

# THE PHOENIX



December 2011

North Haven High School Newspaper

## 'Heartfelt' sentiments drive 'Pink' fundraiser

By Lily Keegan

Every year at the beginning of October, NHHS's maroon and white colors blend together on walls, clothing and ribbons to form varying shades of pink. The goal is to spread awareness and educate everyone about breast cancer. North Haven's pink week was started a few years ago and has become increasingly involved over time.

This recent October, students on and off the fields, donned the cheerful color to send out a positive message of support regarding a serious matter: there is hope. Early detection, as well as spreading the word to loved ones, can save lives.

Activities varied among stu-

dent groups and organizations to include, wearing pink shirts, sponsoring fundraisers like bake and bracelet sales, and wearing pink hair extensions as a visual sign of optimism. Students, faculty and even parents came together to confront the battle as one.

Some of the strongest supporters of pink week were members of the athletic community. When this tradition first began, the volleyball team organized events on and off the court to support the cause. Since then, all athletic fall sports teams have become involved, raising money in their own unique ways.

The volleyball team sold the iconic pink week shirts, worn with pride throughout the month and long after. They

succeeded in raising more than \$4,000 dollars this year alone.

The football team added splashes of pink to their uniforms, drawing in a large crowd with their talent and commitment to the cause. The swim team sponsored a swim-a-thon, which pulled in close to \$2,000 dollars.

Molly Falkowski, one of the senior captains for the field hockey team describes her team's participation, "We all decorated cans and put them in shops and businesses throughout the community to collect change ... and we sold a lot of pink bracelets, raised money from the shirts we wore during our game, and also sold candy ... it's a reason to get pumped up and support a good cause at the same time."



Photo by Denise Ciccarelli  
North Haven High School's girl's field hockey team fundraised for Breast Cancer this past October.

Other NHHS students not affiliated with team sports got involved in other ways. They

attended games, helped with other fundraisers in school, and simply wore the color

pink to convey the message that much "louder."

Senior soccer captain, Emily York contributed both on and off the field and states, "It is really great to see all of the fall sports as well as the majority of the school community at large come together to support such an important common cause throughout breast cancer awareness month."

While the color pink may fade from the NHHS walls, the wonderful bonds formed among friends working together will be cherished and linger in the hearts and memories of students. Hopefully their unified efforts, kind sentiments and financial assistance will continue to support those in need and the fight against breast cancer.

## FREDA INAUGURATION



Staff Photo



Photo by Hannah Johnson

Above: Members of NHHS's Student Council gathered at the inauguration of our First Selectman, Mike Freda, Wednesday, November 30th. Pictured left to right: Cara Cinelli, Angela DeFilippo, Julie Cheung, Gabrielle Benedetto, Kayla DeLuca, Hannah Johnson, Emily York, Aedan O'Brien, Tina Valente, Daphne Pellegrino, and Caroline Campanelli. Right: Members of the North Haven High School Student Council, Tina Valente (left) and Emily York (right), pose with Mike Freda at his inauguration Nov. 30.

## Are protesters abusing 1st Amendment 'rights'?

By Alessandro Cavaliere

According to the First Amendment of the Constitution, an important principle on which this country is based, "Congress shall make no law ... prohibiting the free exercise of freedom of speech ... press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble for ... grievances." Ratified in Dec. 15, 1791, the amendment has caused its share of controversy most recently with newsworthy events involving protesters disrupting the funeral services of fallen members of the military.

The armed forces of most developed countries today have removed policies excluding homosexual individuals and included strict policies regarding sexual harassment. Of the five permanent members of the United Nations, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States have converted their policies.

On Sept. 20, the U.S. repealed the 1993 law that allowed homosexuals to serve only as long as they kept sexual orientation private thus ending the "Don't Ask-Don't Tell" policy. After years of debate and months of preparation pentagon officials certified the change would not undermine the military's ability to recruit or fight wars and reminded soldiers to treat each other "fairly at all times."

However, the new policy opened the floodgates to debate and disagreement. Thus began the clash between advocates of free use of First Amendment Rights and those who propose the practice of respectful reasonable restraint.

Some American citizens are using their "freedom" to express their anger regarding the new policy by showing up at ceremonies for military members killed in battle, much to the horror and heartbreak of family members. Holding signs with what critics describe as "offensive and inflammatory" messages they are making "horribly difficult times even worse", one military father states, "by turning my son's memory into a circus".

Statements like "God hates you," "You will go to Hell," "God hates Jews," "Aids cures fags," and "Thank God for dead soldiers" have left many Americans deeply offended and incensed.

