



# THE MUCKRAKER

the students' voice since 1997

THE INDEPENDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY SCHOOL STUDENTS' NEWSPAPER

Volume XIV, Issue II

Friday, November 12, 2010

Circulation: 600

PAGE 1

## THE MUCKRAKER



As the attentive reader of The Muckraker might have already noticed, we have decided to dedicate the second issue of our "Muckraker Year of Creativity" to the story that has accompanied most JFKS students throughout their childhood and youth, the great Harry Potter. Since there haven't been any major events, neither in politics (except for the recent bomb-parcels from Yemen, the US elections, the Stuttgart 21 discussion, the Nobel peace prize being awarded to Liu Xiaobo, etc.) nor at the Kennedy School (except for the continuing celebrations surrounding our schools 50th anniversary, the plans to de-democratize our school by removing parents and students from the ED, etc. - all dutifully not covered in this issue), the upcoming premier of the seventh and second-to-last Potter Movie "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows (Part One)" on November 18th was bound to be the theme-giver for this issue.

After this, only one last event in the timeline of the great Harry Potter saga awaits us - the last movie, to be released next May.

And then what?

Some people say, the world will end with the last film. Others claim that after Harry Potter, no book will ever be published again. Who knows, they might be wrong? But one thing is for sure: The completion of the Harry Potter series marks the end of childhood for an entire generation of people across the world.

In that sense, *Quietus.*

## An Open Letter to the Student Council Presidents

It took me a long time to decide whether or not this is the correct medium to voice my opinion on the issue of the Student Council. I know that I will probably be criticized for taking this decision, but, after carefully weighing up my options, I write this article with the clear conscience that it is for the best of the SC.

I am disappointed. I am pissed. And I am mad. For the first time as far back as I can remember, this year saw two SC-newcomers elected as SC presidents: Jung-Gun Park and Max Wieland. Jung-Gun had never before been in the Student Council, Max had never been in the cabinet. I thought that bringing some fresh blood into the system might do it good.

I was wrong.

I want to use this opportunity not

to destroy this young SC's morale, but to make sure it gets back on the right track before it's too late.

1. KISS - Keep it simple, stupid! The way the SC is organized is ineffective, at the least. Most students will at least have heard of the committee-system: The SC members are divided into committees at the beginning of the school year; all tasks that need to be worked on are split between the committees. The idea isn't bad, but the way it's realized is. Back when I was in 7th grade, there were three committees: PR, Entertainment and Money. That already led to confusions. Last year, there were also three: Entertainment, Spirit Week and PR, although PR was split into Money, Organization and Communication. That was ridiculous and no less confusing. This year we have six committees.

At the new SC's first meeting, upon being asked how effective I felt

**An Open Letter**, *continued on page 3*

### Interview with Frau Steinmeyer

Most of us have heard of the creatures who inhabit the small room at the dark end of the blue building's second floor: the peer mediators. But what do they do? Read the Muckraker's exclusive interview.

*on page 4*

### Geschichten aus Chile

Nach 69 Tagen unter der Erde wurden vor wenigen Wochen 33 chilenische Bergleute befreit. Lies mehr zu dem, was in Südamerika geschah und wie es dazu kam.

*on page 7*

### The Terrorists Within

The US government issued a travel warning for Europe; the UK did so for Germany and France. Ever wondered why Berlin is suddenly such a dangerous place to be in?

*on page 7*

### Wacky Words

"Did you notice the way that polyglot octogenarian in the zuchetto intimated that he disliked the augustly precocious enfant terrible?" Understood nothing? Then read Sophia Kula's article.

*on page 9*



# JFKS Life

**An Open Letter**, *continued from page 2*

the current committee system was (concerning especially the concept of a subdivided PR-committee), I suggested revising the system, creating two large committees: Organization (in charge of one large-scale project at a time, such as the teacher evaluation, seminar day, etc.) and Entertainment (in charge of coordinating bake sales, spirit weeks, etc.). I was told by Mr. Felt that a step like that would require an amendment of the SC By-Laws.

That is wrong.

The By-Laws (as published in the 2009-2011 Student Handbook and thus accessible to all students) contain not a single reference to the committee system. In fact, the only reference ever made to the committee system in the Handbook is the Spirit Week Committee. They come beneath the heading "Guidelines for Spirit Week – Article VI" (although no respective articles I through V are published with it), which in turn belongs to the section "Special Meetings". This section is referenced nowhere in the By-Laws as an appendix, and thus has no binding relevance. But that brings me to my next point:

2. Re-evaluate the SC By-Laws – become aware of their existence, use them consistently and revise them where necessary! First of all, the current SC doesn't even have By-Laws that apply to it. Article VII of the By-Laws states that "the By-Laws must be re-ratified by each new Student Council at the beginning of the school year". I have never witnessed that happening. Let us for a moment assume that the SC was subject to the By-Laws published in the Handbook. Let me point out the articles it would currently be breaking:

- Article I: The SCs "goal is to realize and maintain the Student Body's interests by democratic means" – more on that under point three.

