “Vickie” Ramberes, Lower School Teacher Emeritus recalls Mr. Butterfield’s unique personality.

"He loved pushing the envelope," she said. "He loved to play music wherever and wherever he could. He played his guitar and harmonica at school dances and class parties, and even back then you could see his potential. There was a forrerunner magazine in the 60’s that called the Concept, and Paul illustrated for that magazine. He was a very talented artist and kept debating about his thoughts on music and graphic design."

"I'd be more than interested to help with this assembly, and if it was important for me to speak, I would definitely come down to it. I'm just shy when it comes to public speaking."

Journalism Adviser Wayne Brasler said his experience in the music industry made him a perfect fit for the project.

"The reason why Max and Kevin came to me is because I know so much about the music business," Mr. Brasler said.

"In the 90's I produced AIDS benefit concerts. I volunteered to be their faculty adviser because I found it to be a very interesting idea, especially coming from two students. I suspect that a lot of students don't know who Paul Butterfield is, so that he went to U-High. I think that this assembly will be a great thing."
Teacher’s trip to Egypt resonates back home

By Mona Dasgupta

Editor-in-Chief

"Wow, I got to study, live and be in Egypt. I got to listen, observe and take part in conversation with other people devoted to education around the world."

So said History Teacher Shoom Shapiro of her trip to Cairo. Egypt November 20-December 2, as a part of the People to People Citizen Ambassador Programs. Founded in 1956 by President Dwight Eisenhower, who believed citizens of different nations could connect through values and goals, the program provides foreign educational travel for American teachers. Selected participants connect with people with similar professional interests through meetings, seminars and activities.

Egyptian education, school visits, and Great Pyramids tours were among the program’s activities. Of 428 Conference delegates, Mrs. Shapiro was among 17 in the history delegation. Mrs. Shapiro visited the el-Naer English School of Cairo where activities included discussions with teachers and classroom observations.

“The el-Naer English School of Cairo is one of the best private schools,” Mrs. Shapiro said. “They were concerned with showing us their uses of technology development in math and science. The history teacher, Omara, was my favorite teacher. One gave a multimedia presentation on the school and history education.”

Mrs. Shapiro visited the Mubark City Teacher Training Institute, a training center for new teachers after college, in Giza.

“The director of the school gave a lecture and power point presentation about moral education and instilling ‘value’ in students.” Mrs. Shapiro said. “Then we saw labs where science graduates learned how to teach science. Then we saw an IMAX presentation on the Galapagos Island’s Darwin Experiment. This day was about science. Most of the education reforms tend to be about math, science and technology. Humanities is sort of on the back burner nationally in Egypt.”

“This trip was truly amazing. I was intrigued. I was interested in Islamic life and culture, in Egypt as a more liberal Islamic country. It was wonderful being in a country at the crossroads of antiquity and modernity.”

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4 Teamwork

NEW, veteran talent propelling Math Team

By Rafi Khan
Midday reporter

Turning over one perfect paper after another, freshman Charles Du has proven among the most promising newcomers. Among eight freshmen on the 35-member team, Charles had not gotten a single problem wrong in the North Suburban Math League (NSML) meets as of November 27.

In NSML competitions, five schools vie for the highest cumulative score on individual written tests. During the first two of five NSML meets, October 3 at Nenana Valley High in Naperville and October 25 at Lake Forest High in Lake Forest and Western Springs, Charles correctly answered all five questions in both freshman and sophomore rounds. The Maroons placed fifth in another meet December 6 at Niles North High School in Skokie; results came after Midway deadline.

"I try to practice with textbooks and old contests whenever I can," Charles said. "But the attention is kind of overwhelming; it's really not that big of a deal." Charles has won praise from other members, such as Senior Rob Webber, who believes Charles will help the team win many meets.

"Charles is the best guy right now," said Rob, four-year member. "I mean, four straight perfect papers is like, epic. He's going to be better than me, I swear. But Charles isn't the team, man. He's just one person. We need three in each grade.

As of last week, U-High was ranked 9th of 55 schools in the NSML and 2nd of 12 in its division as of the second meet.

Math Team also competes in the Illinois Math League (IML), a series consisting of six monthly contests. Tied with seven schools for 15th place out of 82 after the first contest, December 22, the team looks ahead to its third test tomorrow.

Math Teacher Nadja Aquino, former assistant coach, replaced veteran Head Coach Jane Czarnik.

Debaters preparing for big event

By Andrew Sylora
Midday reporter

Heading into their 10th meet this year, four varsity and four to six novice debaters are traveling north to the prestigious Lake Tech Invitational, scheduled for Friday and Saturday, January 18-19. The members will compete in teams of two. At last year's Lake Tech event, U-High's novice teams each won two meets and lost three, while varsity won three meets and lost two. The topic chosen by the National Forensic League, why the U.S. needs to increase public health assistance in Sub-Saharan Africa, is being debated nationwide.

In the absence of Coach Anna Blinstein, a Middle School teacher who was on an educational trip to Japan, University of Chicago graduate student Sarah Grunin has helped the team prepare.

"Sarah helped the varsity develop a more solid base and understand more of what debate actually is," said Junior Elisabeth Mo- rant, captain. "She also helped with our upperclassman, since debate is really time-dependent. She drilled us with constant exercises dealing with taking notes, how to write memos, having us do practice rounds during the team meetings.

Roasting 12 members, the team is composed of eight freshmen, Sophomores Jennifer Glick and Claire Milsted and Juniors Elii Lipat and Elisabeth.

"All of the novices on our team have shown outstanding improvement," Elisabeth said. "They're really motivated. One Thursday, the entire team gave up double lunch to prepare."

Science Teams gears up for early Olympiad, other challenges

By Alex Kleiman
Midday reporter

Building musical instruments, robots and model airplanes at the Science Olympiad Invitational, Saturday at Hinsdale South High School in suburban Darien, Science Olympiad airplanes and teams to top last year's 7th place.

Teams of two from the 15-person varsity team, sponsored by Science Teacher Sharon Houlihan, compete in three events at Olympius. Events may be related to biology, chemistry, earth science or physics. Additionally, all pairs compete in engineering and technology challenges requiring knowledge of several scientific fields. This year's events range from Forest Ecology to Experimental Design.

"We've never done an invitational this early in the year before," said David McAlpine, Science Olympiad co-captain with Maria Birukova. "We're both seniors. So it's really a chance for us to see what strengths and weaknesses the new team has and give us a chance to see what we need to work on this year. We intend to work more on the robot building and the physics events."

Potentially taking away some Olympiad participants, the Illinois Council of Teachers of Mathematics (ICTM) math contest is also scheduled for Saturday.

"There is a large overlap between Math and Science Olympiad," Maria said. "A couple of strong Science Team competitors are really torn about which team to compete with. We may lose some of our best participants."

After the Science Olympiad, Science Team members will participate in Worldwide Youth in Science and Engineering (WYSE) Regional academic challenge February 2, sponsored by Universities Katherine Zhou and David Xu. Participants can choose to take tests in subjects such as math and physics.

Last year U-High placed 1st in Regional, Sectional and State divisions for WYSE.

U. of C. meet next up for Model U.N. team

By Julie Carlson
Associate editor

Representing Grenada, 22 Model United Nations delegates will compete at a conference in the Palmer House sponsored by the University of Chicago, February 1-3. It is the third of four scheduled meets.

At last year's U. of C. conference, 10 members won Best Delegate awards, eight won Honorable Mentions and seven won Commendations.

