

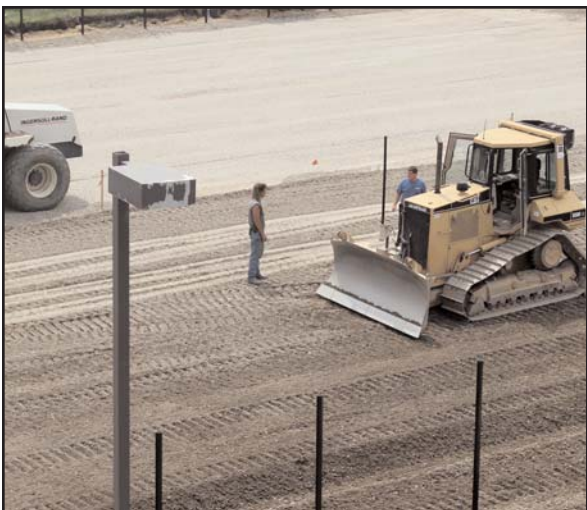
# The Oracle

Edwin O. Smith High School

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*Tennis Courts Under Construction*



*Spectators in the new stands*



*Football players playing their first game on the new turf field*

## Game On! New Athletic Field, Track, Tennis Courts Completed

By Ellen Yang

The E.O. Smith athletic facilities renovation project, a huge undertaking to improve the condition of the sports facilities, shows great progress and promise for the high school community as well as for Regional District itself.

Wei Jia Ma, an E.O. cross country runner, includes his input on the benefits of a new track and field, while Ralph Pemberton, Director of Building and Grounds, gives a detailed chronicle of the aspects of the project that may be a happy surprise to many.

The creation of such a supremely-built facility is not an inexpensive affair. The overall cost was approximately 2.1 million dollars, which covered the track, field, and tennis courts. However, E.O. Smith was in dire need of a renovation. The E.O. Track team's 2010 t-shirts even read, "Trackless!" in protest of a rickety running track that was too dangerous for the hosting of home meets, due to its hazardous ditches that could ruin a contestant's season, or future seasons.

Lucky for the E.O. Smith runners, a brand new polyurethane track will be all theirs shortly. There is an eight-lane straightaway, connecting to a six-lane track, all of which is now painted a resplendent red. This track will not only benefit the track team, but also the physical education classes of E.O. Smith, who now will have a much-improved area for the use of fitness testing.

Wei Jia Ma, a junior and a runner at E.O. Smith, truly finds the project to be a good investment. "It's comparable, if not better, than the UCONN track," he says. "It will greatly reduce injuries as well as provide a great environment for everyone on track, as well as physical education. As you may know, the mile test assessment must be taken by everyone; it will be great to practice on such a nice asset to the E.O. Smith community."

The track is one significant division of the renovation enterprise, but the field is just as important. Instead of installing a grass field that could easily be ruined and therefore be quite costly to maintain, the project architect decided on a synthetic grass. This is a much more sensible decision, in that it will not get muddy, and will always remain beautiful without fertilizer or irrigation.

This development of a more efficient field will be extremely useful to the football, soccer, and field



*The New E.O. Smith Sports Outdoor Facility is ready for action!*

hockey teams. The football and soccer lines are sewn into the field in order to smoothly maintain lasting boundaries, whereas field hockey lines will be painted on. With this new field, the E.O. Smith soccer and field hockey teams can more conveniently choose to play at either Farrell Fields, located by the Storrs Post Office or on the synthetic field.

The tennis courts are also benefiting from this renovation. Previously, six courts were in use, and a huge number of cracks prevented fair play or effective practice. They were caused by a badly-installed court base, which eroded over the years and dispatched the usefulness of the tennis courts. However, with this new affair, all the old tennis courts have been ripped out and a new base resurfaced. On this base, there will be seven tennis courts which will serve both regular lines, as well as kid's lines, for both traditional and junior play.

The nearby Mansfield Community Center received a grant which paid for a brand new tennis fence, as well as the extra lines. The courts will be painted blue and green in mid-October, and new tennis nets will be put up in the spring.

As a bonus to the project, Mr. Robichaud, the E.O. Smith athletics director, will be purchasing all new equipment for the sports that will be using the track, field, and tennis courts. These will include high jump pads, new tennis nets, a new scoreboard, and much more. A new 500 seat bleacher system has also been included in the project for watching the games and augmenting school spirit.

This will be a new chapter for E.O. Smith, with new sports opportunities and a superb addition to the E.O. environment! By providing high quality facilities it is expected that they will last a long time and provide an outstanding value to both the students and health conscience members of the school district.

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# E.O. Smith Band Represents in Eighth Annual 'Celebrating Mansfield' Parade

By Josh Stern

In a song from *The Music Man*, "Seventy-six trombones led the big parade, with a hundred and ten cornets close at hand." There weren't quite



*The E.O. Smith Marching Band at the parade*

that many trombones and cornets in the Celebrating Mansfield Parade on Sunday, September 25, 2011, but there were a lot of participants—over 550, according to Elizabeth Paterson, Mayor of Mansfield. The parade is part of Mansfield's annual Festival on the Green, which was held for the eighth time this year. It was the idea of the Mansfield Downtown Partnership—"an independent, non-profit organization [composed] of the Town of Mansfield, the University of Connecticut, and individual business members and residents" (according to the official Mansfield website)—to develop a downtown Storrs area for the first time.

"It really started out eight years ago as a way to

draw attention to the Storrs Town Center, and now that the Town Center has broken ground and is under construction...there's a real sense of excitement," says volunteer Dee Goodrich.

As for the parade itself, it originated with small children on their bicycles leading people into the parade grounds, and it has since become Mansfield's biggest parade—but at only two blocks, it is definitely not Mansfield's longest. It begins at the Storrs Post Office, makes a right onto Storrs Road, turns left onto Bolton Road, and comes to a stop in the E.O. Smith parking lot.

Leading the parade this year were a police car, flag carriers,

and Brownie Troop 61083. The guests of honor included Grand Marshall David Woods, UCONN's Dean of Fine Arts; Mayor Paterson; UCONN's new president, Susan Herbst; Secretary of State Denise Merrill; and State Representative Greg Haddad. Students from Villari's Martial Arts, bicyclists, and fire trucks were also to be seen, as were puppets from the Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry. Arriving in the parking lot, the parade was greeted with the first verse and chorus of Petula Clark's 1965 hit

"Downtown."