- Article II: "The average number of students per electing class is determined at the beginning of each school year". That average then is relevant for deter-

mining how many representatives each class has to the SC. I am not aware of that ever having happened.

- Article III: At the beginning of the school year, contrary to what the By-Laws expect, the SC did not elect: a scholarship administrator, four secretaries and an explicit "Treasurer/Fund-raiser".

- Article VII: Re-ratification of the By-Laws, an issue already mentioned. It might also be argued that Article VI (stating that SC meetings should follow the "Student Council Rules of Order") was broken, but as the Rules of Order state themselves that they "do not need to be followed 100% if everyone agrees with the procedures", I will not hold it against the SC presidents; I would, however, like to make the Presidents aware of the issue and suggest going back to following the Rules of Orders, since they do make meetings easier.

Amending the By-Laws is reasonably easy. If the presidents decide that they do not approve of the present By-Laws, they ought to amend them; otherwise, they should abide by them.

3. Democratize – the presidents should lose their dictatorial allusions. Part of the problem might stem from the title they are awarded: SC presidents. I find the German title much more appropriate: Schülersprecher. The Presidents are not meant to rule the student body or the Student Council; they are meant to represent and coordinate it. Assigning SC representatives to committees is an act of arbitrariness that only serves to demotivate: people are less likely to work actively on a project they don't enjoy; assigning someone interested in organizing events such as spirit week to the money committee (which in effect is a bake-sale-committee) or vice versa can only do harm. Not allowing discussions on topics important to members of the SC with plenty of time left before the end of the meeting to happen, but then going into an extensive period of "committee time" (which ought to be done in separate meetings or-

ganized by the committee-heads) is contrary to my conception of democracy.

Part of the problem might be that Jung-Gun has no experience in the SC and thus is not familiar with SC standards and procedures; nonetheless, to fulfill article I of the Student Council By-Laws, the Presidents must become less SC Presidents and more Schülersprecher, and must view the other SC representatives as their equals.

4. Focus. As long as I have been a member of the Student Council, the concept of the SC has become increasingly perverted, with the SC becoming less and less of a representative organ and more and more of an entertainment organizational body, responsible for spirit week and bake sales. This year, chances are that the SC will take another giant leap into this devastating direction. The two Presidents having no experience in the cabinet, it is likely that they will focus on the tasks of the SC that were propagated the widest; tasks that belong to the least important the SC has. Spirit Week is nice, but no more. It is good that the SC organizes it every year, because it improves its image; more important, however, is the task of representing the Student Body's interests. One of the symptoms of this problem is the choice of officers who are members of the cabinet: Those students in charge of organizing bake-sales (the committee heads) are members of the cabinet; the students who perform much more important tasks such as the SC representatives to the School Conference or the BSA are not included, thus effectively being students in their respective organ, but not student representatives to that organ, as they are not included in the SC organ directly assisting the elected representatives of the Student Body.

The most recent example of this problem is the discussion surrounding the amendment of the JFKS school law concerning the ED. This amendment would constitute a serious infraction upon our rights, the rights of the student body. But at

**An Open Letter**, *continued on page 4*

# JFKS Life

**An Open Letter**, continued from page 3

the last SC meeting, the Presidents' only comment was a request that we show our parents the Parent Newsletter, which is to contain an article on the issue. No discussion, no further explanation, no call for action. We as a student body have the responsibility to act on this issue and to defend our rights. And the SC Presidents must be the ones leading the struggle.

5. Publicize – stay in contact with the “grass-roots”. We are in the lucky position of possessing a student newspaper like The Muckraker, and not using it as a means of communicating with the Student Body is simply ignorant.

At the beginning of the school year, The Muckraker approached the SC presidents, inviting them to publish their goals. We still await that article. Until a few years ago, it was customary for the presidents to comment their achievements in The Muckraker on a regular basis. That hasn't happened for many years.

And lastly, The Muckraker would have been the perfect organ for involving the Student Body in the fight against the new JFKS law concerning the ED, had the Presidents approached The Muckraker as soon as they found out.

Dear SC Presidents,

That is why I am disappointed, pissed and mad. But the school year has only just begun. You still have time to change many things: KISS, re-evaluate the By-Laws, democratize, focus and publicize.

Being SC President is more than an opportunity to polish your CV. It is a responsibility. Don't let down the people who voted for you.

Yours faithfully,

Moritz Zeidler

## JAZZ AND DEEP-FRIED SCORPIONS AT THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA

In the first week of fall break, five students and three teachers stepped on a plane in Tegel, and, except for the missing McDonalds at terminal 2E in Paris, everything went well and we safely arrived in Beijing 16 hours later.

Without any Chinese-speakers in our group it still was no problem to find a taxi – the adventure started once we got onto the streets; even Mr Germann's statement that “At least our driver knows on which side of the road to drive!” was proven wrong in the next days. But does a little roller-coaster ride every now and then bother those who eat deep-fried scorpions, deep-fried silk worms and deep-fried ice-cream at a night market? Not really. And so we admired not only the Forbidden City, but also the Great Wall for two days before we met all 70 participants of the 2010 AMIS International Honor Jazz Band Festival at the International School of Beijing.