The team's most recent meet, December 6-7, took the team to Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

sets outside Boston. A 10-delegate team represented South Korea. Results came after Midway deadline. At the University of California, Los Angeles, November 9-11, a 23-member team represented the United Kingdom won the Best, Extracurricular Delegation award. Individual award winners at the meet were as follows: BEST DELEGATEES: Masawak Hob, Sarah Wold. OUTSTANDING DELEGATEES: Joseph Bezdini, Brady Cline, Robert Mayer, Sydney Spiek. HONORABLE MENTIONS: Julie Solomon, Beni Solomon, Billy Sullivan, Katherine Zou. COMMENDATIONS: Jenny Harris, Matt Larraine, Aarne Racz, Matt Wheat.

"Before UCLA, we practiced speaking every day," said Senior Jenny Harris, Model U.N. president. "We had a lot of rookies this year, so we wanted to make sure they were prepared. They did really well. By the end of the year, I hope that we'll have a very experienced team that really cares about national policies and issues." After retiring as a history teacher last year, Mr. Earl Bell has kept coaching the team. History Teacher Paul Horten, who returned to U-High after many years' absence, is serving as the team's assistant coach.
Calls from the Fire Swamp
by Eric Cochrane

CHARACTER SKETCH AMANDA PAPPAS

King of being carefree

ROCKING TIGHT fitted jeans, a white button-down shirt and a black hat, young Senior Tom Brewer’s eclectically styled look would be recognizable in person or in art form.

Tom’s tall and slender frame is complemented by his calm and carefree personality. Homecoming King along with brothers Sophomore Jack and Freshman Dan Brewer, it’s clear his peers appreciate his natural charm and suave character.

ALONG WITH seniors Victoria Rogers, Nick Mittelsteadt, Nathan Worcester, Tom is now editor-in-chief of the magazine.

“Understanding the other editors and I have discussed thus far are ideas for the design of the magazine,” Tom explained. “We really want to make sure the design supports the art and doesn’t overwhelm it because some people thought the design was aesthetically pleasing but occasionally detracted from the art. This time we’re thinking about something simpler because we have less time to produce the magazine. We were thinking about getting it done by the end of the school year. My job is really the responsibility for developing the artistic vision and honing it.”

IN ADDITION to exploring his passion for art through clubs, Tom enjoys producing art for himself. “I do a lot of sketching of all types of people. I love my friends or sometimes people on the bus. If someone strikes me particularly interesting or unique, I try to draw him or her. I typically draw abstract faces built of smaller drawings. ‘My art tends to be bright and colorful and I try to draw and create art as often as something. Usually on the weekends I try and take one or two-hour solid blocks of drawing time. I find it therapeutic. It feels really good to be creating something and it keeps me happy.”

“I spend a lot of time in Brian Wilderman’s room. It’s sort of become a hangout for my friends and me because we have access to art materials when we want to do something and it’s always fun to talk to Brian.”

Finding another haven in music, Tom says he often devotes time reading music blogs.

“I listen to all types of genres of music,” Tom said. “I have about 110 days worth of music on my computer. I listen to a lot of indie but I also like anything from guitar driven music to more synthesized or slow music.”

“I listen to different kinds of music for different types of moods. If I’m feeling down I listen to something depressing or something I can relate to like a singer or songwriter type person. If I’m in a really good mood I listen to funnier or more upbeat stuff. Whenever I’m in my room, I’m always listening to music.”

ALTHOUGH he listens to certain music depending on his mood, he turns to track and cross country for a constant high.

“There’s a certain raw energy you feel when running,” Tom said. “I always feel better when I run. There’s something about competing at meets that’s really exciting. I usually run the 400-meter dash, the 100-meter hurdles and I hope to do the 800-meter dash this year. Doing the actual event is painful but finishing is really rewarding.”

Untraditional traditions

(continued from front page)

excited. The holidays make the families especially down because their kids are really sick, and they can’t celebrate the way that they want to.’

Starting her annual community service during Thanksgiving, Sophomore Isabella Pretto donates toys, clothes and presents to kids through her mother’s law firm, Francis Sullivan, P.C. on Jackson Street and Wacker Drive.

“I love to donate little toys,” Isabella explained. “What happens is we decorate a tree and for every ornament we donate a present to put under the tree that we give to little children. ‘There’s also a program where you can adopt a child for the holidays and the child tells you what they want. Last year we had a little girl that wanted a doll, a dollhouse, and clothes.”

“In my program, a girl that I am in for someone in need, and to think, ‘What is this girl going to want?’ I like being able to choose what they want, like in pink or purple. ‘I’ve always thought the holidays were a time to give back. ’

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U. OF C. steps up safety initiative

By Cydney Weiner
Editor-in-Chief

Lab Schools administrators don’t anticipate any additional safety measures after U. of C. Graduate Student Amande Cisse was shot and killed while walking home at 6120 South Ellis Avenue November 19.

In response to the tragedy, Lab Schools Director David Magill notified parents, faculty and the Dean’s Office by e-mail as soon as a police report was filed and Dean of Students Larry McFarlane and Principal Matt Horvast conducted a safety meeting in the cafeteria at lunch November 20.

“We are constantly being cautious whether because of this incident or just because of where we are located,” Mr. Magill said. “I understand that these things happen sometimes raise a lot of anxiety, but my feeling is, if it makes someone think the next time they go out then it’s worth it.”

“If anyone feels uncomfortable about walking to their car at night, they can call up the University at any time and ask that they be accompanied.”

New safety services by the University include increased police patrolling in the area, blue light emergency telephones at 61st and Drexel and Greenwood Avenues and plans to install University phones at University, Woodlawn and Kimbark Avenues at 61st Street.

Other recent crimes in the area include the robbing of a U-High sophomore boy at 51st Street and Ellis Avenue November 25 and two Middle School boys robbed on 55th Street between Kenwood and Dorchester Avenues several weeks ago.
Chicago’s hottest spots for Hot Chocolate

Tasty cold-weather treat comes in tantalizingly tasty variations

By Anna Katrina Zbikowski

In search of the best hot chocolate in Chicago, four U-Highers traveled to the North Side on a blustery Friday afternoon to find the steaming, delectable treat. With squishy couches and brick walls adorned with local artists’ work, the cafe Dollop, 4181 North Clarendon Avenue, tempted Seniors Sara Sandmel and Lienen Xu and Freshman Chi Luppescu.

Promptly ordering, the U-Highers decided on four bowl cups of Ghirardelli hot chocolate, slathered in whipped cream and drizzled in melted chocolate. Raving over the piping hot drink, Chi said that hot chocolate wasn’t usually her favorite beverage.

“I don’t always like hot chocolate, but this was really good,” Chi said. “And it looked really good. It was really sweet. I knew that hot chocolate was made with Ghirardelli and I really like that stuff.”

OPENED BY owner Phil Tadros three years ago, Dollop is his third coffee shop and fifth storefront business. Working behind the counter, Mr. Tadros, sporting dark rimmed glasses and a scruffy beard, explained that customers can add anything to Dollop’s hot chocolate.

“Our hot chocolate is made with Ghirardelli chocolate and organic milk,” Mr. Tadros said. “But you can have soy milk, or add white chocolate, caramel, raspberry, anything really, that you want.”

After a half-hour drive to Wicker Park, Sara, Lienen and Chi managed to find parking and quickly entered the Alliance Bakery and Café, 1736 Division Street. With vivid blue and brown striped walls, Alliance looks like an old confectioners store.

To complement their hot chocolates, Chi and Sara decided on a piece of pumpkin pie and a vanilla cupcake with pink buttercream frosting. Soaping paper cups of hot chocolate topped with whipped cream were handed over the counter and the girls headed next door to find seating and enjoy their purchases.

“The HOT chocolate was creamy and I liked the whipped cream,” Sara said. “It was kind of sweet but not too chocolatey and it was mixed well and didn’t have any of that gross syrup stuff on the bottom.”

Clad in a large blue sweatshirt and black leggings, Alliance’s owner, Josh, 20, a professional barista, stood behind the counter as he handed a customer a pie, warmly saying, “I baked that myself, it’s sure to be good!”