Two ensembles provided musical entertainment. UCONN's "Pride of Connecticut" Marching Band brought up the rear and continued to give spectacular performances in the parking lot, including energizing renditions of Ke\$ha's "We R Who We R" and Paula Abdul's "Cold Hearted."

Participating for the first time this year was the E.O. Smith Marching Band, under the direction of Aaron S. Burgess. The entire ensemble was not there: the freshmen were exempt from the performance because it was so close to the beginning of the year, and several of the upperclassmen could not make the parade due to other obligations. However, from the point of view of EOS senior and Ensemble Manager Rachel Gagnon, the band's participation was a success.

"As a whole we did pretty well marching...and I think that getting the opportunity to listen to the UCONN marching band was a great experience," says Gagnon. "I am looking forward to when we all march together as a group on Memorial Day."



*Community members on the EOS "green" waiting for the parade*

During the course of the parade, the EOS band played "You're A Grand Old Flag" and "This Is My Country" twice each. The drum line, directed by EOS alumnus David Keplesky, filled in between the songs with various cadences.

Following the parade, spectators advanced to the "green" (the EOS parking lot) on which the festival is held. Here they enjoyed everything from pottery demonstrations to pony rides, with plenty of food stands providing a pleasant aroma and the unique brass/accordion combo 'Slavic Soul Party' supplying musical entertainment.

Mr. Burgess feels very strongly about the EOS band's participation: "Parading is an important part of the history of wind bands. This parade was a great opportunity to perform early on in the school year, and it is extremely important for the band to have a strong presence in the community." The band will be performing in the parade again next year and, most likely, many times thereafter.



*The UConn Marching Band at the parade*



*The Good Life in the Senior Lounge.*

# New Bullying and Prevention Policy.....What's New and Do You Know?

By William Zhang

Here at E. O. Smith, the general vibe is usually that students are better regarding matters of discipline than elsewhere. The school climate isn't by and large one that inhibits learning, and we don't often make headlines beyond all the positive things the school permits. Why is this? Surely the school *Bullying and Prevention Policy* has something to do with this, right? The policy was recently revised, which, naturally, everybody must know. After all, we all read the hefty student handbook. Or perhaps not everyone does. Or perhaps only the rare few do. Come to think of it, does anyone actually know how the policy reads? Be honest.

The policy is rather thorough on bullying, and includes things such as cyberbullying online. Bullying, for the purposes of the new policy adopted September 6, 2011, is defined as:

*the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same school district, or a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at another student attending school in the same school district, that:*

- 1) *causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student's property;*
- 2) *places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property;*
- 3) *creates a hostile environment at school for such student;*
- 4) *infringes on the rights of such student at school; or*
- 5) *substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.*

*Bullying shall include, but not be limited to, a written, verbal or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics. (Source: Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy, Region #19 Board of Education)*

Where does bullying take place? While it may seem like that should be addressed on school grounds, or at school events only, that's not actually the case. With students so often communicating through different forms of media, bullying can take place almost anywhere; and that means the school may need to address it no matter where it happens. The policy states that:

*the Board expressly prohibits any form of bullying behavior on school grounds; at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program, whether on or off school grounds; at a school bus stop; on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education; or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by Board of Education.*

The Board also prohibits off campus bullying under these circumstances:

When the off-campus bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the victim;  
When the off-campus bullying infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or  
When the off-campus bullying substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of E.O. Smith High School.

Under the current policy, staff members are required to report any bullying incidents they see to the administration, no later than the end of the next school day from said incident. Also, both sides of such a sad story would be informed. Both the bully, and the bullied, would be fully assured of where things stand, along with their families. Our school policy is up to date, and most importantly understands that reporting an act of bullying may not endear one to their peers. Fortunately, E. O. Smith policy states that anonymous reports of bullying are possible, and that steps must be taken to ensure that no discrimination or harm comes to those who assist with reporting or investigations of bullying.

E. O. Smith's bullying policy is modernized, however it isn't perfect. For instance, while a student can report bullying anonymously, disciplinary action cannot be taken based on *only* an anonymous report. This means that regardless of whether a bully is found, such a bully might not be prosecuted. The question is, how guilty does someone need to be?

Keep reading to stay up to date with information on one of our most important policies. Future articles will detail how to report an incident of bullying, how to act as an ally, how to protect oneself online and also will delve deeper into the perceptions and attitudes of E.O. Smith students and staff surrounding this important issue.

## Storrs Regional FFA wins at Eastern States Exposition's FFA Floral Design Contest

Students from E. O. Smith High School's Agricultural Education Program entered the Northeast Regional FFA Floral Design Contest hosted at Eastern States Exposition in Agawam MA. The theme for the event was Winter Holiday. This multi-state competition was displayed in the Farm-O-Rama Building during the fair.

- 1<sup>st</sup> Place - Chris Pongoh of N. Windham
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place - Joshua LeBaron of Windham
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Place - Alicia Gusan of Willimantic
- 7<sup>th</sup> Place - Katie Zak of Coventry
- 9<sup>th</sup> Place - Kylie Crabtree of N. Windham
- 12<sup>th</sup> Place - Emily Dennis of N. Windham
- 13<sup>th</sup> Place - Karen Vazquez of Willimantic



*Chris Pongoh*



*Josh LeBaron*



*Alicia Gusan*

# OS School Groups

## Depot Update Real World Learning In Action

By Amber Barr

There are many new faces at the Depot Campus this school year. Fifteen sophomores filled the vacant spots that were left by last year's graduating class of twelve students. Along with the new faces, new relationships have formed. Many of the students feel like they are part of a community now - The Depot community. No student is left in the dark. We all participate in some way to contribute to the culture here. This year, two students proposed the idea of making a Depot student council. This new initiative goes to show how the campus environment is developing and improving more every year. The student council will help plan events such as dances, field trips and community service, as well as openly communicate with the Depot staff.

This year has had a wonderful start! Every student has been getting out into the real world in some way. Even though school only started in September, we have learned a lot. School is looked at in a totally different perspective for many of the new students, including myself. Rather than dreading the week, most of us look forward to coming here. The environment is open and friendly. It is easy to be yourself here, especially because of the amount of students. There is no hiding at Depot!! We all get individual attention. Instead of looking at the teachers (advisors) as having full control over our education, we get to take some ownership over what we want to learn. Advisors guide us through it and give us support. We make our own decisions on what we would like to learn throughout the year. Each student develops their own individualized learning plan that includes learning goals, resources, assessments and deadlines. This working document takes the place of a traditional course syllabus.