For three days the jazz band rehearsed their nine pieces with three different rhythm groups and several soloists, while the vocal ensemble also prepared for the big concert. Less pressure was on for the Jazz Skills Workshop, as all the new skills were put into practice at an informal, internal combo concert.

In the afternoons, buses took the whole load of musicians to places like the Yashow Market, where “Made in China” got a whole new meaning as we bought “Ray Ban's” for 3€ and “Pashmina” scarves for 2€. Friday night gave a first taste of what was to come on Saturday, as selected big band members played in three combos at a restaurant five minutes away from the Great Wall. Finally, on Saturday, the big theater of the school was filled with workshop members, teachers, host families, and music-lovers, as the jazz band, vocal ensemble and combos proved the enormity of what a group of musicians, who have never met before, can put together in just three days – alongside jet lag, sightseeing, and making new friends from all around the world.

Friederike von Streit

## MEDIATION IS THEIR PROCESS, NOT MINE.

The Peer Mediation Team started a survey some of you might have responded to. Most 11- 13th Graders said they prefer to solve conflicts on their own, whereas the majority of 7- 10th Graders would take mediation into consideration when in a conflict. Almost all 7-10th Graders claimed to know what Mediators do, but when asked to describe what it was, failed to give a correct definition. Seeing that there is a lack of information on mediation in general, we chose to interview a professional mediator.

Interview with Frau Dr. Bernadette Steinmeyer, Professional Mediator and Conflict Coach

*Mediators: “Frau Steinmeyer, can you explain to our students what your job consists of?”*

Frau Steinmeyer: “As a professional mediator, I help people in conflict to reach mutually acceptable and desirable solutions to their problems. It is very important to realise that I do not decide the outcome of their disputes for them. Instead, it is my job to create and hold a safe, confidential, and non-judgemental space for them in which they can discuss their problems and hopefully reach agreements on how to settle their differences. I am absolutely “neutral” towards the parties – I don't take sides or have an interest in how the problem is solved. The parties also set up their own rules and conditions for the mediation process and as the me-

Mediation, continued on page 5

# JFKS Life

**Mediation**, continued from page 4

diator, I watch over the process and ensure that these rules are abided by. I also watch over the concept of "fairness" during mediation – making sure that the parties are not in any way disadvantaged as regards each other and that they have all the necessary information at their disposal to make their decisions. Once agreement is reached, I help the parties to put it in writing and help them set up a framework to ensure that they are held accountable for the outcome of their mediation. In that way, I enable and empower people to settle their differences themselves. Mediation is their process, not mine."

*Mediators: "Between which parties can Mediation be conducted?"*

Frau Steinmeyer: "There is a wide range of problems suitable for mediation: from problems within families, between husband and wife, employees, within teams, businesses, social clubs, and neighbours, to conflicts between consumers and industry. A great example of a current mediation is the ongoing process between residents of Berlin and the governments of Berlin and Brandenburg who have different opinions concerning the recently published air corridors for the new Berlin-Brandenburg International Airport. Another example is the mediation process that was finally started between Stuttgart 21 supporters and their opponents. Germany is discovering Mediation slowly and somewhat reluctantly. In much of Canada, parts of Australia and several of the US states, civil court appointments are only granted on proof of prior mediation."

*Mediators: "When does Mediation make sense?"*

Frau Steinmeyer: "Mediation makes sense where the parties involved are in some essential way connected to each other – when they have a need to get on with each other. This is the case for example within families, offices, communities of many kinds – particularly of course, within schools and classrooms. Within the school context, I would say that when a problem arises which the parties cannot solve together, and when this problem disturbs the way in which those involved relate to each other substantially, i.e. beyond the stage of a simple disagreement, mediation is definitely the way to proceed. Mediation is quick, efficient, and absolutely confidential, and most of us want our conflicts settled without everyone getting to know the gory details. A mediation room is one of the most protected spaces you can step into. It is also important to remember – mediation is the process that enables you to determine the outcome of your problems yourself, rather than having a decision imposed upon you. In that way, solving differences through mediation is truly empowering."

*Mediators: "How do you keep from taking sides when mediating?"*

Frau Steinmeyer: "That's where the training as a mediator comes in – and that's why not everyone is suited to being a mediator. They are there to serve the mediation process, not to decide the outcome and never to take sides. We tend to think that it's natural to take sides and our culture teaches us to do so. It likes to paint

things in black and white, good and evil, wrong and right. But we forget that just because something seems natural – it doesn't mean that it's good! We say, for example, "all children fight" – yet we are always at pains to stop them from doing so and hurting others and themselves. Being "neutral" (not taking sides) as a mediator is a conscious state of mind and probably the most defining feature of mediation in that it is this neutrality towards the outcome of the mediation that empowers the parties and enables them to find the best possible solutions to their problems."