See PROTESTERS, Page 15

## Freak October snowstorm shuts down state

By Alex Addesso and Steph McGovern

As students and parents received phone calls of school cancellations, they all pondered why the "Snowtober" storm caused such a disaster. Even the thirty inches of snow that Connecticut received last winter did not keep students out of school as long as this minor five inch storm.

The issue, as we all know now, involved power lines knocked down by trees and leaves, heavy with snow, wreaking havoc throughout the state. Trees that fell in the road prevented bus transportation for students resulting in numerous days home from school. Even more crucial, thousands of homes were left without heat, electricity and many other comforts of home typically taken for granted.

The snowstorm of Saturday, Oct. 29, left devastation in its path and more than 800,000 homes without power. While Governor Dannel Malloy warned CT residents to expect the outage to continue for a prolonged period of time, even he did not expect the lengthy delays which ensued.

United Illuminating and Connecticut Light and Power spent long days and nights reestablishing power for the homes that lost it. They claimed they called in

every crew member available from all over the east coast to assist them in this desperate time of need. Yet, in towns such as Seymour, where power was lost to everyone, days turned into nearly 2 weeks as deadlines for repairs were repeatedly extended.

For residents of homes that lost power, families had to deal in the dark with frigid temperatures. Fortunately schools, libraries and recreational centers opened their doors to provide havens with cots for those who needed to sleep overnight, warm dinners and hot showers to anyone in need. Thus, communities came together and supported those who did not have access to staying with family members.

Many volunteered at these shelters with some cooking meals at home and transporting them to various locations. Even some restaurants opened their doors and served free food.

"I had family members staying with me, sleeping on my couch, in our guest room and eating breakfast in the morning as we prayed every day that their power would be restored," said Emily York of North Haven High School.

Eventually, all bad things do come to an end and power was restored for all Connecticut residents after 13 long days.

Governor Malloy began his investigation as to why service was so slow causing the extended suffering of so many state residents and began demanding answers from president and chief operating officer of CLP who was in charge of repairs.

Malloy wanted to know why, following this snow event as well as Hurricane Irene in August, CLP failed to bring in enough private line and tree repair crews to efficiently restore power to affected homeowners. As the inquiry continues questions persist as to if 1500 unpaid invoices lingering from Irene hindered the company's ability to get necessary assistance for the more recent weather catastrophe.

While many continue to ask why greater efforts were not taken to hasten the process to help out those in need during such critical times, after defending his actions and those of CLP, Butler abruptly resigned amid the "flood" of post-storm criticism. Perhaps reaction from CT residents shed some "light" on the situation and he "warmed up" to the idea of moving on. Whether new management proves to be more efficient remains to be seen probably sooner than most residents would like since the Farmer's Almanac predicts a cold snowy winter. Stay tuned ... and warm, fellow New Englanders.

## FYI: Government endorses HPV vaccines for males

By Hien Ngo

Human Papilloma Virus is the most common sexually transmitted disease in the U.S. HPV infections cause over 15,000 cancers in women and 7,000 in men each year. There are 40 types of HPV that infect both men and women. Studies show that the HPV vaccines, available in two types, Cervarix and Gardasil, protect against four different strains, two of which cause the majority cases of cervical cancer.

The vaccines have been used by thousands in the U.S. and around the world for several years and have been very safe. However, although the vaccine has been approved for males since 2009, it has been primarily used by women ages 13-26 since it has not been as heavily promoted for men. That may be about to change.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention advisory panel recently recommended routine HPV vaccination of boys ages 11 and 12. The HPV vaccine is unusually expensive with its three required doses given over 6 months costing up to \$400 or more.

The government panel recommendation transforms the HPV vaccination into a routine practice, and therefore private insurers are more likely to pay. Therefore, more parents may pursue

See VACCINES, Page 15

# 29th Annual SCSU Journalism Day inspires students

By Alessandro Cavaliere

Southern Connecticut State University held its 29th Annual High School Journalism Day featuring various guest speakers and workshops on Nov. 18. The program focused on the mission statement goals: "Recognizing that the future of journalism rests in the hands of students at the college and high school levels ... we wish to contribute to the growth and preparation of future journalists by providing helpful information on writing, editing, graphics, interviewing and career planning."

The college recognizes the exciting prospects in the growing field of journalism and has organized the day around several guests, including Journalism Professors, newspaper and magazine reporters, publishers and editors, television personalities and people in advertising and promotional media. The speakers offered helpful advice on preparing and applying for jobs and

discussed responsibilities/experiences regarding various positions.