The non-traditional learning environment at the Depot is much different than the one at E.O Smith. Much of our learning takes place outside of the school building. Volunteer work is a big part of the real world experience here. Every student is expected to get out into the community in some way. Some of us have already visited the Covenant Soup Kitchen in Willimantic to help prepare food, clean up and serve food to those in need; the Depot sends a group every Wednesday, so that all students will have the opportunity to contribute.

Students have also generated other ideas for volunteer work, such as the Windham Area Interfaith Ministry (WAIM). This is a charitable organization in Willimantic that helps and serves people in need, and students from the Depot will be working with them every Tuesday and Thursday from now until the holidays. Red Tar Farms has also come into discussion for those who like to work with animals. This is a therapeutic horse farm

in Stafford, and one advisory will spend a full day there soon. Joshua's Trust is a local organization, whose mission is to preserve land, and we have done trail maintenance with them. One Advisory is working on a Water Quality Monitoring Project with the Last Green Valley, Willimantic River Alliance, and the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. They collected organisms from the Cedar Swamp stream and identified and preserved them to send off to a lab in order to find out how clean the water is in the area.

Internships are a big part of our real world learning experiences and education at the Depot. Every Tuesday and Thursday each student is expected to have an internship with a mentor. Students get to take control over what kind of environment they would like to be in and what interests them. Personally, I have an internship at Kid's Kingdom daycare in Willington. Other internships include bakeries, dining halls, excavators, and salons. A lot of the work we do there is exploring our interests and learning through actual "Real-World Learning" experiences rather than text books. Having the trust of our advisors to get where we need it be is great; we are learning independent work skills in addition to the individualized content of each setting. Here is a recent list of where Depot students are interning this fall:

River LeFebvre - Willimantic Food Co-op  
Randy Barclay - Wrana Excavation  
Taylor Deschene - WHUS radio, Storrs  
Amber Barr - Kid's Kingdom Daycare  
Devin Vigue - multiple job shadows at local bike shops  
Marie Cyr - UCONN bakery  
Tyler Brothers - Lutz Children's Museum  
Paige Mendenhall - Jewels Verne jewelers  
Kayla Thornhill - His & Hers Elegant Edge Salon  
Ali Grant - Evergreen Health Care Center  
Megan Shain - Preschool of the Arts & Tolland Elementary School  
Kurdt Polttila - Flying Dragon Farms  
Miah Dunphy - Goodwin Elementary School  
Marcus LaGuardia - Red Tar Farms  
Bill Thorne - Logistics Computer Solutions  
Megan Flanagan - UCONN Dining Services  
David Maturo - Cabinet and Finish Carpentry  
Brianna Harmon - Skylights Salon  
Eric Ouimette - Sports Mogul Video Games

## Spanish Exchange EOS Students Host Spaniards, Will Visit Spain in April

By Stephanie Diamond & Anna Hoyle

On September 3rd, seventeen students and one teacher arrived from the town of Burgos, located in Northern Spain. They were met by an equally as excited group of American students at Bradley Airport. Due to Hurricane Irene, the Spaniards arrived during the end of our summer vacation, and the American students missed the first day of school for a team-building field trip called Empower. At Empower, the 34 students climbed up large trees, swung on ropes, and zip-lined many feet up off the ground, all in the pouring rain.

While the American students adjusted to the new year in school, the Spaniards did as well. They spent several days following their American counterparts to classes, as well as playing a fair amount of ping-pong in the cafeteria. During the day, the Spanish students also went on many day trips to get a flavor of Connecticut and New England life. Their trips included visits to the Mark Twain house, the Pequot Museum, and the Basketball Hall of Fame. The students also enjoyed local activities like a tour of UCONN, including an ice cream break at the Dairy Bar. The girls especially enjoyed shopping at the Buckland Mall; almost every one of them returned to Spain with a new pair of Converse sneakers.

One Thursday, all thirty-four kids, plus chaperones, went on a trip to New York City. While in the city, the students, guided by our fearless leader Sra. Meshanic, climbed the Statue of Liberty and the Empire State Building. It was a great day for everyone, especially the Spanish students who were experiencing New York City for the first time.

During the three weeks of their stay, the Spaniards discovered a love for American pizza, E.O. Smith soccer games, and Starbucks coffee. Over the course of the trip, a few parties were thrown which brought out the Spaniards' love of singing and dancing. The birthday of one student, Noelia, was celebrated while she was still in the United States, which introduced us to Spanish birthday customs, such as pinching the birthday boy or girl.

The Friday the Spanish students left was both a sad and exciting day for the whole group. Everyone cried as the Spaniards boarded their bus and we all said our final goodbyes. However, they left us with the happy thought of meeting up again in April when the Americans visit Spain!



**E.O. Smith & Spanish exchange students visit NYC!**  
*E.O. Smith students participating in the Spanish Exchange 2011 are: Giulia Bambara, Carder Chatay, Vicki Chilinski, Stephanie Diamond, Paul Farence, Anna Hoyle, Lauren Hunley, Ashley Klosa, Kim Konieczny, Todd Lambert, Matt Marcellino, Sara McNeal, Olivia Murphy, Annie Sung, Summer Webster, and Claire Westa*



*A Few Depot Students with a mentor out in the community*

# Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange Scholarship

## *E.O. Smith Students describe their experience in Germany*

By Genevieve Rigler and Zachary Pociask and Edited by Frau Smith

Last spring, Zachary Pociask (Class of 2011) and Genevieve Rigler had the honored distinction of receiving the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange Scholarship. Out of hundreds who applied, only a few won these prestigious awards, which is now affording them an all-expense paid exchange year in Germany. Zach was placed with a host family outside of Dortmund, Germany in the western part of the country. Genevieve was placed with a host family in Celle, Germany, not far from Hannover in the north. Each student has been living in Germany since the beginning of September, and they have sent back news of their life and impressions of Germany thus far:

Zach Pociask on his arrival in Germany:

"The very first day was one of the most amazing days of my life. I arrived in the Frankfurt am Main airport with the other AFS-USA students (all 91 of us), and although I had to wait for hours for my train to come to take me to Dortmund, I spent that time talking with kids from all over the world. That's not something many people get to do, and I felt extremely privileged to have had that opportunity. The train ride was on the Frankfurt to Cologne high speed rail line, and we spent most of the one and a half hours travelling at around 180 miles per hour through beautiful cityscapes and countryside. The AFS-Germany volunteers were very friendly and filled us in on all sorts of things we needed to know about where we were going to be living. Upon arrival in Dortmund, we were warmly greeted by our host families, and we have all been in close contact ever since."