*Mediators: "Why is a harmonious atmosphere within a group important?"*

Frau Steinmeyer: "Well, if we take the example of a school environment, it is only in a situation of relative harmony that we can be creative and really learn. If I sit in the back row of a classroom and am constantly put down by snide remarks from the student two rows in front of me, I might manage to take notes, but it is very unlikely that I will be able to learn effectively or that I would be prepared to participate actively in class discussions. Not only does the individual student suffer, the whole class suffers through the inner withdrawal of the back-row student. The sense of community is also disturbed and a divided community is not a very pleasant place to be in – particularly in view of the fact that the school day is long and the prospect of having the same conflict to deal with repeatedly through the course of a school year, hardly a joyful one."



# Culture

## IN NEED OF A PERSONAL LIFE COACH?

Facing a crisis? Struggling with life's most honest, supportive, sustainable losses or transitions? Having trouble and powerful way possible, challenging communicating in essential relationships? Lost sight of your goals and dreams? Lacking motivation or self-esteem? Explore the possibilities of Personal Life Coaching in a free trial session with Personal Life Coach and Mediator Dr. Bernadette Steinmeyer. Call today 030. 8038804 or email [berlinmediation@web.de](mailto:berlinmediation@web.de) for your free session

## ENVIRONMENT VS. GENES

Have you ever asked yourself where our middle class intelligence comes from, or why some people are smarter than others? Does it really all depend on our genes, or does the environment have a much greater effect on our intelligence than we thought? A recent study has proven that children, who are intellectually challenged from early childhood on, turn out to be more intelligent than others. Therefore, those who come from lower class families or have been neglected by their parents, score much lower on IQ tests than middle or higher class children, who have been exposed to a completely different environment. For example, statistics show that three year old children from the lower class have heard 20 million words in their lifetime, while children of the same age from the middle class have heard 30 million. This has its effect on their vocabulary: While the kids from the middle class know 1100 words at the age of three, lower class children are only able to say 525. The intelligence of the continuously stimulated children was therefore much higher. Another factor that can affect your intelligence is stress. Pressure, worries, disregard, and abuse can all reduce your brainpower. Scientists from Boston have also found, that kids who live near main streets and highways, and are exposed to higher amounts of CO<sub>2</sub>, have an IQ of around three points less than those who live in the countryside. Similarly children from poor families, frequently exposed to stress, score up to 10 percent lower than well taken care of children from the

The latest research supports the theory that our intelligence is not fixed, but surprisingly alterable. Even the cultural differences among us influence it. A study performed on Canadian and Chinese students proves this. In the experiment, both Canadian and Chinese kids were given the same math exam. Afterwards, they were told whether they did well, or if they failed, independently of their actual score. During a retake of the exam, the Chinese children, who were told that they had failed, did a lot better on the second test, while the Canadian students responded better to praise, and those Canadians who were told to have failed in the first test turned out to be somewhat discouraged, and scored rather low on the second test. As a result, researchers have downgraded the influence of the genes on one's intelligence from 80 percent to 50 percent. This means, that 50 percent of one's intelligence is based on environment and education; parents and teachers have to develop effective measures to provide a healthy learning environment. Particularly children from lower class families can benefit from this and have better chances in their future. The cognitive capabilities of a person are a mirror of his/her environment. Source: Spiegel Online "Was das Hirn begehrt" by Joerg von Blech

*Ina Schmidt*

## STAFF BOX

### Founding Fathers:

Helga Hufflepuff  
Godric Gryffindor  
Salazar Slytherin

### Editors:

Clawpaw  
Wise-Eyes

### Layout Editor:

Slipfin

### Journalists:

Mad-Eye Kula  
Lisa Lovegood  
Victoria Krum  
Hermione Park  
Sophia Trelawney  
Ina McGonagall  
Rebecca Skeeter  
Friederike von Dursley  
Draco von Salisch  
Sirius Schwarz

### Guest Journalists:

Mira Weasley

### How to join the Muckraker Staff

1. Come to our weekly meetings in the 20-minute-break on Tuesdays in B214
2. Send in your articles to [themuckraker@gmail.com](mailto:themuckraker@gmail.com)
3. Drop a note in our mailbox or approach us randomly in the hallways

*Comments, Replies?*  
send your opinions and articles to:

**[themuckraker@gmail.com](mailto:themuckraker@gmail.com)**

## International

# MIT FERNSEHREIFEM HAPPY-~~END~~

Es war wie die erste Mondlandung, das WM-Finale oder die fesselndste Fernsehserie, die je im Fernsehen ausgestrahlt wurde: Die Rettung der 33 verschütteten Bergleute in Chile am 13. Oktober. Nacheinander wurden die „Kumpel“ durch eine Rettungskapsel mit nur 53 Zentimeter Durchmesser aus 700 Meter Tiefe nach oben befördert, wo sie ihren Verwandten und Freunden freudig in die Arme fielen. 69 Tage lang fieberte die ganze Welt mit der Rettungsaktion mit, und konnte so das Leben der Verschütteten täglich mit verfolgen. Es kam zu einem Heiratsantrag eines Bergmannes an seine Freundin sowie zum Bekanntwerden einer langjährigen Affäre. Täglich gab es eine Versammlung der 33 Kumpel, in der das Leben unter Tage gemeinschaftlich abgestimmt wurde. Es wurden Rollen verteilt: vom Pfarrer, der tägliche Gebete veranstaltete bis zum Arzt, der die Impfungen gegen Wundstarrkrampf und Diphtherie durchführte. Außerdem wurden drei Gruppen eingeteilt: Eine Gruppe arbeitete an den Bohrschächten und verteilte die Versorgungspakete, die täglich von oben hinuntergelassen wurden, eine zweite Gruppe kümmerte sich um Sicherungsarbeiten und verstärkte den Schutzraum und die Zugänge gegen weitere Einstürze, und die Dritte kümmerte sich um die medizinischen

Fragen. So konnten die Männer so tief unter der Erde den Umständen entsprechend gut leben. Aber wie kam es eigentlich zu diesem tragischen Einsturz? Grund dafür war ein Bergschlag (eine schlagartige Spannungsumlagerung in kompaktem, sprödem Gestein), der die Wendelstrecke zum Einstürzen brachte. Ein riesiger Felsen blockierte den gesamten Durchgang der Strecke. Die Bergleute versuchten zunächst durch einen anderen Schacht zu fliehen, doch ein weiterer Einsturz zwei Tage später zerstörte auch Teile dieses Schachtes, so dass sie sich in den Schutzraum zurückzogen, aus dem sich nach 69 Tagen schließlich gerettet wurden. Diesen Raum teilten sich die Männer in Schlaf- und Essräume ein und wählten für ihre Notdurft einen 200 Meter entfernten Ort. Nach der Rettung, die von über 1700 anwesenden Journalisten verfolgt wurde, sind die geretteten Bergleute natürlich vorerst im Mittelpunkt der Presse. Es sind sogar schon mehrere Bücher, Dokumentarfilme sowie ein Spielfilm in Planung. Mit diesem Schwall an Aufmerksamkeit und dem noch vorhandenen Schock wird wohl keiner der 33 Kumpel so schnell wieder „unter Tage“ zu sehen sein.

*Victoria Christians*

## TO FEAR OR NOT TO FEAR, IS THAT THE QUESTION?

First 9/11, then the attack on the London Subway, and now, who's next?!

According to the United States, it's apparently us – Germany.

With the accompanying picture of a Muslim woman in front of a mosque, the New York Times indicated in article on Oct. 12 that we Germans have been put "at the center of the global terrorism scare" due to "intense abstract danger of homegrown radical Islamic terrorism" and "the sleeping cell of terror" amidst us.

To act upon the wisdom of the "better safe than sorry" princi-

ple, the United States therefore quickly issued a travel alert not only for Germany, but for the whole of Europe to warn its citizens about the 2010 European Terror Plot that could fortunately be disrupted by intelligence agencies. Simultaneously, the British government raised the level of threat of terrorism from "general" to "high" for both Germany and France.

Now, are they simply tripping or what's up?

The sad truth is that terror has become a global challenge that needs to be taken seriously and addressed as such.

But how come the German government hasn't issued out warnings to us? Have you heard about this "terror cell" amongst us and this "high" threat of terrorism that relates to our country? Why does everybody talk about us, but not to us?

Are we simply being disregarded, or are Great Britain and the United States overreacting? After all, the travel alert will be withdrawn by next week anyway . . .

*Manuela Schwarz*

# Entertainment

## THE NEWEST CRAZE: SILLY BANDZ

"Hey, you wanna trade some Silly Bandz with me?" "Silly... what?" "You don't know what Silly Bandz are? Man, where have you been?" It's official: in America, if you happen to be one of the oblivious few who is ignorant of the existence of the high-on-demand Silly Bandz, you will most likely be regarded as a caveman who has long ago severed his ties with the rest of the world. Silly Bandz may have a corny name, seem cheap, and distinctly resemble your daily kind of rubber bands, but they have taken the U.S. by a storm- and the rest of the world along with it.

Silly Bandz, colorful, elastic silicon wristbands that come in a variety of shapes ranging from zoo animals to alphabet letters that always revert back to their original shape after being stretched to be worn on the wrist, have been rapidly surfacing on wrists of students and adults alike all over the world. Invented by American Robert Croak, Silly Bandz stirred a major craze when they went on sale online in November 2008. After having been recently offered 10,3 million dollars for his firm, a blissful Croak said, "This is the American dream. This is way too much fun for me to take the money and run." Croak achieved the aforementioned feats without having advertised his elastic inventions even once, and the Silly Bandz Facebook page now has over 166,000 fans. Following the explosive sales of Silly Bandz in America, other countries such as England are vigorously importing the products at the moment. The popularity of

the eye-popping, shape-shifting bracelets have also been boosted by snapshots displaying celebrities and fashion icons such as Sarah Jessica Parker and Agyness Deyn sporting Silly Bandz on their wrists; many fans consider Silly Bandz to be trendy, affordable fashion accessories rather than toys. Silly Bandz also topped the headlines when a rap song about them became viral on YouTube.