Both the Phoenix Newspaper staff and Advanced Photography students attended this event, along with NHHS instructors, Katherine Karcz and Diana Blythe. The group of 30 selected two workshops from several offered during morning sessions held in different rooms throughout the state-of-the-art Michael J. Adanti Student center.

Workshop choices included: "Seeds for the Leads," "Multimedia Journalism," "Wuzzup with Lady Gaga and Derek Jeter," "Everything You Ever Wanted to Know about Journalism," "You're on the Air," "Video technology," "The World of Sports," "Classic Photojournalism," and "How Newsrooms Foster Democracy," to name a few.

Each hour-long event explored how to brainstorm ideas, acquire skills and explore a wide range of occupational opportunities. Following

question and answer periods, students reconvened in the main ballroom to hear keynote speaker and 15-time Emmy award-winning Photographer and Editor for FOX CT Mike Piskorski.

Piskorski discussed the highs and lows of his competitive, sometimes challenging but mostly rewarding career. He showed video clips of some of his award-winning material and explained the importance of "appropriately and accurately seeking out and reporting the truth."

A valuable handout entitled Code of Ethics should prove helpful to students when dealing with assignments and reporting. It was sponsored by the Society of Professional Journalists with the goal of "improving and protecting journalism" and a focus on the "rights" and "wrongs" of journalism. It stressed the importance of "being truthful, accountable ... acting as independently as possible ... and minimizing harm." Excellent life lessons for all to learn.



Staff Photo  
Members of NHHS attended SCSU's annual Journalism Day field trip this past month and are seen here with keynote speaker and Emmy Award winner Mike Piskorski.

## MEDEA: DRAMA CLUB SUCCESS



Staff Photo  
Pictured left to right: Alyssa Porto, Amber Rutolo, Hannah Kleffke, Lindsay Grant, Emma Griffiths, Nora Greenstein-Bondi, and Elizabeth Colombo pose backstage at a performance of Medea this past November.

## New studies link Alzheimer's to Diabetes

By Rachel Balzano

Most people hate when they cannot remember something. However, imagine not remembering where you live or failing to recognize family members and friends. A disease called Alzheimer's, similar to dementia, could be the cause of this kind of confusion and memory loss but is there a connection to Diabetes as well?

Alzheimer's affects the brain and progresses by attacking and damaging its nerves. Victims experience thinking and language comprehension issues, as well as behavioral changes.

The assumption that only elderly people get this terrible disease is inaccurate since there is also early onset Alzheimer's that affects younger adults; but what brings on the disease and who are its likely victims?

New studies have discovered that people who have diabetes have a greater risk of getting Alzheimer's. In recent years, there have been cases where people have gotten Alzheimer's in their 30's and 40's. While those are quite rare,

people who develop the disease in their 50's are more common.

There are currently more than 5 million people diagnosed with Alzheimer's and 25.8 million adults and children who have some type of diabetes. Those with type-two diabetes are more likely to get Alzheimer's later in life. Diabetes can lead to vascular dementia, a type of cognitive decline caused by damaged blood vessels and changes in the brain.

Type-two diabetes greatly impacts the activity of body tissues and the brain's reaction to insulin. According to the research website www.ahaf.org/alzheimers/about/risk/ which provides accurate information to assist and inform diagnosed Alzheimer's patients: "With Type 2 diabetes insulin does not work effectively to convert blood sugar into energy and this inefficiency results in production of higher levels of insulin and blood sugar which ... harm the brain and contribute to ... progression of Alzheimer's."

But by having diabetes people are also at greater risk of developing other diseases like mild cognitive impairment. MCI is the transi-

tion from normal aging forgetfulness to the more serious issues with which Alzheimer's victims must deal.

Despite the fact that there is no cure for Alzheimer's, it can be prevented in some ways. Doctors recommend exercising your brain with intellectual games such as crossword or other word puzzles that keep your brain sharp. However, those with diabetes may not necessarily be at greater risk for getting Alzheimer's since it is passed on genetically.

If one's family has a history of Alzheimer's doctors recommend consulting a physician to see if there are reasons for concern. Other ways to decrease risk include: getting 30 minutes of exercise every day, maintaining a healthy and balanced diet including fruits and veggies, taking suggested medicine if prescribed, and follow directions concerning monitoring your blood glucose, cholesterol level and blood pressure.

Doctors hope that one day there will be a cure for Alzheimer's but until that is the case, exercising one's body and mind to keep fit may be the way to go.