Genevieve Rigler on adjusting to the food, family and culture:

"It is my third week in Germany and it has been a blast. Definitely having some problems with indulging in chocolate and cheese though...I don't understand how thin these people are considering how much bread and cheese they eat...for breakfast and dinner every day!!

Nevertheless, the language is coming along great, which is the most important thing. I have been going to language camp called Volkshauptschule in Celle with ten other students from the New England region. I'm living in

Celle with a temporary host family, but will be moving to my permanent host family soon (and



*Genevieve Rigler in Germany*

will stay there for the next nine months). I don't know who they are yet, but that's the least thing I'm concerned about. I have two host brothers in this family, one is fifteen and the other is fourteen. The older sibling is very shy, and the younger is very good at table tennis and thinks he is too cool for me. So I've been playing with the seven year old daughter, but that is how I've learned most of my simple German! The clothing here is incredibly expensive...it's like buying a piece of artwork. Lots of scarves and blazers for both men and women. They believe you will get sick if don't wear a scarf while biking, or walking."

Zachary Pociask on German school and students' views on America:

"The school was very similar to my high school experience in the U.S. My first class was an English class, and the topic was concerning different things about the U.S. and the image Germans have in their minds when they hear terms like 'Manifest Destiny, Independence Day, Frontier, Multiculturalism,' and others. It was also the day after the tenth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, so in both that class and elsewhere in the school there were discussions, newspapers, magazines, etc. about 9/11 and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Additionally, many kids and adults wear T-shirts with random things like 'California University' or 'Missouri High School-Go Wildbucks!' to try and look 'more like an American.' It's a bit weird, but I'm getting used to it. I've told a few people that I come from the U.S., and most of them smiled when I told them.

I've always been questioned about different things in the U.S. and what it's like in Connecticut, and every now and then I have to tell a person that the U.S. is not like what they see on MTV or in American movies."

Genevieve Rigler on the directness of Germans:

"Differences I've noticed so far? Interactions between people. The Germans I've spoken with tend to think that American relationships are hollow, and overfriendly. I think quite contrarily. American relationships are genuine. We have no problem being friendly. What I think the Germans are referring to is the duration of the 'American friendliness', which tends to fade after time, whereas German relationships are

for life. I have yet to make a relationship like that, naturally is only the third day. Maybe I bring out the more

gregarious side of people, but so far people in my class have been super friendly and they invite me places. In other words, I'm never alone, which is one of the biggest fears

for an exchange student. Germans are indeed very forward, which is nice, because no one has to waste time and beat around the bush when you want to give constructive criticism."

Zachary Pociask on what he has seen of the country so far:

"I've seen a lot of interesting things in Dortmund. The city was once the steel capital of Europe, so there are a few old, massive steel mills left dormant in odd places of the city. The city center is loaded

with shops, restaurants and things to do, and the fact that it's all easily accessible by the U-Bahn (subway) and buses makes it all the more amazing. I've been to a Heavy Metal store and a Heavy Metal bar, a coal mining museum, a massive cemetery in Bochum, two AFS meetings (both incredibly fun), and an amazingly beautiful farm in a town called Werland."

Genevieve on German cuisine:

"Breakfast and dinner here is bread, cheese, and sliced meat, veggies, mild Greek cucumber sauce, and shaved lamb stuffed into a pita pocket. And don't forget for dessert: Eiskaffee, two scoops of vanilla ice cream in coffee with whip cream and espresso drizzle. Life is especially yummy when visiting the host grandparents: Munching on Kaffee und Kuchen (coffee and cake) in their little piece of property nestled between the potato fields."

On the whole, both students are thrilled with their experiences they have had in the two short



*Zachary Pociask with a view of a German railway*

months they have been living in Germany. Eight more months of adventures still lay ahead of them, replete with the trials and tribulations of acclimating to the German school system, enjoying/surviving the holidays away from friends and family and using the long winter months to perfect their German language skills.



*Zach and his host German father*

## E.O. Smith German Exchange 2011:

# E.O. Students visit Germany

By Lisa Morton

Our trip to Germany was spectacular! The first couple of days we spent in Berlin were filled with many new things. Everything led to a new adventure. While learning more about Germany, we also learned new things about each other. We soon became a family and with our "parents", Frau Smith and Mrs. Lovejoy, we discovered the beauties of Germany. In groups of four, we all got the chance to lead one another around the beautiful city of Berlin. My favorite excursion would have to be the Berlin Wall art that was preserved for all to see, part of an exhibition called the East Side Gallery. On the first day we went to the Sony Center, near Potsdamer Platz. It was full of people because of the premier of Transformers 3



*In Front of the Brandenburg Gate*

that took place on the night of our arrival. We got our first taste of Germany. Whether it was shopping or eating ice cream in Germany, all of it felt exhilarating. The next day we went to the concentration camp, Sachsenhausen, where they used to train the recruits. There was a calm that made almost everyone silent. To be in the place where all these horrors took place opened our eyes and our hearts. The camp had the terrible distinction of being one of the eastern camps that had been reopened between 1955 and 1965. An additional 12,000 people lost their lives there (mostly ex-Nazis and enemies of the Soviet state). But Sachsenhausen was also the camp used during WWII for counterfeiting foreign money. The British pound was successfully created there, and the prisoners, under the direction of the Nazis, were on the brink of successfully duplicating the American dollar when the war came to an end.

Berlin was also the city where we saw the Wilhelm Gedächtnis Kirche, sort of. This church had its top blown off in WWII, and was left in this condition as a type of memorial. Yet even this we did not "see" because the church was under construction, the collapse of the church finally imminent. The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe was also a moving experience, as we all wandered through the 2,711 concrete slabs of varying sizes, all tilting and leaning in slightly askew directions. Directly in the hubbub of downtown, in the middle of this memorial, it is eerily quiet, provoking thought and reflection on the realities

of the Holocaust.