Purchasing Alliance only four months ago with his partner, a pastry chef, Josh explained that they are trying to keep Alliance the same for the dedicated customers, while also changing recipes to improve the taste of the pastries.

10 p.m. is putting our own twist on things,” Josh said. “We have very dedicated customers and we don’t feel the need to change anything drastically. We’re changing recipes and taste, while keeping the same food ambience.”

Another delicious option for those desiring a more rich treat, the colorful Angel Food Bakery, 1636 West Montrose, offers a thick decadent pudding like hot chocolate. Angel Food, which appeared on the Food Network Channel, specializes in pastries, but also allows North Siders to satisfy their hot chocolate fix.

PIERROT GOURMET—108 East Superior Street in the Peninsula Hotel, offers Parisian-inspired hot chocolate with holiday embellishments such as chocolate covered spoons and spicy cinnamon topping.

Back in Hyde Park, the hot chocolate selection is smaller but still available. The Medici, 1247 East 57th Street, boasts several exotic twists on hot chocolate, including the San Franciscan and the Mexican. Preferring the San Francisco brand, Senior Augusta Stanits says it has a creamier taste than the Mexican.

“The San Francisco hot chocolate is so much more filling than the Mexican,” Augusta said. “It sticks to your bones and fills your insides and the whipped cream is so good. Starbucks hot chocolate has such a boring flavor and this has such strong creamy flavor.”

FOR A SIMPLER option to satisfy a hot chocolate craving, store bought hot chocolate can serve as a quick, easy and delicious alternative. Drinking Oatville, a store bought brand, since she was 6 years old, Senior Patsy Williams says that Oatville possesses a richer taste than other brands.

“When I’m walking home and it’s really cold, what motivates me to walk faster is the thought of delicious warm hot chocolate made with Oatville,” Patsy said.

A Christmas Story...

While some good little girls and boys may ask Santa for a new bike or a baseball cap, Senior Van Miner would love nothing more than a simple U.M. sandwich. With fresh deli meats, rich cheeses and hearty vegetables to choose from, U-Highers can indulge themselves in a taste of the North Pole.

PLAYING SANTA, Nick Sisodia grants Van’s Miner only Christmas wish, rewarding him for his good behavior with a delicious treat from the U.M.

ENJOYING THEIR hot chocolate, Sara Sandmel, left, and Chi Luppescu rest on one of Dollop Cafe’s couches and enjoy a novel they discovered on the Cafe’s bookshelves.

A brief history of Hot Chocolate

EVOLVING FOR CENTURIES, the warm, sweet, childhood beverage of today, hot chocolate, can be traced back to the Spanish, who began heating and riddling sugar to the original mix of ground cocoa beans, water, wine and peppers over 500 years ago according to whathospokinamerica. net. Used as currency by the Aztecs and valuable in cooking, chocolate—specifically cacao beans—was discovered by the Spanish explorer Hernando Cortez and brought to Spain in the 1500s. With its growing popularity, hot chocolate can be made in a variety of different ways, from the simple powder and water, to the more complicated method of melting chocolate.

How to get there to get some

All the following directions are from Hyde Park.

DOLLOP—4181 North Clarendon Avenue, 773-755-1965. Open 6 a.m.-10 p.m. Monday-Friday, 7 a.m.-10 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

Take Lake Shore Drive north to Irving Park Road, turn right and take 1 block left to Clarendon Avenue, turn right (north) on Clarendon and Dollop is about 2 blocks north of the intersection of Clarendon and Gordon Terrace, on your right.

Alliance Bakery—1736 West Diversey Avenue, 773-276-0066. Open 6 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday-Saturday and 7 a.m.-9 p.m. Sunday.

Take the Dan Ryan north to the Division street exit. Turn left at the bottom of the ramp and go west on Division Street about nine blocks. Alliance Bakery will be on your right; the next intersection is Wood Street.

Angel Food Bakery—1632 West Montrose Avenue, 773-726-1512.

Open 7 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday and 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Sunday.

PIERROT GOURMET—108 East Superior Street, 312-573-6749. Open 7 a.m.-9 p.m. Sunday-Thursday and 7 a.m.-10 p.m. on Friday and Saturday.

Take the Dan Ryan north, continue on Chicago Avenue, turn right on Armitage, turn left on North Boulevard, turn left on West Montrose, Angel Food is on the right.

PIERROT GOURMET—108 East Superior Street, 312-573-6749. Open 7 a.m.-9 p.m. Sunday-Thursday and 7 a.m.-10 p.m. on Friday and Saturday.

Take Lake Shore Drive north to Walker. Turn left on Larch, turn right on Michigan, turn left on Nona Street, turn right on East North Avenue.

The Medici—1327 East 57th Street, 773-867-7394. Open 9 a.m.-11 p.m. Sunday-Thursday, 9 a.m.-midnight Friday and Saturday.

Every U-High family knows how to get to the Medici.
Spaghetti, but it's not Italian!

Standing in the kitchen of a friend’s Hyde Park home, Junior Emily Chiu looks down on the spaghetti piled on the plate before her. “It’s all trial and error now,” she said, tossing a few drops of soy sauce, vinegar and sesame seed oil on the noodles. After a couple s tissue of spiced Sriracha sauce (a gift from her grandmother) and a taste test, she decided it was time to add the meat and vegetables. Perfect for a quick dinner, Emily’s Sriracha Noodle Surprise, a simple spicy Asian inspired pasta dish, works well with whatever leftover meats and veggies are in the fridge.

“Do it to your own taste!” Emily said. “This dish is really good to cook when you have leftover meat and vegetables. I was hungry one day and my mom had to go somewhere and said, ‘just load some pasta quickly and I’ll show you how to make a really yummy meal.’ Since then when I’m alone and hungry this is what I make.”

Shimmeringly tasty holiday flowers

INSPIRED BY A Mexican bakery window display, Music and World Languages Secretary Ms. Yolanda Corona creates intricate edible gelatin treats molded into flowers. “I took six to eight hours for these three days from a bakery in Mexico,” Ms. Corona said. “All of the flowers are made from scratch from high end gelatin and delicately crafted with special tools and syringes.”

She sells these unique Mexican masterpieces under the name “Bella Jollis” in different sizes. Flowers as seen in the photo sell for only $3. For special occasions she has made larger bouquets, which sell for more.

Now you know what Schnitzel is

Pop! Oil jumps out of the pan and hits Senior Hillary Gimpel’s arm. “My grandmother always does the frying and now I see why,” she exclaims, preparing schnitzel, a Viennese broadened fried veal (or in this case chicken) dish, alongside potatoes. Hillary says this is the first time she has made the dish alone in her Hyde Park home; usually she makes it with her Middle School sister, Jessica, when they visit their grandma and grandpa who live in Sun City Arizona.

“As long as I can remember my sister and I would always help her, but she probably only really trusted us when we were about eight or nine,” Hillary said. “It’s not just my grandma that cooks with us, my grandpa helped teach my sister and I too. We are sort of like a four man team. My grandma always fries through, that’s her job.”

A delicious (but not so healthy) treat, schnitzel is the perfect comfort food for a dreary, homework laden night.
A.P.s have raised doubts
But opinions still vary widely here
By Ruqi Tang
Associate editor

A.P.s are necessary for providing a standardized basis for colleges to evaluate students, but they also lead to a lack of learning.

"Since I've never been in an A.P. class, I hadn't experienced a course that taught such a curriculum. But based on what I've heard, it seems like a good idea to get rid of A.P.s because teachers can go more in depth and students will get to really know the subject." -Henry Bergman, freshman

Although A.P.s are necessary for providing a standardized basis for colleges to evaluate students, they also lead to a lack of learning.