By Nina Godlewski

"Mom always liked you best" may be heard among battling siblings or perhaps on television as part of sitcom dialogue. However, if asked if they had a favorite child, most parents would automatically say "Of course not!" but, is this really the case? Many children would say their parents have favorites and actually, they are correct. New studies reveal that in most families, there is favoritism apparent in some way or other.

Based on a poll given on the parenting site Netmums a third of mothers said they love their children equally, with half saying they love equally, but in different ways. The "different ways" component is what makes a child feel less or

more favored by a parent.

So what effect, if any, does favoritism have on children in terms of impacting growth, development, personalities, future interrelationships and even success as adults? That appears to be the million dollar question that parents everywhere would like answered.

When a child feels less favored than one or more of their siblings they may develop feelings of inadequacy and think they are never quite good enough to live up to the expectations of their parents. This can lead to a disinterest in a variety of things including school-work and extracurricular activities.

This may be due to the fact that if the child is not succeeding in these areas for him or herself, they are most likely doing it to keep

parent satisfied. If the parent seems uninvolved or disinterested and the accomplishments and behaviors of the child go unnoticed, the child often loses motivation to continue with those positive actions.

Living in the shadow of a more favored sibling can also cause identity issues. Instead of working to develop his or her own natural talents and skills a child might try to change to be someone they are not naturally in order to be more like a favored sibling and get the attention of a parent.

On the other hand, favored children sometimes feel that rules and regulations simply do not apply to them. They may end up underestimating consequences that they will someday have to face in the real world because they never dealt with them in the home.

Favorite children may also have feelings of entitlement and over confidence which can have an adverse effect on them once they are grown adults. This can be their downfall due to a lack of awareness in certain situations. They may also have difficulty showing empathy for others because they are accustomed to be the focus of so much attention.

Also, on the negative side, favorite children may be put under a lot of pressure to be good examples for other siblings, which is also something that can adversely affect them. When they experience failure or make mistakes like everyone is bound to do, they may struggle or become devastated rather than take it in stride as a learning experience.

There are obvious pros and cons of being a favorite vs. less favored child. Regardless, children cannot help but wonder why they have attained a certain status in their family. Oddly enough, in more cases than not, there is no clear explanation.

There are many factors that contribute to which child is favorite. The two main factors being that no two children are the same nor are any two parents. Parents can sometimes favor one child due to age, gender, athletic or academic ability, as well as many other things. In some cases, parents get along better with children who share their personality traits and yet in other instances, the exact opposite is true.

Some parents favor children who they sense are weaker or more vulnerable while others favor those who show more self-direction and confidence and see them as the shining star with unlimited possibilities which they are obligated to encourage. Some parents admit they feel some of their children simply need them more or enjoy the attention less than others.

Child psychologists agree that above all, parents should try their best to juggle their time and attention to satisfy the needs, help develop the strengths and assist with the weaknesses of all their children fairly. They suggest encouraging extended family and friends to play beneficial roles in children's lives and siblings to help one another in symbiotic relationships based on cooperation and mutual respect.

## Eating disorders affect 24 million in the U.S.

By Daphne Pellegrino

Many people today believe we live in a superficial and judgmental society that places unreasonable expectations upon women in terms of physical appearance. Some feel the media's promotion of unhealthy images and thin Hollywood physiques, like the iconic Barbie doll, have contributed to a dangerous obsession.

The brainwashing impacts children at a young age. Toddlers now compete in beauty competitions while teenage girls, caught up in the "image" they think they should project to the world, imagine themselves with "perfect" Barbie bodies.

Most dangerous is the ultra-thin goal of young girls who instead of eating healthy foods and getting appropriate exercise, are buying diet pills/sodas, binging/purgings and starving themselves as they fall victim to disorders like anorexia and bulimia.

Psychologists agree the twisted ideas of the media have infiltrated the minds of young women everywhere; it has reached a point where they are placing themselves in peril and for many, it all started with a doll called Barbie.

Barbie has been an icon of perfection for generations of girls – almost every American woman, at some point, owned or played with a Barbie doll. Many have envied her: the image of flawlessness: Long, blonde hair; slim body; perfect clothes, handsome boyfriend, great job (Astronaut, model, and teacher). But, is she really all that perfect and is that image of so-called "perfection" even realistic? The answer is, in fact, "no".

If Barbie were a real, living woman, she would be 7'2" and weigh 101 pounds and wear a size 4 dress. The average woman is 5'4" and weighs 140 pounds and wears a size 14. The discrepancy is astounding.