Leipzig, our second city, was very busy--even at night one could hear the city still buzzing with life. In this city we experienced a ton of food. We chose one of over a hundred variations of schnitzel at a restaurant called Schnitzel Culture, and had a similar experience at Kartoffelhaus No.1, where we chose from a myriad of dishes all featuring the humble potato. We also saw the famous Nikolai Church in Leipzig. This is where protestors from the DDR (Former East Germany-communist side of Germany) came to protest, seeking reunification and freedom of travel and speech. It began on a Monday night in 1989 with merely a few local activists and escalated each subsequent Monday until finally hundreds of

thousands took to the streets. The protest then spread to East Berlin and other large cities in the east. Our tour guide had grown up in the DDR until the age of seven, when the Wall fell. But like many East Germans, the Stasi (secret police) had a file on him, despite his youth. He had been deemed a possible enemy of the state because, believe it or not, his mother was learning Danish. He told us how he was so amazed when they got to go to the West for the first time. His family in the West had all kinds of technology that he had never seen before, along

with things like Coca Cola and Captain Crunch.

Then, finally after less than a week in Germany, but more than six months waiting, we saw our host partners. From the first day we arrived in Emmendingen we had some where to hang out and someone to meet. It felt like how a little kid imagines their high school life, being able to go where you want, when you want, and doing it with your friends around you. With our new families and friends we went to the Vogtsbauernhöfe, their version of Sturbridge Village, the city of Freiburg, Europa Park (like our Six Flags) and many other day trips. We made presentations in the school (the Goethe Gymnasium),



*At the Sony Center*

observed classes and spent time on the weekends and evenings with our new families. By the end, even at the farewell party, the reality of our impending departure didn't sink in.

The goodbye really sank in at the airport when our flight got cancelled. This had not been our first run-in with travel complications. After seven hours in the airport, fear of being split up, and then rerouted back to Berlin for an additional night, we finally were on route the following day. On the plane a random person

had a seizure and the plane dropped scarily, several times. But everything went back to normal within a matter of minutes, the person regained consciousness, the plane kept flying, and snacks were passed out. Everyone cheered as we landed at J.F.K Airport. Disaster was averted yet again. As a group we were finished with dealing with planes, trains and automobiles-and German busses!

Though we were all glad to be home, most of us already have plans to go back. Genevieve Rigler and Zach Pociask are already in Germany for the year. Carly Fox and Alicia Kelly are planning to apply for the Congress-Bundestag Exchange scholarship this year. Mostly everyone has an invite from the host families to come back and stay for a while. We all look forward to our further journeys and hope that one day we can see Germany again.



*E.O. Smith students in front of the Reichstag*

# The Sports Oracle

## Fall Sports Focus

By Brian Cheney

### **Football:**

**Record: 0-5**

Losses: Farmington, Wethersfield, Hartford Public, Bristol Eastern, East Hartford

It's been a rough first half of the season for the E.O. Smith football team as they have not been living up to their pre-season expectations. They've been having trouble closing out games in the late second half with three of their five losses coming in the third quarter or later. The second half of the schedule looks promising for the Panthers as they start to play more conference opponents such as RHAM, Fermi, and arch rival Tolland on Thanksgiving.

### **Boys Soccer:**

**Record: 9-3-3**

Wins: Rockville, Rocky Hill, Fermi, Bloomfield, Tolland, Rockville, Hartford Public

Losses: Glastonbury, Rocky Hill, Fermi,

Ties: Farmington, Rham, Hartford Public

The Boys Soccer team had big expectations for this season as they looked to improve on the quarterfinal loss in last year's state tournament against Hall. It's been somewhat of a shaky season with a disappointing tie to Hartford Public, and losses to LL opponent Glastonbury, and conference opponent Rocky Hill. They concluded their 2011 regular season campaign with a game against arch rival Tolland with a 1-0 win. They won their first state tournament game versus Wilcox Tech, but lost in the second round to Avon, 2-1.

### **Girls Soccer:**

**Record: 9-7-1**

Wins: Rockville, Fermi, Hartford Public, Bloomfield, Rockville, RHAM, Fermi, Bloomfield, North Haven  
Losses: Simsbury, Rocky Hill, Tolland, East Catholic, Rocky Hill, Tolland, Avon

Ties: Rham

The Girls soccer team was looking to make it into the state tournament, as it requires an overall record of over .400 for the regular season. The Lady Panthers were successful, and won their first state tournament round versus North Haven, but lost in the second round to Avon in penalty kicks.

### **Volleyball:**

**Record: 13-6**

Wins: Rockville, Windham, Hartford Public, Conard, Fermi, Bloomfield, Rockville, Manchester, Windsor, Fermi, Hartford Public, Bloomfield, Tolland  
Losses: Rocky Hill, Rham, Tolland, Rocky Hill, RHAM

The Girls Volleyball team lost four tough games against four-time defending state champion Rham, arch rival Tolland in a five game match, and also to Rocky Hill twice, who features the number one player in the state. But, they have been dominating teams regardless, with all of their wins being by a 3-0 margin. The Lady Panthers qualified early on for the 2011 state tournament, with a BYE for the first round, but lost to Fitch, 3-2 in the second round.

### **Field Hockey:**

**Final Record: 7-10**

Wins: Newington, Norwich Free Academy, Southington, Wethersfield, Killingly, Maloney, Fermi  
The Varsity Field Hockey team finished up their season by qualifying for the first round of the State Tournament. They played a strong game versus Pomperaug, but unfortunately lost in the pouring rain on the new turf field 1-0. The team showed their strength with their rank of Second Place in their Class M League by season end.

By Alicia Kelley

### **Girls Swim Team:**

The swim team has had an interesting season, but all in all we managed to make the most out of it. This is the closest that the team has been for many years, with no inner bickering or drama, just a mutual love to swim. We had a rough season, but still managed to come out with a record better than last year. The swim team has high hopes for next year, especially with a lot of new talented freshmen that joined the team this year.



*Senior Darron McCall makes a play during the soccer team's first game on the new turf field. The team lost the game to Fermi, but went on to defeat Tolland and win its first state tournament game 6-0 over Wilcox Tech on the home pitch.*



*Freshman Syie Prince "kicks off" a new era in the Panthers' first home game on the new turf. The team rose to the occasion, defeating Bulkeley High for their first win of the season.*



### **Boys Cross Country:**

**Overall Record: 10-5**

The Boys Cross Country Team finished a strong season with several wins, earning them a standing of Fourth Place in their Class L League. Their team placed fourth at the Windham Haddad Invitational, and third at the Wickham Invitational Seeded Race. At the Woods Trial Run in Thetford, VT, the runners finished with two First Place and three Second Place races.