But as popular as Silly Bandz may be among their fans, they have also been criticized heavily by parents and teachers, who claim the bands to be "a health hazard"; children who are enthusiastic enough to wear more than 100 Silly Bandz per arm have suffered from a constriction of blood flow to the hand. There have also been incidents at school involving students flicking Silly Bandz at another student's eye and face, causing the hospitalization of handfuls of children. If that's the case, though, shouldn't girls be stopped from wearing life-threatening hair bands on their wrists and rubber bands be locked away in impenetrable titanium safes to be kept away from children's mischievous fingers? Additionally, Silly Bandz have been characterized as an immature means to flirt among adults; numerous singles are now slipping their person of interest Silly Bandz to express their attraction for him/her at bars and clubs. While some singles think that this is a cute, no-strings attached way to exhibit their interest for another person, some regard it as an extremely juvenile method to do so.

Silly Bandz are low in price and keep adolescents entertained through the trading of different kinds of bands with one another. With children rushing to the nearest store after school to purchase the newest package of 24 diverse Silly Bandz for just five bucks, they have quickly become the more colorful and silly-con version of Yu-Gi-Oh and baseball cards. But however many positive sides there are to the Silly Bandz, one cannot overlook that fact that, when it comes down to it, one is shelling out five dollars for a bunch of rubber bands that may label its wearer's image as tacky, gaudy, and childish. Sure, not many parents would hesitate to give their children five bucks to buy what they want in the economy as it is right now- at least their kids aren't asking them for a PlayStation or a new iPod. But wouldn't it be better to save those five bucks every time their children ask to buy the newest collection of Silly Bandz and buy a better toy for them instead?

No matter how many naysayers Silly Bandz manage to collect, their popularity continues to expand everyday. With the newest Justin Bieber Silly Bandz collection making its debut just a few weeks ago, the Silly Bandz fans will undoubtedly be kept busy for the months to come, to say the least. Only time will tell if the Silly Bandz craze is just a phase or a long-term trend that's here to stay.

*Hyerin Park*

## LAZY ALTRUISM 101, OR TEN EASY THINGS TO DO FOR YOUR FELLOW EARTHANS

1. Donate old blankets, towels, and other pieces of cloth to the sick, injured, and orphaned squirrels that the local squirrel sanctuary are taking care of. Karen Heitz will be very happy to take your donations there for you.
2. Stop the bus for the desperate schoolkid trying to catch it (remember, it could always be you!).
3. If you just finished eating your Oreo, don't just surreptitiously drop the packaging. Take the extra three steps to the bin and throw it in there (it'll give you a bit of exercise too). And if you're walking through the park and a plastic bag floats your way, grab it and toss it in the next bin you pass. It barely takes a second.
4. Don't laugh at people for being different. You may think it's just funny teasing; they'll probably think it's hurtful bullying. Find something more worthwhile to do in the breaks (see #3, #7, and #10 for ideas). All it takes is to shut up a little.
5. Next time you want to snap at someone angrily, stop and remember why exactly you're angry. Chances are you'll realise it's not worth wasting energy over (and anyway, wars are just plus-sized arguments. Are you sure you want to start a mini-war?).
6. You might be rather exhausted after a long day of school, extra-curricular activities, and rehearsals, but don't give in to the urge to phone your parents and get them to pick you up. Go by public transport. This does three things: it

saves on the phone bill, it saves your mum or dad the annoyance of having to get up from the nice comfortable sofa (or get distracted from their important work), and it saves the energy and exhaust your car would need.

7. Listen to people. Don't just tune out because you've got music in your ear (and really, you shouldn't be listening to music while someone's talking to you anyway.) or because you've got an English Klausur the next day. If you really listen to what someone's saying, you'll probably find it really interesting, and there's a far greater likelihood of understanding what they're talking about, too.

8. Just had a nice dinner that your mum or dad (or whoever) cooked? Then don't just creep off to your own room. Help clear up! At the very least, put your plate and cutlery in the dishwasher. It doesn't take much. Same goes for dirty clothing (don't wait for whoever's doing the washing to come and get the laundry from your room, bring it to the washing machine!).

9. Use Ecosia as your search engine. Because every time you search, the organisation behind it will protect around 20sqm of rainforest (not just good for the rainforest, good for your breathing too).

10. Smile! It will brighten everyone's day, including yours. :)

*Sophia Kula*



# Entertainment

## WACKY WORDS TO IMPRESS YOUR ENGLISH TEACHER

**august** – [AW-gust] Apart from the month name, it can also be an adjective meaning majestic, noble, or impressive. Comes from the Latin word for venerable or consecrated. Before leaving her chambers, Elisabeth I. assumed an august air that was especially designed to intimidate men who otherwise might not have taken her seriously.

**enfant terrible** – [ehw-FAHW teh-REEB-I] A child that asks awkward questions and repeats everything it hears, to the embarrassment of those who said it. Can also mean any other person who causes embarrassment by not sticking to (or, if you want to sound impressive, adhering to) social norms. A French word. John and Anne were very embarrassed when their enfant terrible loudly announced John's great-aunt with "That old hag is on the phone again!"