The same goes for the models/movie stars the media features on billboards/television and in magazines/movies. Most models weigh around 25% less than the average woman, and 15 to 20 percent lower than recommended healthy weight for a woman of same height and age.

Seeing these nearly emaciated women in the media explains why 24 million people in the United States are currently suffering from eating disorders of some sort. The majority of women who suffer from these sometimes deadly disorders are between ages 12 and 26, likely because advertisements using thin young women monopolize media and target young audiences.

These girls strive to look like models, reminiscent of the familiar plastic Barbie doll. However, celebrity "role" models are products of an industry designed to make money; but at what expense to young American women whose minds are so malleable? Young women are brainwashed to believe the concept of "Skinny is Beautiful" and all you need to be successful in life.

Health experts say the goal to possess that "Size-Zero-Live-On-Yogurt" body is unrealistic and unattainable; it is irresponsible to portray it to young people as the norm to incite them to look "Easy, Breezy, Beautiful" like Covergirl models or thin like celebrities on the red carpets. What standards are we setting for our young women?

Concerned citizens have openly criticized the media. When young women feel their bodies are not "up to par" it can trigger disaster. The emotional issues and mental illnesses that come with the eventual eating disorders is such a heavy burden that many do not make it out alive.

Eating disorders are reported to have the highest mortality rate of any mental illness with victims often dying for multiple reasons including malnutrition, heart or other organ failure, or even suicide.

The question for many remains: when will this madness cease and the media stop poisoning the minds of the public into believing one must be a size 0 to be beautiful? How can they be motivated to do so and will these changes come sooner rather than later.

Fortunately, organizations such as Seventeen Magazine's "Body Peace Project" try to promote healthy body image to the public. Celebrities such as Raven Symone are involved in the fight against the media's cruel brainwashing in order to help change the culture. Celebrity status can be used to set positive examples of sensible healthy living.

One of the most successful women in the world is far from a size 0 but has accomplished a great deal and positively impacted millions. Oprah Winfrey is a female role model who struggles with her own human issues but stresses giving back and being the best person you can be to take charge of your own destiny. It is a positive message based on the assertion that who you are inside means more than what you look like on the outside.

Hopefully the Barbie dolls women currently have ingrained in their minds will be replaced by healthy role models such as those who compete in college/Olympic sports, possess valuable skills/talents or work at rewarding professions.

Following one's own personal dream is a great substitute for the struggle to attain the superficial goals of a Barbie doll.

**THE PHOENIX**

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# Deficit grows as Americans continue to struggle

By Nicole D'Amico

Most Americans do not realize how serious the national debt situation truly is. At more than \$15 trillion, the number is staggering and almost too hefty for many to even imagine. Some ask how this can possibly happen.

In simple terms, the national debt reflects all the money the government owes from borrowing large sums as a result of huge deficits: the money it spends every year in excess of what its tax, tariff, and fee revenues bring to the table. When the government must borrow repeatedly to make up the difference, such as during current difficult economic times, the number obviously rises.

Also, since we are constantly spend-

ing government funds on things like maintaining our military personnel and fighting wars, providing Medicare, Social Security, Welfare and other services/programs, sustaining roads/bridges, and many other government expenses, basically the costs are outrunning the revenues.

This issue, of course, has Republicans and Democrats fighting, pointing fingers and suggesting solutions with Republicans traditionally suggesting we cut spending before approving more borrowing, while Democrats recommend we increase tax on the wealthy.

President Obama, who will seek a second term next year, is scrambling to find solutions for the current economic crisis which we now see is far-reaching and becoming more of a global issue

with the Euro and various European nations in crisis and much of the Middle East in turmoil.

"Now is the time. If not now, then when?" asks Obama, referring to our need for solutions, compromise, and sacrifice. The issues have politicians and experts worried and pondering for answers. Solutions which have historically worked during critical times cannot necessarily be employed now since today's world changes so rapidly, each and every second.

As Americans search for answers, it is clear that if the debt continues to grow or even stagnates, it could have a huge impact on the future leaders of America. College graduates are going to have an even harder time finding jobs because of this, which will make paying for college

loans difficult for many if not impossible for some. Many young people are discouraged about the prospect of even entering the workforce and earning a living.

The problems trickle down as is evidenced by lackluster consumer spending, closing of businesses and employee layoffs during financial downturns. The cycle continues as this leads to still fewer consumers having money to spend and more people seeking unemployment and other benefits to survive: pay for heating homes, food, and healthcare. Throw in a slumping real estate market and you have a recession which could easily slip into a full blown depression.