### **Girls Cross Country:**

**Team Record: 16-1**

**CCC East: 13-1**

The Girls Cross Country Team completed a very strong season tying with Tolland as East Division Conference Champions. They also earned 17th Place at the State Open, and Third Place in their Class L League.

# The Spotlight

## The Art of the Foot and Fist

By Lisa Morton

"When it's all or nothing and nothing is NOT an option." (Waz). Griffin Beland, senior at EO Smith is a nationally ranked taekwondo artist. He spends most of his time outside of school working on this highly developed form of defense. It's a combination of thinking on the spot, using skillful combinations, and executing them in flawless fashion. Even before he entered high school he placed highly in competitions. After working harder and harder and getting better and better these are just some of the competitions he's won since he entered high school:

2011 Junior National Team Member (Jr. Light)  
 2011 Junior National Team Trials (Jr. Light): 1st  
 2011 USAT Junior Olympics (Jr. Light): SILVER  
 2011 USAT Buffalo National Qualifier (Sr. Fly): GOLD  
 2011 USAT Buffalo National Qualifier (Jr. Light): GOLD

2010 New York State Championship (Sr. Fly): BRONZE  
 2010 New York State Championship (Jr. Light): GOLD

2009 USAT Junior National Team Trials (Jr. Fly): 3rd  
 2009 USAT Junior Olympics (Jr. Fly): BRONZE  
 2009 USAT Buffalo National Qualifier: BRONZE  
 2008 U.S. Cup: SILVER  
 2008 New York State Championship: GOLD  
 2008 AAU Jr. Nationals: SILVER  
 2008 AAU Jr. Nationals Qualifier: GOLD" (USA Taekwondo).



**Griffin Beland and his team at Junior Nationals 2011**



**Griffin Beland in action .**

His coach, Alvaro Mendez, inspires him to become even better. His favorite person to watch doing taekwondo is Servet Tazegul because "he just keeps going." according to Beland. His passion for taekwondo was started by a family friend who first introduced him to this whole different world. After this he started training

with his sports taekwondo coach, Mendez. So far he's been studying for ten years.

Taekwondo is the most systematic and scientific form of martial arts. For 5000 years people have been studying its skills. Taekwondo means "to put fists under control". Doing taekwondo means that you have to have an active brain. You have to constantly be thinking of new combinations and ways to execute them.

The reason why Griffin loves this world of taekwondo is because of the psychological and physical aspects. He has the drive to

keep getting better and keep learning more.

Griffin was slated to compete for the Junior National Team in the Pan American games, in Guadalajara, Mexico, on October 15th -October 18th . Good Luck to Griffin and best wishes that your senior year is an amazing one!

## Blomstrann Earns 2011 National Coach of the Year

By Christian Schirmer

A recognizable face to many of you who have taken one of his science courses or are involved in soccer, Mr. John Blomstrann has won the National Coach of the Year award for boys soccer through the NHSACA(National High School Athletic Coaches Association). This is



**Coach Blomstrann in his classroom 2011**

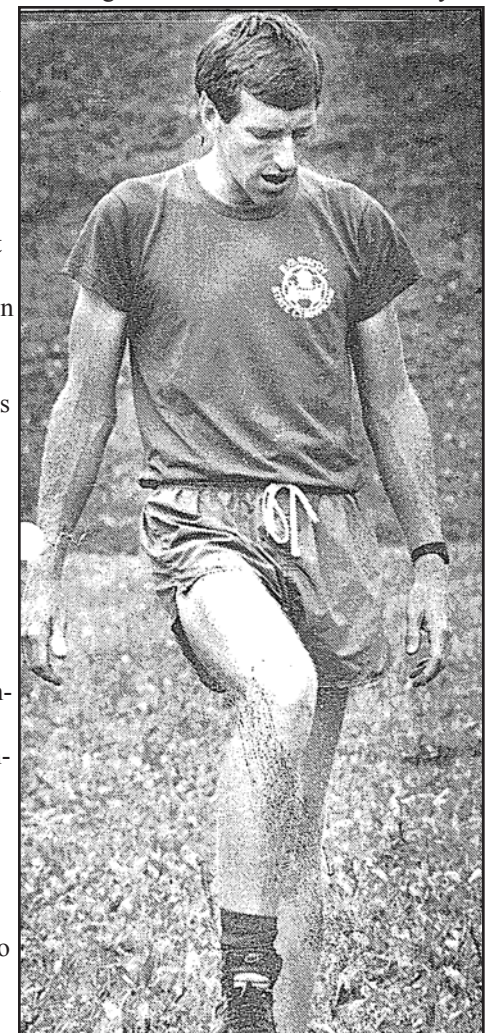
level, nominees must have been head coach of a sport for the preceding five years, be a CHSCA(Connecticut High School Coaches Association) member for at least five years, and not have won the award yet. Nominees are evaluated according to their demonstration of good ethics and professionalism, coaching experience, team win/loss record, the caliber of their opponents, and tournament performance. If selected to move on to the next level, they compete against nominees from other Region 1(New England) states. From this point, eight regional winners are selected from across the country; Mr. Blomstrann has won the Region 1 award three times. From here, a national winner is selected from the eight regional finalists; this year, Blomstrann won at the national level.

In an interview, Blomstrann states "It's an honor for sure, but based upon longevity to a degree - you have to be around for a long time before you would even get nominated for the award," and he goes on to say, "I view it as a way to show every team's accomplishments over the years - we've had a lot of successful teams that I've been very proud of."

Some students who have older siblings that attended E.O. Smith may

know that Mr. Blomstrann also served as E.O. Smith's Athletic Director for over ten years. Our current Athletic Director, Steve Robichaud speaks about his predecessor and this honor: "Coach Blomstrann has stood the test of time, which means his teams have been successful on a consistent basis over a significant period of time. He understands the game, teaches it well and is a master strategist. The soccer tradition at E.O. Smith High School is recognized for its excellence and integrity. The National Coach of the Year Award clearly demonstrates that Coach Blomstrann is one of the finest coaches in the country."

Blomstrann has been coaching at E.O. Smith for 32 years, and plans to continue coaching until retirement. He also coached sub-varsity at UCONN after playing for them, and was introduced into the Connecticut Soccer Hall of Fame just two years ago.