**equivocal** – [eh-kwee-VO-kl] Something that's ambiguous or has a double meaning. Can also mean questionable or suspicious. Another Latin word. The attorney didn't notice that the witness' statement was equivocal on a crucial point until it was too late.

**inimical** – [in-IM-i-kl] Hostile or harmful (to someone or something). Has the same Latin root as enemy. The class clown insisted that any sort of homework was inimical to his health.

**intimation** – [in-ti-MAY-shun] An implication or hint. From the Latin word *intimus*, meaning 'inmost' (which is also the root for the word 'intimate'). "Would you like to have dinner with me?" John asked nervously. Anne understood the intimation perfectly, but she still asked teasingly, "Are you asking me out?"

**mordant** – [MORE-dent] Can mean caustic and biting (as

in 'mordant sarcasm'), pungent and smarting, or corrosive and cleansing (like an acid). Also a Latin word. "Ouch!" Anne dropped the test tube when a drop of the mordant liquid fell on her skin and quickly held her hand under a stream of water to wash the substance off.

**octogenarian** – [ohk-toh-dje-NEH-ree-an] A person in their eighties. Yet another Latin word. John felt a certain smugness whenever people refused to believe that he was already an octogenarian; his youthful appearance was finally a good thing rather than a reason to distrust his capabilities.

**polyglot** – [POH-lee-gloht] Person who speaks many languages, or a book translated into many languages. Can be an adjective or a noun. Comes from the Greek *polloi*, meaning many, and *glotta*, meaning tongue. People in the bus often mistake the absent-minded Denglish of JFKS students as polyglot showing-off.

**precocious** – [Preh-KO-shus] An adjective that describes a person who has developed some characteristic or skill earlier than usual. Basically a child genius. From the Latin *prae* (before) and *coquere* (cook). Though Einstein was one of the most brilliant of modern physicists, he was hardly precocious as a child: he regularly failed math at school.

**zucchetto** – [tsoo-KEH-to] The skull-cap worn by priests (black), bishops (purple), cardinals (red), and the pope (white). Comes from the Italian word *zucca* which means gourd or head. *Zucca* is also the root of our word *zucchini*. The stand-up comedian pretending to be the pope quickly had to put a hand on his head to stop his zucchetto from falling down when he bowed to the audience.

Sophia Kula

## MOVIE REVIEW: SCOTT PILGRIM VS. THE WORLD

"Scott Pilgrim vs. the World" is a movie like no other. It takes the typical "boy meets girl" story line to a completely different level, playfully mixing clichés with brilliant new ideas. It's based on a series of graphic novels by Bryan Lee O'Malley, and is directed by Edgar Wright ("Shaun of the Dead", "Hot Fuzz").

Scott Pilgrim (Michael Cera, known from "Juno" and "Superbad") is 22 years old, and lives in Toronto, Canada. He is the bass guitarist of a band called "Sex Bo-bomb", and is dating a 17 year old high-school student. He lives in an apartment with the hilarious, gay Wallace (Kieran Culkin), who gossips about everything in Scott's life with Scott's sister (Anna Kendrick, known from "Up in the Air"). One day he meets Ramona Flowers (Mary Elizabeth Winstead), a cool, pink-haired girl, and falls in love with her instantly. After they become closer, he soon finds out that, in order to date her, he has to defeat her "Seven Evil Exes". There are a lot of factors that add to the movie's appeal, and make it a "must-see".

For starters, "Scott Pilgrim vs. the World" is filmed in a video game style. There are a lot of game references, using typical sounds, images, colors, and settings. For example, a text appears under each new character, introducing him or her. At one point, when Scott needs to use the bathroom, a "pee bar" appears above his head, which diminishes while he pees. Especially the fight sequences are similar to those in a game, with the strength of the opponent being shown, coins being earned for every success, and extra lives being available. It

doesn't matter at all if you actually play video or computer games, the style makes the movie completely special and different, and is extremely entertaining!

Another appeal of the movie is that it's completely hilarious. The dialogue is filled with countless, smart jokes that create a lot of "laughing out loud" situations. The characters themselves are amazingly funny, including Scott's shy, awkward personality while trying to chat up Ramona, his gay roommate, the vegan rockstar (one of the evil exes), and countless others.

The music adds greatly to the movie's charm. The soundtrack is excellent and fits to each scene individually, and the bands at the contests are very entertaining as well.

Some people may find this movie shallow, since it doesn't address problems in the world or have a really deep meaning. I don't agree with this, since I think the movie brilliantly represents parts of today's culture, while being plainly fun!

All in all, from the amazing beginning credits to the last scene, "Scott Pilgrim vs. the World" is different from any movie ever made. In addition to its unique style, it is funny, exciting, and filled with great music. It is equally cool for guys and girls, since the ongoing romance is mixed with action-packed fighting sequences. In my opinion it contains everything you can wish for in a movie, so I strongly recommend everyone to watch it!