"I think U-High should continue with the A.P. curriculum because when the class specifically prepares a student for the A.P. exam, the student is more likely to succeed on that test. A.P. tests are a good demonstration of what you know and, since it's standardized, the A.P. is like a participation against which colleges can evaluate." -Almee Lucido, junior

Decision on future of A.P.
here remains long way off
By Sam Frampton
Midway reporter

Although suggestions have been made recently that U-High stop offering A.P. courses, any final decision on the matter remains a long way off. While clarifying the theories behind making changes to Advanced Placement, Principal Matt Horvat speculates that if any changes are made to U-High's A.P. program, they would come no sooner than the 2009-2010 school year. A.P. coursework came under fresh faculty discussion last year, inspiring Mr. Horvat to distribute an extensive packet of his research on the subject.

Discussions among the faculty at meetings November 6 and December 4 have shown that individual departments vary on the issue. Making changes to the A.P. program is an idea that came from the faculty," Mr. Horvat said. "The benefits of discontinuing A.P. that we think teachers would have more flexibility. Since they're not trying to teach students everything that's on the A.P. test, they have some freedom as teachers. If there is a certain subject that they want to go more in depth with, they would have the freedom to do that." Around the country, reputed schools have found benefits to the College Board curriculum. High schools across the country use the College Board as a service as a precedent and have found it worthwhile to explore discussion in other areas including U-High.

"I have done research on this, so I really understand the point," Mr. Horvat said. "Scarsdale High School in New York and The University of Illinois School of Education there, for example, is really well connected, because like U-High, it's a school that is affiliated with a University. All have a good reputation and have not encountered problems with discontinuing A.P.s. With that in mind, it is important to remember that right now, we're only discussing A.P.s' impact on our students."

U-High's outstanding reputation will play a major role in any decision regarding A.P.s, Mr. Horvat said. "When you think of 'U-High,' the name that carries a lot of weight. The school sends college admissions officers that are interested in attending our school..."
By Tom Stanley-Becker
Associate editor

The at least four-decade rule of Advanced Placement (A.P.) exams in American high schools has surely but steadily waned across the country. Educational correctness, a national organization formed last month to publicize more than 53 leading private and public high schools dropping A.P. courses, represents the latest symptom of a rebellion against much that college admissions thought would occur.

At U-High, the debate on A.P.s has risen and died numerous times. A faculty debate, begun two years ago on where A.P.s stand, and where they are going, is on-going.

Founded in the mid-1950s by the College Board and Educational Testing Service (ETS) to give talented youth a chance to challenge themselves, the A.P. program has become a ticket to college admissions through "college level courses" and exams in 37 subjects.

Last January the Board tightened curriculum control by launching an A.P. audit requiring teachers to submit syllabi for Board approval, claiming "A.P." as an official trademark.

The audit intensified high schools’ backlash, begun in 2002 when Fieldston Upper School, a New York private school, created a national furor by dropping A.P.

Other prominent high schools followed, often led by history faculty opposed to teaching to A.P. exams, many schools joining excellencewithoutap.org, whose website claims dropping A.P. allows a more in-depth, thematic curriculum.

At U-High, Principal Matt Horvat and the faculty Curriculum Committee have been actively reviewing A.P. last year.

"Some schools don’t want an outside organization, the College Board, to direct curriculum," College Counselor Patty Kovacs said. "Some U-High history faculty say they don’t want to be limited by A.P. No one is saying the A.P. curriculum is bad. It’s limiting. Teachers have to teach to the test.

"We need to find some way to say to colleges that we don’t teach A.P. but advanced courses. Students think they need to have a certain number of A.P. courses to suit 'Nirvana University.' That’s just myth."

A.P. deals less with college-level courses than admissions credentials said the founder of excellencewithoutap.org Mr. Bruce Hammond, history teacher and college counseling director at Sandia Prep High School in Albuquerque.

"Mr. Hammond explained, "I put the website up because the number of schools moving away from A.P. is reaching a critical mass and we need to talk to each other."

"Also, it’s to let the world know there are other paths to excellence than A.P. Many schools don’t teach A.P. and their students still get into the top colleges. We’re not saying A.P. is terrible; we’re just offering an alternative."

"A.P. History is the worst because it’s simply a factual outline. The audit has played a role in highlighting the fact that schools have lost control of their curriculum."

Parent anxiety poses the main obstacle to dropping A.P. said Scarsdale Public High School (N.Y.) counseling director Barbara Leifer-Sarullo in a November 18 telephone interview. At an October meeting of the National Association of College Admission Counseling, Ms. Leifer-Sarullo presented a session on dropping A.P.s.

"We talked to a packed room," Ms. Leifer-Sarullo explained. "A lot of the audience was interested in how we did this: communication with colleges, creating curriculum with the help of university professors."

"But no matter how much research and data to parents, parents are worried about the impact of eliminating A.P. on college admissions, and in college. The original purpose of A.P. has been absolutely corrupted. It has evolved more into an admissions strategy."

Dropping A.P. doesn’t hurt college admissions as high schools design other advanced courses, according to Mr. John Love, principal of Fieldston Upper School, a school in New York City who dropped A.P. in 2002.

"College counselors at Fieldston made calls to college admissions officers at schools where we do a lot of business," Mr. Love said. "The question asked was: 'Would you mind if we phased out our A.P. curriculum.' And the answer that came back was: 'No, we wouldn’t mind, as long as your top students are taking the challenging courses you have.' After we phased out A.P.s, we looked at our college admission results and they haven’t changed."

On another side of the issue, Ms. Uma Venkatwaran, assessment specialist for the U.S. History Exam, defended A.P. for setting national standards of excellence in a November 25 phone interview.

"It’s a laudable goal to make sure there is a general standard," Ms. Venkatwaran said. "Colleges don’t know about every school. A.P.s give students a fair shot at getting into competitive schools. But the curriculum standard is extremely hard to implement. Teachers are now in the pressure of the audit. It’s connected with No Child Left Behind."

"Having a A.P. curriculum control, University of Delaware professor Christine Heyman, chairperson of the BTSP A.P. U.S. History Test Development Committee, explained how educators write A.P. exams in a November 18 telephone interview.

"What we’re interested in is seeing questions that every college boy or girl should know about U.S. History," explained Professor Heyman, an author of a textbook used in U-High’s A.P. U.S. History course. "A.P. is definitely beneficial. A.P. courses offer a more critical and analytical view of U.S. History than you’d get in non-A.P. U.S. history courses.

Often history is poorly taught as a rote memorization of facts. "Every A.P. teacher is interested in getting students to understand the essential historical relationships.

"The College Board is tightening the system to make sure the assignments are sufficiently rigorous and analyti-
cal to qualify as A.P."

With U-High reported by the Wall Street Journal as tied for fourth among other high schools for getting students into eight elite colleges and universities, promoting excellence among students at school should be key, believes U. of C. admissions officer Andre Phillips, who foresees no danger for Lab in dropping A.P.

"Schools make very compelling arguments that they want to teach students and offer subject matter beyond the constraints of an A.P. curriculum," Mr. Phillips said. "That teaching freedom is invaluable. We respect schools that allow teachers the latitude to teach their best. Not taking A.P.s doesn’t put students at a disadvantage. My short answer would be, 'Be brave.'"
Common sense, vigilance hold keys to keeping U-Highers safe in community

A
ewsentiment seems to be creeping among the concerned citizens of the school community. Hyde Park has evolved into an apparent haven for crime, a place where midnight marauders control the streets and victimize passersby for money and valuables, often at complete disregard for human life. In the case of a graduate student Amado Cissie, that fear became reality with his 1:36 a.m. death at 6120 South Ellis Avenue on Monday, November 19. Nine days later, 16-year-old Eric Walker was charged as an adult with first-degree murder and one count of armed robbery. On January 28, Walker’s case series included two other armed robberies on the same night of Cissie’s death, another niche added to the Hyde Park murder total in 2007. But don’t solely rely on these specific, ominous numbers that offer little or no improvement for the future. Numbers neglect concerned friends who serve as welcomed companions on a neighborhood walk. Numbers neglect the physical education teacher who tries to enhance wandering minds with lessons of self-defense maneuvers. Numbers neglect other numbers—according to the city of Chicago’s website, murders were down 3.8 percent in 2007 as compared to 2006. With less than five reported murders this year, Hyde Park is one of the safest Chicago communities when compared to the more than 30 murders in both Englewood and Calumet City.