With the greatest economic minds in the world deliberating over what to do next, the stock market soaring/slipping

as it reacts to the release of financial news, unemployment down recently although only slightly but at least not rising, and Occupy groups throughout the U.S. protesting the inequitable distribution of wealth, America holds its breath.

Americans hope in earnest that they can, as in the past, survive these challenging times. With holidays approaching, many families try to strike a delicate balance between spending money on family, friends and festivities, but not so much that bills become overwhelming.

Most look forward to the time when we can successfully close this stressful chapter in the history books so that our grandchildren may someday read about how we solved our problems and survived these trying times.

## Revealing the truth about teenage heart attacks

By Emi Kanyo

Cases of teenage heart attacks are sweeping the nation. From a 14-year old runner in Wisconsin to a Texas high schools star quarterback, sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) is affecting many teenagers. The deaths of these young people are very scary for both athletes and their parents.

Recent studies of this phenomenon have shed light on just what causes these teenage "heart attacks." Contrary to popular belief, SCA is not the result of physical activity. It actually stems from an inherited heart defect known as hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, commonly referred to as an enlarged heart which, when combined with an enlarged heart and intense physical workouts, can hinder blood flow to the heart and result in SCA.

Intense physical activity is dangerous for teenagers with an enlarged heart because it

makes the heart muscle swell/enlarge and this in turn can lead to SCA. A few other causes of heart problems in teenagers are unusual thickening of the heart wall, aberrations in the small arteries that feed the heart muscle, and abnormalities of the heart's electrical system.

All of these heart issues can lead to SCA in particular when victims undergo physical stress, and/or intense workouts. In some cases, according to Atlanta, GA, cardiologist Doctor Winston Gandy, founding member of the Piedmont Heart Institute and Co-Director of the Cardiovascular Ultrasound Center of Excellence, "When the athlete collapses, it is not from a heart attack. It is due to a sudden chaotic rhythm of the heart that cuts the blood supply to the heart." So, despite popular belief, the cause of these deaths among teenagers is not actually heart attack, but the effects of different heart-related abnormalities.

Experts say these deaths can be prevented with education and testing. Adults need to be familiar with the signs of SCA, which is mainly when someone collapses, has no pulse and is not breathing. The public also needs to be educated about the proper way to perform CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) which is used to help get oxygen to the brain and heart so that less tissue damage occurs while help is on the way.

Also, portable defibrillators should be kept on site of sports fields, schools and other public buildings so that the heart of someone in distress can be kick-started in case of an emergency. In addition, athletes should be tested prior to competitions to see if they have any heart complications that might pose a physical problem; pediatricians should be certain that clear records are maintained so that schools are kept informed and updated about abnormal health conditions.

## SNIFFING OUT DANGER



Officer Jim Brennan, Principal Dr. Russell Dallai, and Chief Police Tom McLoughlin pose with a K-9. The dog was trained since he was a puppy to detect illegal substances. Officer Brennan performed a demonstration to show the dog's abilities.

## Why risk it all to 'buy' high SAT scores? Students pay hefty price for fraud

By Brynne MacDonnell

How truly important is the Student Aptitude Tests? There is certainly a lot of preparation for it in school, and it is submitted as an important part of the college application process. However, just what are students willing to do to get desirable scores? A recent SAT scandal sheds light on the drastic and deceitful extent to which some will go.

In the town of Great Neck, New York, it was discovered that several students went beyond working hard and carefully preparing to take the SAT. When teachers heard whispers and rumors about cheating, they contacted authorities. It was discovered that Emory University Sophomore Samuel Eshaghoff was paid \$1,500 to \$2,500 to take the SAT for at least six of the school's students.

With the required admissions ticket and a fake ID that had his photograph and the name of the student he was impersonating, he took the tests at different schools in the district where students would not be recognized by name. In one case he is accused of taking the test for a girl although it is unclear how he disguised himself. On at least

one occasion, Eshaghoff allegedly flew home from school just to take the test twice in the same weekend, according to prosecutors.

All seven were arrested on Sept. 27, with the high school students who are minors charged with misdemeanors. As a 19-year-old adult, Eshaghoff was charged with scheming to defraud, falsifying business records and criminal impersonation. While he is cooperating with authorities, he is denying the charges. If convicted, he faces up to four years in prison.

Nassau County District Attorney Kathleen Rice said in a statement, "Colleges look for the best and brightest students, yet these six defendants tried to cheat the system and may have kept honest and qualified students from getting into their dream school."