Mira Leass

# Entertainment

## AUTUMN

Sitting here on a cuddly sofa and looking out through the spotlessly clean window at the cold and dreary world beyond, a melancholic feeling grips my heart. It is the time in autumn when those cold grey clouds and the biting wind keeps you indoors to yearn for better days of warm sunshine and less layers to be worn. Even during the fall, I often feel like an onion, with its many layers of skin. I, too, need to be wearing these, my blood is often cold and nothing but tea and 20 layers and 3 pairs of socks can keep me from freezing. If you are sitting in a coffee shop with the sun lighting up this Muckpage, then of course you may not understand what cold and dreary stands for. But when you stand on a lonely hill, the wind whipping your hair into your eyes, you may understand what it means to dislike the cold and fall. Nevertheless, while I yearn for the hot summer days where I can run outside in shorts and feel freer than ever during the year, autumn has its little pleasures as a season that one may not notice on cold and dreary days like these. It has its Halloween Festival, which is one of the best each year; it has its magical feel of the cold air and its beautifully coloured leaves. Autumn is colour-wise the most beautiful season of the year, the warm orange and the pink and reds, deep brown green and purple-violet. Sadly, all these things are often missed in day-to-day life. Mornings, it is too dark and too cold to look at the world, and during the day we are in school and have other things on our mind. Weekends, perhaps, we get a chance to glance outside the window, but even then our mind is filled with university applications, homework, MSA, projects, personal statements, research papers, English essays, Muckraker articles, or simply friendships broken to pieces and the latest party that



Picture Courtesy of [www.upload.wikimedia.org](http://www.upload.wikimedia.org)

didn't turn out the way it was supposed to. In our fast paced times, it may seem very useless to take a few minutes to glance at the changing world and the beauty in fall. But why not use the next free days to do so? Why not take a glance, and maybe be inspired by what you see?

Over fall break we visited family in south Germany, in the country side, where one is around nature and cannot miss the beautiful scenery. Here I sit, in grandma's living room; drinking tea and watching tractors pass by my window. Yesterday had been a classical autumn day. We went with the tractor to some fruit trees on the field, and spent the day picking pears and apples from the grassy fields. It felt good, we were around 14 people, it was a very different kind of work from the things we do in Berlin. When I stopped to look up, the whole valley was stretched out in front of me.

Fields and trees and a winding road were set in the landscape in a picturesque arrangement. The smell of autumn was in the air, people around me were talking and working, but otherwise solidarity reigned. It was the world, the landscape, a tree and me. It

was the autumn all around in the air, fields and the sky, and the earth felt so full of things and it made the world seem so complete and whole, and yet so empty. It was a beautiful feeling I had inside, one that only this kind of autumn day can procure. Later on, we raked the leaves in the garden. Is that not also such an autumn-like thing to do? For me it means family, because we used to have a garden where, each fall, the leaves would be raked together. I remember as a small child happily riding along in the wheel barrow, with the smell of crispy leaves and fresh earth all around me. I remember making mountains of colourful leaves, and then collapsing into them, laughing all the way. I remember all the pumpkins we have made, all the Halloweens we had, all the warm soups and decorations. Autumn is a time of celebration, and even in Berlin this becomes clear. You have the Festival of Lights, that is not only something you should go to as a tourist. It is celebrating Berlin, the youth, and the multicultural feel of the city, and the fall that sets Berlin into its beautiful colors.



# Entertainment

## THE HARRY POTTER TRIO. EVOLUTION



Alas, the final Harry Potter film is about to come out and with it comes the end of a great era for many of us. Harry Potter has accompanied us through thick and thin, through the good and bad times. We can remember his first day at Hogwarts as vividly as our own first day at JFK (and yet still hoping that our own letters to



Hogwarts simply got lost in the post). And some of us remember queuing for hours upon hours at midnight, just to be able to spend the night reading them. Yes, Harry Potter certainly has had an impact on our lives. Even now, I find myself asking, "What would Harry do?" or "What would Hermione write here?"



Even so, we could never resist comparing Hogwarts teachers to JFK teachers...I could certainly imagine



Mrs. Galloway as Prof. Sprout, Herr Sgustav as Snape, Dr. Mentan as Trelawney, Dr. Peterson as Lupin, Mrs. Hepner as McGonagal, Mr. Baildon as our very own Hagrid and the Hausmeister as Filch... So I have included a picture of the trio from each movie just to see how they've gone from chubby cheeks to sophisticated icons. How the time flies by!



*Expecto patronum!*

Photo courtesy of [www.twnn.net/](http://www.twnn.net/), [www.kaumie.files.wordpress.com](http://www.kaumie.files.wordpress.com), [www.mugglespace.com/group/thetrio](http://www.mugglespace.com/group/thetrio), [www.images.allmoviephoto.com/](http://www.images.allmoviephoto.com/), [www.sugarcoveredquills.files.wordpress.com/](http://www.sugarcoveredquills.files.wordpress.com/)

# Sudokus!!

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 through 9.

### Easy Sudoku

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

### Hard Sudoku

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