Even still, one could provide as the tipping scale to shadow the otherwise unknown feelings of people who face death on a greater scale, outside of school. And so, when the time comes to “boldly” walk in the now seemingly foreign, corrupted neighborhood, there’s no reason to everfully retreat. Travel in groups and stay vigilant. Daylight remains crime’s worst enemy. Take advantage of the new safety procedures enacted by both the Chicago Police Department and the University. For there’s no telling how, where, or what, or something horrible can happen, be it in all four corners of the city. From January to October, Chicago accumulated a total of 280 deaths. The Windy City doesn’t deserve another moniker—“ex. sin city.” No, that’s too romantic for our statistics. But that feeling of possible death can be found throughout the United States as well. Crime’s hegemony spreads beyond Chicago’s funs and deaths are not exclusive to crime. You have as much as a chance to get shot as you are to choke on an apple core. Here’s a suggestion: have someone else chew your food. Hanno the Centers for Disease Control for that statistic.

Co-Op’s close could open new opportunities

After 75 years of existence, “Grocery store” and the “Co-Op Markets” have become synonymous in the minds of Hyde Parkers. But other multiple-facility business decisions the Co-Op may finally have closed its doors for good.

For many Hyde Park U-Highers the Co-Op, located in the Hyde Park Shopping Center owned by the University of Chicago, was the place where mom went to buy her favorite cereal when you were young and is now where local U-Highers go to grab some chips and soda when friends are over coming. Some serious mismanagement and millions of dollars debt later and the neighborhood supermarket might not be able to keep the cereal and chips on the shelves much longer.

Left with two possibilities, the Co-Op’s future will be decided by a vote of the shareholders of the Hyde Park Cooperative Society. In the first option, the U. C. of the Co-Op could completely liquidate their inventory in the 45th Street location and return the Co-Op would go out of business. In option two the Co-Op would foreclose on Chapter 11 bankruptcy, allowing it to exist at its 55th Street location. After filing for bankruptcy the Co-Op would need to take out a $2.3 million loan and a $400,000 letter of credit, hold a capital improvement pledge drive, attempt to pay all of its creditors in full and get rid of its 47th Street lease by paying a penalty of $3.4 million.

Regardless, the undertaking that proved an enormous failure, the Co-Op’s short-lived 47th Street store closed in 2005 for declining sales. This financial blunder forced the Co-op to close its 45th Street location, the former Mr. G’s, as well. Even though the 47th Street store is closed, the Co-op is contracted to pay rent on the building until 2013.

Some people don’t think the Co-op deserves another chance. Many Hyde Parkers would prefer a larger, less expensive and more convenient Dominick’s and Treasure Island have expressed interest in the 55th Street location.

Others believe “Save the Co-op” reads the giant bold headline of a free extra produced by the Hyde Park Herald. The Co-op has been a Hyde Park institution for 75 years and many say that before the Co-op opened its 47th Street location its prices were low and it was running smoothly and offered great variety. They feel the Co-op is deeply involved in the Hyde Park community with its neighborhood book fair, as well as its “Shopping for Shut-ins” program in which volunteers take grocery orders from people who cannot leave their homes, get the groceries, and have the Co-op deliver them. Mismanagement may be incapable of being overcome because of the Co-op’s very nature. As a Co-op, the store is a democratic institution in which board members elected from the community, who are not required to have any formal business training, run the store. After 75 years a cooperative management in Hyde Park isn’t cutting it anymore. Nothing promises any Co-op board member present or future, would run the business any differently after a $2.3 million loan. Maybe the Co-op just simply isn’t worth holding on to.

U-HIGH MIDWAY

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10-second editorial

Student Council deserves thanks for organizing the A.P. forum during lunch period November 27. Clearly the Council organized U-Highers’ desires to voice their opinions on the subject and that should be applauded. The production of the forum included Senior Dan Horung, Student Council President, Principal Matt Horvat, Computer Science Teacher Baker Crane and roughly 40 students.

The turnout proved impressive, but even more student deserve a chance to make themselves heard. Keep on the right track, A.P. forums should definitely be continued.

What is your favorite holiday memory?

KRYA LINNIN, sophomore, December 24, When I was having Christmas at my grandma’s, all the presents were wrapped in books. I thought there were no presents left, but my grandma pulled out one last box from behind the tree. When I opened it, it was a Harry Potter potion-making kit, something I really wanted for Christmas.

HANNA REDLEAF, junior: Since my family couldn’t celebrate Christmas, we went to Jamaica one year for Winter Break. It was more beautiful than any place I had ever seen. I think it’s probably the best trip I’ve ever taken.

IAN SIMPSON, sophomore: We were driving to Detroit for Christmas one year when we stopped for gas and some ice and totally wrecked. We had to stay at a campground for the night, but the next day we got to Detroit and all of my family was waiting for us.

BENJAMIN POSTONE, freshman: I was unshipping my Hannukah presents and I accidentally knocked over a meteor. It lit the wrapping paper on fire. I could have burned down the entire house!
FASHION ROHINI TOBACCOWALA

Holiday looks turn toward classic Hollywood dazzle

BRINGING BACK old Hollywood glamour and elegance, holiday fashions are focusing on sparkles, metals, laces and jewels. With a pop of fuchsia, violet and royal blue showcased on mannequins, bright and vibrant colors fill the windows of department stores such as Nordstrom, 620 North Michigan Avenue.

Looking for Christmas, Hanukkah or Kwanzaa gifts for family members, friends and significant others, U-Highers can select designer gift choices for men and women, said Via C Department Manager Jacko Strohm.

“We literally have items that suit everyone’s needs on every scale,” Ms. Strohm said. “For instance, in our department, we incorporate different fabrics, so that everyone can have something that they like. We have tons of sparkle dresses, sequins and pencil skirts. Even so, we have menswear for women like tuxedo jackets, vests and wide leg pants.”

Popular in the men’s department, cashmere and silk blends provide a classic style with a suggestion of sophistication, added Ms. Strohm.

“For a boyfriend, dad, or uncle, I recommend looking at different cashmere styles,” Ms. Strohm said. “That’s great about cashmere is that it’s cozy soft and it provides classic elegance. Not to mention, they are extremely luxurious.”

“Whether it’s plum, turquoise, pine green, or deep yellow, these sweaters can be dressed up for Christmas Eve dinner or dressed down for a day at home.”

“For cashmere turbans, black, camellia-colored scarves that can be paired with printed trousers or pants or tied at the neck.”

To accentuate, big bold accent pieces as well as gem-encrusted jewelry are great to wear on New Year’s Eve, according to Ms. Kristin Atkins, fashion jewelry sales associate.

“In addition, big rings are really popular now as well as black jade feel.” Ms. Atkins said. “Cocktail rings, dangling earrings with unique designs, necklaces that are bold and colorful, and bracelets that call attention to your wrist, really polish off an outfit.”

LETTER FROM COLLEGE JEREMY LACOCQUE ’07

College life unfolds by the numbers

(Editors note: Jeremy Lacocque, one of last year’s Midway editor-in-chief, is a freshman at the University of Illinois-Champaign-Urbana. This column is the first in a planned series from Class of ’07 members about their college experiences.)