**Coach Blomstrann on the field in 1986**

not, however, his first accolade as a coach. To be recognized at this national level, one must first win state and regional level awards.

Starting off at state

# E. O. Smith Teacher of the YEAR!

## Mrs. Palmberg

# Over the Hills and Through the Woods to E.O. Smith came Mr. Bayne



By William Zhang

This year's E.O. Smith Teacher of the Year is Mrs. Palmberg, who teaches Calculus, and has taught Geometry (her favorite!) and Algebra for over twenty-two years here at E.O. Smith. Students and teachers alike had better prepare to take notes if they want to keep up with a star teacher. All kidding aside, Mrs. Palmberg posts most class notes on her eboard, which is notable in that it saves her students from developing calluses from excessive writing, as well as broken pencil tips—a change from the typical math course.

As might be deduced from the title itself, Mrs. Palmberg was selected for her prestigious new title for her innovative style, which could be described as fairly “hands on”. To sit in Mrs. Palmberg's room is go on a technological adventure into the world of math. What immediately stands out is the resident Smartboard at the center of the room, powered up and flashing with latent math problems, just waiting to be solved, proved, or graphed. Then as the class progresses, the usually laborious work of solving is mitigated by the use of Sentios, small handheld number pads which can be used by a whole class simultaneously to submit answers anonymously. It's certainly the most technologically advanced class I've ever been in,

including advanced computer sciences.

When asked how she felt about receiving the prestigious award, Mrs. Palmberg noted that she felt “excited and honored”, as one might expect. When posed a tougher question, such as how she promotes innovative technology inclusion in the classroom, she replied that she gladly runs technology workshops for teachers in the building. Eboards and Smartboards are sometimes not fully integrated into all classes, so her expertise in the area of technology is inspiring for her students and colleagues alike. Mrs. Veronneau, head of the math department praises, “Her eagerness to learn is a model for all students,” and indeed when asked about her style, Mrs. Palmberg replied, “Teaching is a two way process”. Thomas Chadwick raved about her Advanced Calculus class, “Mrs. Palmberg is the most fun-loving teacher I've had; she is always so excited about teaching us, and it makes me excited to learn what she's talking about! I love Calculus because of her!” Another student also had a positive remark, “She is an awesome teacher who is enthusiastic about Calculus!”



By Lisa Morton

Mr. Steven Bayne is one of six new faculty members at our school this year. He is E.O. Smith's new Director of Special Services. After working in California for ten years, he moved to Connecticut because all his family was out here in the East, and his three kids never got to see their family very often. During his professional years in California as a school psychologist, he noted that in the school systems he worked in there, each classroom had more than twice as many kids and a lot more violence compared to what he sees here at E.O. Smith. He said he is impressed at EO Smith's dedication to its students. Mr. Bayne said he hopes to continue “improving the education experience for students” emphasizing preparing students for the life outside of school.

Born in Mount Kisco, NY, after high school he earned his Bachelor of Arts Degree in Philosophy from SUNY, Newport and his Master of Arts in School Psychology from Marist College. In his work as Special Services Director, he designs programs to help students learn; whether it is learning to control their emotions, or getting ready for college. These programs would be similar to a teacher providing instruction not only in the trade or field the student wants to go into, but helping them through the application process, and helping them find a job after. These techniques will stay with these students through their whole lives.

But this Director isn't all work; in his free time he likes to create his own songs on his guitar, and might even perform in the E.O. Smith holiday performance. He says he will only be playing, as his singing isn't as he wants it to be. He loves eating fresh cherry pie, the color blue, and reading about history and other non-fiction books. He is someone who lives for the thrill of being outside, traveling, exploring, and even skydiving. He recently went backpacking in the Black Hills of South Dakota. He took shelter from a thunderstorm in a cave. In the cave he found an arrow head. As he looked out at the clear sky he found that the cave happened to overlook Mount Rushmore.

## Spotlight on E.O. Smith Clubs

### Men's Chorus

Are you a tenor or bass in the E.O. Smith Chorus who works hard, loves to put on a spectacular performance, and is eager to tackle a diverse selection of sometimes challenging (but always exciting!) songs in a smaller ensemble? If so, bring your commitment, enthusiasm, and a smidge of vocal swagger to Men's Chorus next semester! Men's Chorus is an all-male ensemble which meets once a week for forty-five minutes after-school, to prepare an array of pieces ranging from poignant ballads, to jaunty Barbershop classics, to daring modern *a capella* numbers. No auditions required; the ensemble is open to any boy in chorus willing to put in the time and effort to help create a stunning performance! Men's Chorus will not be accepting any more members this semester, but welcomes any new additions at the beginning of second semester! Hope to see you there!

### Invisible Children

Since 1986, Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army in Central and Eastern Africa has been responsible for the abduction of over 66,000 children into forced military service, and the displacement of millions more as they wage a violent campaign in Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This year, E.O. Smith is supporting Invisible Children, a non-profit organization dedicated to the elimination of this terror which has caused the oppression of thousands of innocent children over the past two decades. The E.O. Smith Invisible Children Fundraising Group meets after school on Wednesdays in Room 218 to brainstorm, plan, prepare, and manage events throughout the year to help raise money for this worthy cause, competing with other schools across the country to make the biggest difference. The organization has already made huge strides in helping to end this atrocity; we welcome your contribution to the effort.

GSA is place that we label as a “safe space” it is free of judgment and certain societal expectations. There is always an open door for anyone of any gender, race, religion or sexuality to walk right in and feel safe and at home. We aim to create a strong bond between students of all different backgrounds to understand and coincide with their peers while working towards a more accepting generation to influence the next generations to come. We laugh, have fun, cry, talk, and support each other through any obstacle that may come our way. Advisors: Ms. Waicunas and Mr. Mingrone. Meetings are Tuesdays from 2:30-3:50 in room 218

# The Arts & Leisure

## One Day

...That the viewer of this movie wishes she could get her money back

By Lily Cunningham

It's not up for debate that Anne Hathaway is a beautiful woman, and an extremely talented actress. Jim Sturgess has captured the hearts of many adolescent girls like me; and his childlike innocence is captured beautifully in most of his films. Sadly, this one is an aberration.

For those of you who haven't read the book, I highly recommend doing so. David Nicholls tells a moving story of two friends-turned-lovers, and highlights their romance on the same day of certain years.