The Educational Testing Service is the company that designs and administers the SAT and is responsible for test security. Its spokesman Tom Ewing said the company "takes cheating allegations very seriously and investigations include visits to the schools involved, examinations of documentation and sometimes even handwriting analysis."

"The SAT scores that are generated are used to make important college admission decisions and if we can't stand behind their validity, we will not report them for use," Ewing said.

Great Neck North High School is one of the highest-ranked public high schools in the country with notable alumni including film director Francis Ford Coppola, fashion designer Kenneth Cole and Olympic figure skater Sarah Hughes.

The district states, "It is our hope that the actions currently being taken by the District Attorney's Office will serve to bring an end to any dishonest practices which may have placed students at an unfair disadvantage and ... bring to light any shortcomings in the security of the SAT testing system."

Some ask what motivated these students to blatantly cheat on this exam. Many say that the tremendous and increasing pressure to do well on this one standardized test is the driving force.

Sally Rubenstein, a Massachusetts-based senior advisor with College Confidential explains: "This emphasis on test prepping goes hand in hand with the escalating cheating and pressure

these kids feel to do well ... it makes them feel cheating is necessary." Another question frequently posed is, "Should so much importance be placed on SAT scores?"

In fact, more than 800 colleges have stopped accepting SAT and American College Test scores as part of applications. They discuss various reasons such as the ease with which students can cheat, the stress it puts on students to do well, and the fact that in many cases, standardized tests are not an accurate measure of a student's intelligence or success as a future college student.

Overall, the decision to cheat is neither a wise nor ethical one even if made out of desperation. The SAT is seen by both teachers and students as a cornerstone of the college application process but perhaps it is time to for a change. Can a student's intelligence really be summed up in a marathon of standardized test questions?

Most would agree the answer is "No" but until it is eliminated or replaced students should do their best to deal with them with integrity. (ACT is another test option for students and is described as being more content/knowledge

based rather than an evaluator of how well students take tests, like the SAT.) Recommendations include, preparing IDs and other materials the night before, getting a good night's rest and eating breakfast the morning of the test.

Guidance counselors and college admissions personnel recommend students do their best to reveal their most unique qualities to colleges. They should highlight their strengths/skills/special talents and find ways to showcase extraordinary accomplishments.

Special portfolios of artwork, collections of essays, valuable volunteer or extracurricular experiences, leadership roles and superb athletic capabilities are some things to share with schools. Interviews also allow students to shine through clear communication revealing much about how a young person handles themselves.

Good luck students; work hard, stay calm and maintain your dignity. It will take you farther than any "purchased" test scores which could very well come back to haunt you but, most importantly, begin one of the most exciting and positive stages of life in the shadow of deceit.

## Bidding farewell to the ultimate genius, Steve Jobs (1955 - 2011)

By Alexis Tonelli

A new born baby who was to be adopted by a family was turned down because they wanted a girl. He was then offered to a family on a waiting list. The biological family made an agreement with

the adoptive parents that they could adopt him as long as he went to college. The year was 1955 and the child would grow up to be Steven Jobs, a college dropout who made history.

Adopted by Paul (a machinist) and Clara, Jobs showed

early interest in electronics and enrolled in Hewlett-Packard Explorer Club. He attended lectures at the HP plant where he saw engineers demonstrate new products and his first computer at age 12; he knew then that he wanted to work with computers someday.

He went on to college in Oregon for two years but then dropped out. In 1975 he joined a group called Homebrew Computer Club and met a technical wiz, Steve Wozniak, who was trying to build a new computer. Jobs became fascinated with its marketing potential and in 1976 the two men formed their own company called Apple, named after a happy summer Jobs spent picking apples.

Working out of Jobs' garage

with \$1,300 startup money they raised by selling possessions, their motto focused on a quote by hockey player Wayne Gretzky, "I skate to where the puck is going to be, not where it has been." That is clearly what they did as they set their sights on the future and let their innovative ideas lead the way.

In 1977 the partners unveiled Apple II with first year sales topping \$2.7 million and in three years reaching \$200 million. Representing the most phenomenal corporate growth in U.S. history, it opened up a new market of personal computers and a whole new way of processing information.

By 1983, as competitors

such as International Business Machines emerged, Apple lost

half its market share. The 1984 introduction of the Macintosh did not go well and signaled Jobs's downfall at Apple. He resigned in 1985 and by 1986 purchased a small company called Pixar from filmmaker George Lucas. Specializing in computer animation, it became a huge success with hits like Toy Story, Monsters Inc. and Finding Nemo.