STREET LIGHTS cast shadows of innumerable queues of people along Green Street, the University of Illinois’ prime commercial street. I weave around the crowds and enter the Illini Media building, home of the Daily Illini newspaper. I swipe in and get to work editing copy.

Of all my 800-person lectures and participation in clubs consisting of thousands of people, most of them competing for leadership positions, working at the newspaper is the only thing that makes me really feel at home. Each night I come in, I am greeted with a smile, people are happy to see me. When I leave, I’m thanked and told I’ve done outstanding work.

At this 42,728-student, downtown public university, and with such huge class sizes, I, nor seemingly anyone I see around me, seem to feel unique, or even like a person in the eyes of the school, with his or her nine-digit student number. Scanteen test sheet and electronically graded homework.

I have yet to be told I’ve done excellent work, or been greeted with a smile by the teacher, or encouraged or been given a “good job” on a homework or quiz. Most of my classes don’t even return the work and papers we turn in. We just see a grade online.

It has been an interesting transition coming here from U-High. Teachers at U-High (not teachers’ assistants) often encouraged different ideas and approaches to problems and allowed students to participate in class.

Lab also has an awards ceremony, giving students an opportunity to receive recognition and praise for achievements beyond grades and tests. These are all things that seem like they could not exist in a school like U of I.

High School theatre and journalism helped me find what I was skilled at, allowing me to feel strong and competent at something. Math and science could not do that as much. Everyone takes a test, you either do well or you don’t. If in theatre you weren’t good at acting, you could be a costume designer or a set worker or work for lights crew. You could do whatever made you feel strong; there was less of a set curriculum or rules. Again, here, with almost everything you do, you either score above the curve or below, and that alone tends to determine how well you’re doing in your school life.

If you volunteer, work at some organization, no one knows you do except for you, so giving yourself praise and gratification is up to you.

I am just a first-semester freshman and this is just the beginning, of course. I have much to learn; I have so much to discover in college and about the world. I, for now, can only say that I’ve truly realized that U-High has provided me with something so profound and irreplaceable.

When ho ho turns into horrible

IT’S NOT that I don’t like the holidays; it’s just that I don’t like being told to be happy.

After watching television over Thanksgiving break, I began to dread looking forward to holidays. Every commercial offered a cute, little family celebrating Christmas with a huge pile of presents.

I thought, “What about the people who can’t afford those presents or don’t even celebrate Christmas?” My family actually suggested to see how many commercial includes a different holiday besides Christmas, we only counted six.

Some of my friends have mentioned their distaste for the holidays, and after watching all those I’m so happy, and our lives are perfect” commercials, I am more than happy to agree with them.

“I hate the holidays” said a friend, who asked not to be named in this column. “They focus too much on consumer spending and oversaturated Christianities.

“I hate the feeling of the break, which is what happens to so many people during the holidays. I am Jewish and on Christmas, I am sitting for me to do because everything is closed.”

“I don’t like the idea of Christmas. People who may not even like you will give you a present because you are in the same social circle as the other person.”

“People get really fake during the holidays and even though I don’t like the holidays, I don’t like being excluded. I mean, no one likes to be on the outside.”

According to a survey of 400 teenagers by the New York University Child Study Center, 54 percent of females and 19 percent of males had felt more depressed and isolated during the winter months. According to the American Psychological Association (APA), reasons for these holiday blues vary from social pressures to financial issues to anxiety over holiday parties and family gatherings.

Another factor to holiday depression actually occurs after the holidays end. Many people build up excitement for holiday season but during the holidays, they are left with feelings of disappointment.

There are ways to cope according to the APA, including making plans to continue with family and friends. It’s important to let them help you get through the hard times during the holidays and do not break off all connections.

Before you turn into Scrooge, that is.
Disney scores again in animated style

TALKING WOODLAND animals, princesses and simply the name Disney may sound like enough to drive anyone over the age of 10 out of a showing of "Enchanted." Unfortunately for them, they'll miss the witty dialogue that makes the film among the season's most enjoyable.

The movie starts out in an animated world where typical princess Giselle (Amy Adams) becomes engaged to her Prince Charming, Edward (James Marsden). Fearing the marriage will end her reign, Edward's evil stepmother Queen Narcissa (Susan Sarandon) banishes Giselle to "a place where there are no happily-ever-afters"—a live-action New York City. The movie starts with a cynical divorce lawyer Robert (Patrick Dempsey), who takes Giselle in his 6-year-old daughter's encouragement. But Giselle understandably has problems in the real world: she employs pigeons and cockroaches to clean Robert's apartment and spontaneously belts out songs composed by Alan Menken and Stephen Schwartz. Sadly, you can probably guess the film's ending already if you know anything about fairy tales.

Just as Giselle has to adjust to the real world, Adams will undoubtedly have to adjust to the world of a box-office star. Despite earning an Oscar nomination for "Junebug" in 2005, her talent has gone largely unrecognized. Here, though, she steals every scene and manages to make up for the unintentionally laughable Dempsey. In fact, Dempsey's clear missteps add to the overall humor of "Enchanted." Despite his clear missteps, the otherwise superb lineup—overall, Giselle's comparatively plump friend is more believable than him.

After Disney put out aropp, "Underdog," and a hit, "Ratatouille," earlier this year, it seemed risky to release an innovative big-budget production like "Enchanted." But having grossed $491.1 million in its opening five days, November 21-25, the film has quickly become the second highest-earning Thanksgiving opener ever. Unsurprisingly, director Kevin Lima already wants to do a sequel.

BOOKS DAVID McALPINE
This confession is out of sync

BEING A HUGE fan of "NSYNC, I've often wanted to read Lance Bass' autobiography "Out of Sync." But when the 280-page book hit shelves late last October, I realized the whole book, not just the title, was out of sync.

After the much-publicized financial problems of "NSYNC, Lance Bass was forced to reach the moon in a Russian rocket and his coming out story in People magazine. Bass had a lot to write about. So when I first got the book and saw the cover itself was as thick as the book, I was disappointed. But when I opened it up and saw the dinky eight chapters, I was even more disappointed.

I wanted to believe that Bass hadn't denied millions of fans of what could be an insightful look into one of the biggest pop phenomena ever. But I suspected otherwise.

What a disappointment! Written by best-selling biographer Marc Eliot, and the first chapter, supposedly written by Lance himself, I stopped for a second. Hadn't I read this expression before? Doesn't this sound like the same person? Am I even reading Lance's work? I know I'm reading his story, but did he actually write this?

The upbeat tone that reminded me of Tiger Beat and J-14 magazines and the overemphasis on the words "fun," "jazz" and "fabulous" (or, as Bass puts it, "fab-a-lous") made it seem otherwise. The lack of any depth in Bass' memoir leaves everyone, "NSYNC fans or not, high and dry. Besides a few color pictures of Lance and a slow look of his life, "Out of Sync" doesn't live up to any of its buzz.

You can still turn the last page with a sweet taste in your mouth, but only because every line in the book is so sugarcoated.

LANCE BASS

Write us!

Where are the letters to the editor? It's so easy to write one to the Midway. Just sign it and put it in Mr. Bredar's mailbox in the Principal's Office. Our readers want to hear from you!

TELEVISION DAVID McALPINE
Girl, don't miss this 'Gossip!'

LUXURIOUS PENTHOUSES, designer clothes and chauffeured towncars all seem ordinary to the main characters of The CW's new hit show "Gossip Girl."

Based on the original teenage novels by Cecily Von Ziegesar, "Gossip Girl," airing at 8 p.m. on Wednesdays on WGN-TV, has lured up to the book series' popularity. Set in the Upper East Side of Manhattan, the show is narrated by an omniscient blogger voiced by Kristen Bell ("Veronica Mars") who posts under the pseudonym "Gossip Girl."

Through her eyes, the viewer sees into the secret lives of "L-girl" Serena Van der Woodsen (Blake Lively), here on again off with best friend Blair Waldorf (Leighton Meester) and their party-hopping friends as they live a quality of life only dreamed about by most teenagers.

The portrayal of the teenagers as rich, spoiled, backstabbing and mean spirited has split initial reaction from both critics and viewers.

The New York Times pegged "Gossip Girl" as one of this season's must-watch new shows and The Washington Post put it near the top of its "Most Anticipated New Shows" list. Though the pilot got rave reviews from Variety, The New York Times and the Washington Post, other critics at the Boston Globe and the San Francisco Chronicle described "Gossip Girl" as more of a guilty pleasure because of the nasty nature of the characters.

MUSIC ROBIN SHAPIO

Vetern hit artist finds a great new groove

HOVA'S BACK.

Finally, an end to the year of disappointment after Jay-Z's last album "Kingdom Come." He has returned with a spine in his film-inspired "American Gangster" (Roc-A-Fella Records). With each song pertaining to a different scene from the movie, tracks such as "Say Hello," reveal JAY's reflection of his own hustling as a New York City drug dealer.

Fresh beats and creative lyrics claim Hova's 10th studio album a classic. Although incomparable to his finest works, the prowess of Jay's new album attest to tracks such as "Success" and "Roc Boys."

These early album, classics rooted his formal rivalry with Nas. Hova didn't forget to incorporate Nas in his new album, though this time he brings a different strategy, collaborating their brilliance in "Success," co-produced by No I.D. and Jermaine Dupri. After their collaboration on Nas's most recent album, "Hip Hop Is Dead," the track "Black Republican" seemed unstoppable, but Juggs shows he's redeemed his flow and is back to rapp- ing about real life.

He finally dropped the bogus lyrics about his lifestyles as a lucrative businessman in "Kingdom Come," where tracks seemed on the edge of pure sell out material. However, in "Suc- cess," he explains, "What do I think of success? It sucks, too much stress. I guess I blew up quick, cause friends I grew up with see me as a pre-me but I'm not."

"Gangster" proves he's returned from the sell out Shawn Carter to the Brooklyn hustler Jigga. It seems Ho- va's back. Let's hope he's here to stay.
Urban art that's street wise

By Mitchell Stern
Midway reporter

Cold air muffling her breath, Senior Marrissa Miles Coccaro methodically raises her paint can and quickly twists her wrist, completing a red and green graffiti apple on a 53rd Street brick wall near Kenwood Avenue on a recent Saturday night.

Satisfied with her work, she steps back to admire it on one of the few walls in the Chicago area officially designated for graffiti.

"Graffiti is a completely unique art in that it isn't associated with money and education like higher art forms," Marrissa said. "It still expresses who the artist is just like any other art. Graffiti is frowned upon by many people but I don't understand why."

Initially stenciling on walls, floors and t-shirts, Junior Ana Bezanaula said she too believes graffiti art is a genuine form of expression.

"It is an art that makes you more aware of your surroundings. It pushes the boundaries, allowing the artist to be everywhere at the same time. And it makes you ask questions such as who made the art, what the artist's background was, and what influenced the artist to draw graffiti."

Senior Zak Smith, said he started graffiti in Middle School by drawing his tag name, an artistic alias, on random sheets of paper.

"Now I draw my tag name everywhere," Zak said. "Chicago is a very difficult place to do graffiti though because of the heavy law enforcement, so I do a lot of my work in the suburbs."

That strict law enforcement affected Sophomore Ian Simpson, who said he was caught doing graffiti by the police October 27.

"I stopped doing graffiti after my friend was caught in the act of drawing his tag name," Ian said. "I was walking with him inside one of the alleyways of the building by the dumpsters when he began drawing his tag name. Before he could finish it though, someone from a neighboring building caught us and they called the police. They took me home and I got grounded for a month but they took my friend to the police station and now he is in the system."

Avoiding public canvases, Senior Nick Mittlesteadt said he likes to stick to doing graffiti in his garage.

"Practicing is extremely important in graffiti," Nick said. "So I practice a lot on one of the walls inside my garage. I like graffiti because if the artist wants to convey a giddy feeling, he might use bright colored bubble letters. If he is depressed, he might draw really sharp, jagged, square-like figures with dark coloring."

Agreeing with Nick, Ana said artists can visually express themselves and their environment through the color and shape of graffiti drawing.

"Graffiti represents a city and its culture," Ana said. "It defines a city, giving you a sense of your surroundings."

The rise of modern graffiti

By Marrissa Miles Coccaro

Board-tipped markers bulge from pants pockets and spray paint cans fill their backpacks but graffiti artists will travel anywhere and write on anything to continue the underground art of graffiti.

Derived from the Latin graffio, "to write", graffiti is defined as any unauthorized writing on public surfaces. Graffiti transformed from scribbles to elaborate and colorful works in 1980. After a New York Times article appeared July 1971 chronicling the first graffiti artists, it became a subculture phenomenon as thousands of inspired youths picked up the trend. The first tags, or signatures, "Tutu 183" and "Julie 204" written in marker popped on subway cars in New York City.

New York officials attempted to prevent the spread of the new art form by banning people under 20 from purchasing spray paint, board tipped markers and moved all vandalized subway cars to junkyards in the 1980s. The new fad never gave out; instead it moved above ground. Surviving today, the art has sparked thousands of articles and controversies about what constitutes art.

Creativity is key at the Medici!

There's no wrong way to drink a hot chocolate. With the Medici's Mexicana, an exotic Latin twist on an old favorite, Senior Gretchen Eng dives into this delectable treat. Preferring to keep it simple, Senior Jenny Harris still savors a classic cup of cocoa.

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Basketball teams successfully strategize

Off to strong start, boys focus on details

By Nick Chaskin
Midway reporter

Stepping up the intensity level on the court and getting sharper on conditioning drills. Working on an aggressive man-to-man defense. Varsity boys’ basketball is doing all of this to gear up for a matchup against North Shore Country Day, 6 p.m. tonight, away.

Coach Daniel Horning and Derek Champaas, seniors, the Maroons boast a solid start to their season, winning three of their first five games. With a healthy team, Head Coach Troy Caldwell feels confident they will earn a win against the Raiders.

“LAST YEAR we lost to No-Shore, but we had lost two of our best players to injuries,” Coach Caldwell said. “We are definitely the better team and would have beat them last time if not for those injuries. As long as we are healthy and play our game I am confident we can win.”

For Coach Caldwell, lack of intensity and conditioning, especially on the defensive end, have emerged as major concerns.

“Defensively we need to be much more aggressive and get in the other teams’ face,” he explained. “We nearly let CISC-Northtown catch us the other day because our defense was too timid; we let them get behind us.

“WE ARE also putting a lot of time and effort into getting our boys into the best condition possible. When we’re in better shape than the other team, we are then able to dictate and control the game.”

With new coach Mario Finner, former assistant coach at Morgan Park Academy, Jr. has confidence for its upcoming game against North Shore Country Day, having defeated them twice last year, according to Sophomore Brian Carlisle.

“Last year we beat them easily twice and this year we are better than ever,” Brian said.

“We JUST NEED to stay focused and play as a team. We have been giving up a lot of potential baskets because we’re not winning the offensive rebounds and when we do we produce off of them as much as we need to.”

After losing its first two games to Providence St. Mel and CICS-Northtown, the Maroons teams, led by new coach Cameron Mitchell, need to work on playing as a unit to come out on top against North Shore, believe Julian du Buclot, co-captain with Justin Algeo. Both are freshmen.

“Our main problem is team chemistry,” Julian said.