Jobs returned to Apple as CEO in 1996 and by 1997, the company entered in a partnership with Microsoft, introducing several new products and marketing strategies. In 1998, iMac was released offering a powerful computer at an affordable price followed by iBook in 1999. While the other cell phone companies were competing for the best full keyboard, Apple created

the iPhone which had a full keyboard that was touch screen.

Apple created some of the best laptops and desktops in the world most notably because few viruses affect Apple Computers when compared to the thousands of harmful viruses that attack most personal computers. It also offered one of the most popular laptops in the MacBook Air: the world's smallest laptop weighing less than 3 pounds!

Sadly, on Oct. 5, the world lost a genius when Jobs passed away due to respiratory arrest from pancreatic cancer. He will be remembered as a visionary who helped launch the computer industry. He left the world a better place and the legacy he leaves behind will impact generations to come.

## Protesters: 'Free' to disrupt military funerals

From page 1

Many argue that the power of free speech does not permit individuals to intrude on such sacred private events to make political statements. They ask if "freedom" should include sexually harassing people and their families and if America has the right to restrict freedom of speech under such extraordinary circumstances...when life is lost".

One visible organization, the Westboro Baptist Church of Topeka, Kansas, claims that America's soldiers die at war because the country tolerates "disgraces" like divorce, homosexuality and abortion. On March 2, 2011, the group received national attention when they gathered at a Kansas church and began anti-gay protests at the funeral service of a homosexual military member. The father of the fallen soldier filed suit claiming such protests were equivalent to "harassment and...protestors were causing emotional distress with purpose". The family sued for \$2.9 million for compensatory and \$5 million for punitive damages.

The Supreme Court, with an 8-1 vote, upheld the right of the Westboro Baptist Church to promote their messages in the vicinity of the funeral ceremonies of fallen soldiers. Pundits justified the decision by

stating: "There is no right against being offended...if the church members do not attack /harass or personally confront people during protest, behavior is considered a practice of their civil rights since they never enter the cemetery and are not loud...limits on their freedom should be addressed by the Congressional Amendments not the court."

Therefore, as long as they follow these guidelines the church is allowed to preach their belief that American military deaths in Iraq and Afghanistan are God's punishment for US tolerance and a sign the "nation's destruction is imminent". According to lead legal counsel for the church and daughter of the church's pastor, Fred Phelps, Margie Phelps states, "We are trying to warn you (the public) to see the wrath of God...of destruction. What could be more kind than that?"

Cities like Boston have tried to control protesters by proposing a bill which that would extend the distance at which protesters stand from 500 to 1000 feet away from ceremonies.

Following the Supreme Court decision, the controversial fundamentalist Church group vowed to "quadruple their protest efforts". Thus, church members as young as

age 5 continue holding signs at protests.

Military families, feeling helpless and distraught, say protesters force "maliciously offensive statements upon them." One mother states, "Our family has made the ultimate sacrifice to protect freedoms that Americans enjoy...which are now used to harass us during our darkest hour."

One father of a soldier reminded the press that his son was, in fact, not gay and yet protesters showed up at the funeral regardless. He added, however, that his son "would have died protecting any of his brothers/sisters...regardless of his/her sexual orientation".

Numerous NHHS students were interviewed but none were supportive of the protesters behavior even in the name of free speech. One junior spoke of the anguish they caused, "Their arrogance in assuming they've the right to force words of hate and bigotry on others at such difficult times is offensive beyond description...pure evil and simply unforivable."

Most Americans surveyed agree; it is shocking and unacceptable to focus on times of personal anguish at private ceremonies to project despicable sentiments to antagonize, in the name of a free expression.

## Vaccine: Controversy

From page 1

that course of action with government approval and also because cost may be covered by insurance carriers.

Although the federal government has formally endorsed the vaccine, controversy remains. Some parents worry that the vaccination essentially promotes sexual activity at a young age. To which Dr. Anne Schuchat, the CDC's head of the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases responds, "Today is another milestone

in the nation's battle against cancer ... as a health issue not a moral one."

The vaccine, like any medicine, can cause serious problems with some people experiencing mild to moderate symptoms such as fever, headache, fainting, nausea and joint pain. These side effects are short-lived and usually disappear quickly.

As always, consult a personal physician for additional information.



Senior boys get "pepped up" for their senior fall pep rally which led to a successful victory on their Thanksgiving game. Their overall record on the season was 9-2, and went into the first round of the SCC playoffs.

Staff Photo

By Alexis Tonelli

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