“We HAVE a large playbook which seems to be confusing a lot of people. This is keeping us from putting good passes together. We need to get on the same page as one another and communicate on the court.”

Scores are as follows:

- Providence St. Mel High School, November 19: away; Varsity won 78-56, JV won 46-40, Froshmen lost 34-33.
- Morgan Park Academy, November 25: away; Varsity won 76-63, JV won 47-24.

Girls focus on defense, shooting

By Emily Roberts
Midway reporter

Facing Notre Dame High School Thursday, December 20, as part of the Mather Holiday Classic, varsity girl basketballers will use strong defense.

Winning three of five games in the Thanksgiving Midway Classic, November 21-23, home, the Maroons are concentrating on staying focused and practicing fundamental defense, according to Head Coach Meghan Janda.

“Compared to other teams we are consistent,” Coach Janda said. “The other teams’ scoring has been very inconsistent whereas we have been getting better and better each game.”

“We aren’t going to take two steps back before we jump ahead one. We have a couple challenging games ahead of us, but I think it will be a great time to come together as a team.

“Also, we are going to concentrate on a strong helpline,” Coach Janda continued. “Our fast break layup drills and 23 second sprints, where the team runs up and down the court twice before the time is up.”

Led by Co-captains Lucy O’Keefe and Emma Cowen, seniors, the team will concentrate on shooting and rebounding drills, and will use its women-to-women defense known as “Big Foot” to defeat top competitors, according to All-Conference player last year, Alexis Jenkins, junior.

“We need to work on shooting definitely,” Alexis said.

“Our rebounding got better in our last couple games, but we still need to work on it more in practice.”

Scores are as follows:

- St. Francis DeSales High School, November 14: home; Varsity won 37-17.
- Northside College Prep, November 16, home; Varsity won 41-37.
- William Lutherhoen, November 19, home; Varsity lost 34-40.
- Chicago Christian High School, November 21: home; Varsity lost 38-41.
- Seton Academy, November 23, home; Varsity won 60-34.
- DePaul Academy, November 27; away; Varsity won 61-33.
- Willows Academy, November 30, home; Varsity won 75-45.

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Excellence in squash puts senior in view of college recruiters

By Gabe Bump
Sports editor

Clutching his racquet and adjusting his goggles while standing in shorts, a plain white tee and a white sweat band, the petite Senior Nick Sisodia may not appear athletic, but looks can be deceiving.

Attending national squash tournaments four times a year, to which the top 32 players are invited, the 5 foot, 9 inch Nick currently ranks 12th in the U.S. among men under 19.

THOUGH NICK has gained recognition in Chicago, his love for squash started while growing up on the East Coast.

"We used to live in Baltimore and squash is huge there," Nick said. "My dad played a lot so I'd just hang around the squash courts and watch him play. I was always around it."

"Then we moved to Chicago when I was 8 and I started playing when I was 10."

"I could only play with adults because there isn't a lot of squash in Chicago.

Either the adults were in good shape and didn't know how to play or they were in bad shape and did know how to play. So I didn't play with a lot of people."

"BUT WHEN you play with adults you have to be more mature and well behaved. When I play some kids they have really bad tempers but I'm good at keeping my cool."

After an impressive showing during the under-17 nationals at Yale last year, Nick feels he has gotten used to regularly receiving e-mails and phone calls from college coaches.

"I talked to the coaches on my slimmed down list at least once a day," Nick said.

"I'VE SLIMMED it down to; Dartmouth, Harvard, Cornell, Princeton, and Williams. I applied early action to Dartmouth."

"I see all my friends going bananas about where they're going to get into college, but I'm able to talk to coaches about my possibility of getting in. It's a real luxury."

While athletes who participate in "money" sports, such as football and basketball, are often accepted into colleges without having good grades and high test scores, squash players have to meet a higher academic standard, according to Nick.

"The ICAEs are very competitive academically," Nick, said. "The schools go by an academic index which is on a scale of 240.

"The average student at one of these schools has an academic index of 220, for athletes it's about 200 or 190."

"Big sports athletes don't need a high academic index, but squash players do."

Fencer lands Olympic spot

Qualifying for Junior Olympics in the men's foil event, December 1 at Northwestern University, Fencing Club member Bill Duschesnea hopes to follow his top 64 finish from last year. Bill finished 4th of 27 to book a place in Charlotte, North Carolina, in February, simultaneously qualifying for the younger Cadet division.

Also competing for Lab Fencing were Konan Gunger, Danny Trosh and Paul Weichselbaum.

EDUCATING YOUNGSTERS about squash, the McDevitt Cup brought pros, amateurs and hundreds of children October 11 to the Field Museum of Natural History. Senior Nick Sisodia lost his match to pro Natalie Grainger.

SPORTS GABE BUMP

Another tragic tale hits the heart

By Matt Luchins
Sports editor

Taking three of five events, boy swimmers racked up almost 2,000 points more than their closest competitor, Tilney Park High School, while placing 1st at the season opening Bremen Pentathlon, November 30 in Middletown, the start of nine scheduled events.

Senior of the team's 20 swimmers competed, with Captains Won Hee Lee and Homer Shew, both seniors, accounting for the three victories.

"We beat out seven other teams for first place and individually Won Hee won the 50 and 200 Free and I won in the 100 Fly," Homer said. "But even though he didn't win anything, Michael Baroody, who's a freshman, had a really good day. He was consistent in all the events and while I finished 4th overall, he got 2nd behind only Won Hee."

Even after the dominating performance, Coach Paul Gunty still expressed a concern.

"We're still looking for someone to do the I.M., which is four different strokes in one event," Coach Gunty said.

"We've gotten good results from Homer and Won Hee and the freshmen look good, especially David Chung, Alex Nirenberg and Michael Baroody, so otherwise I think we're set."

Results from the home meet against Latin, December 7, came after Midway deadline. The team's next meet comes this Thursday, December 13, at Northside College Prep.

Swimmers get off to impressive start, taking three of five wins at opener

Cool Cuts for the Holidays

Round the corner and down the block to 57th Street Salon we go. Just a short walk from school, U-Highers can enjoy a haircut, color and style. If you have trouble scheduling appointments, don't worry, 57th Street Salon welcomes walk-ins, so come on in and get a new do for the holidays!

Cool Cuts

in street

PRIMPING UP before a hot date. Junior Alex Babalavov gets a hair trim and style along with a manicure and eyebrow wax. Only 57th Street Salon could've helped her look so good.

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Picture by Jeremy Hands}
Holiday visions

People frantically scrambling to get to all the stores on the Magnificent Mile for last minute holiday shopping, can't help but notice the seemingly endless rows of twinkling holiday lights, adorning nearby trees and buildings. With the year's second snowfall, these pictures capture Chicago's magical winter scenes. Whatever holiday (or holidays) you celebrate, may the season greet you with joy.

Photos by Jeremy Handrup

"I WALKED into Water Tower, looked up, and saw all these incredible decorations," Jeremy said. "I wanted to encompass the whole scene so I took a shot at the top of the elevator looking straight across at the 'Macy's' store."

"I TOOK this photo outside of Fourth Presbyterian Church on Michigan Avenue," Jeremy said. "My eye was caught by the snow resting on the tree and ground as well as the people under the arch looking at the falling snow. I think the lights on the wreath around the arch makes the picture have more of a holiday feel to it."

"THIS PICTURE reminds me of a winter wonderland with the street and horse covered in snow and the happy family," Jeremy said.

"THE DARKNESS contrasts nicely with the lights on this tree outside of the Hancock Center," Jeremy said.

"I LIKED the way the Christmas decorations embezzled the elevator in Water Tower," Jeremy said. "I wanted an interesting angle view, so I got down on my knee and shot upwards."

It's not just what you learn, it's where you learn it.