Sometimes in letter form, other times highlighting bouts of dialogue, or inner monologue, the book nails exactly what the movie tries so hard to achieve: a realistic glimpse of human life and romance.

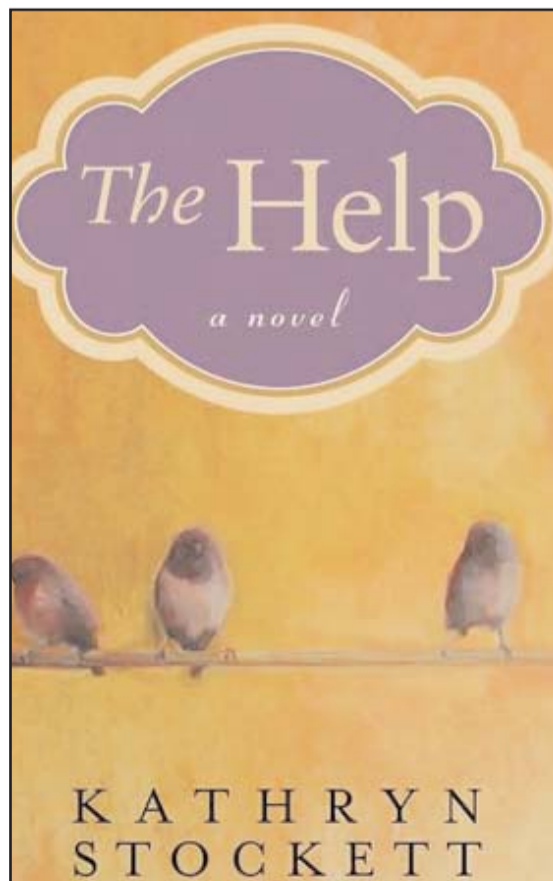
Going in to the movie I had high expectations, being a fan of both actors. But as soon as Hathaway opens her mouth to speak, I know my experience has been ruined. Her "accent" should go down in history for the most trite, contrived attempt at British. At first resembling a ninety year old requesting tea, Anne switches to a trashy cockney/Scottish/Irish mess, and then settles into a strange American lilt with a "hint of something European". Ten minutes of this woman's confusing dialect contrasting with Sturgess' sweet and genuine crone and I wanted to leave the theater.

Another main issue with the movie is the predictability of plot. SPOILER ALERT: she dies. But this is quite easy to deduce from the opening scene, as the director uses a pathetic attempt at parallel action between Hathaway on a bicycle and the motion of a car. After the opening scene, I knew I was in for an emotional, self-indulgent plot leading to an inevitable end that was spoiled in the first few seconds.

And I was right yet again. It's almost as if the screenwriter had inserted into the script "make audience cry here". The cues were melodramatic, and as a conscious audience member, I don't like being told when to feel emotion. As Hathaway looks doe-eyed and pathetically into Sturgess' eyes, and the camera slowly and melodramatically pans closer, the cheap orchestrated soundtrack swells, and I roll my eyes as 90% of the theater sniffls and wipes tears. And when Sturgess rolls in a drunken mess on the floor, we're supposed to bawl as well. As the same

music cues... Of course, we're supposed to ignore the fact that he's doing this in front of his seven year old daughter, who is undoubtedly scarred by this experience, and focus on sympathizing with our poor protagonist in shambles after his true love's death. Insert eye roll here.

The only redeeming qualities about the film were the romantic snippets themselves, filmed beautifully (a respectful head nod to the cinematographer, Benoit Delhomme) and offering a light attraction to the story. But after it became clear that the entire movie was delivered to the audience in snippets, the lighting tricks and giddy laughter became old after the fifth use. How many corny montages should a romance movie entail? Certainly not over three.



## The Help

...Does not help the book

By Beth Charron

A lot of people have suggested that the story of *The Help* is very... different... In the film and the novel, a white woman in 1960s Mississippi creates a book about the stories of black maids. You've got yet another white author telling a Civil Rights story and reaching millions of people.

Although, the book also features many scenes where white people—Skeeter included—are casually racist without realizing it, which reminds the reader that every white person, no matter how decent, was blameworthy in the segregated South. However, there are many moments where Skeeter goes against the wrongful beliefs of her peers and family, to prove what the whites were doing was wrong.

The black characters are written with equal dimension, equal amounts of good and bad traits. And since two-thirds of the novel is narrated by Aibileen (a maid with a gift for writing) and her brassy friend Minnie, black voices actually dominate the storytelling. It was an interesting way to view the story because of the grammar mistakes and the ways of the less educated blacks in the South at that time. So while I was always aware that a white woman was telling me a Civil Rights story, I was also drawn into a narrative that did a good job of balancing its perspectives and intentions. Yes, characters like Hilly (the "evil white lady") are over-sized caricatures, but not every popular novel can be written in a way that shows light on the white race at this time.

Ultimately, the book strikes me as the story of two black women and one white woman who are equally important.

I can't say the same for the movie, which was written and directed by Stockett's friend Tate Taylor. Though it tells roughly the same story as the novel, it makes several small changes that seriously upend the racial balance. Much more than the novel, the movie is a story about white people being awesome and noble. I'm not saying the movie is malicious or racist. It's trying really hard *not* to be. But some of the changes make the story *much* more palatable to white folks.

In the end, *The Help* was a good movie and an even better book. I feel as if the movie tried to mask the majority of the racism by focusing on the black maids lives, and trying not to "upset" the many viewers that are anti-racism extremists. If you read the book and love it, I would suggest that you don't waste your time watching this movie; it will only make you want to scream at the screen.

# Two Takes: Harry Potter and The Deathly Hallows, Part II

## Veteran Reader of Series, Amateur Getting First Taste Offer Different Perspectives

By Josh Stern

From the perspective of someone who has read all seven Harry Potter books and seen all eight movies, I definitely thought the last one was a worthy finale. By splitting the last book up into two movies, they were able to stick to the plot more than they had since the first one; it made me wish Warner Brothers had made two movies for each of the last four books!

*Deathly Hallows, Part 2* picks up almost exactly where the first part ends. The first few shots capture the gloominess of the wizarding world, with Harry staring at a companion's grave and students being marched around Hogwarts. We soon see the three main characters breaking into the wizarding bank and escaping by riding a dragon. Great computer graphics in this sequence—the creature is very realistic.

Among the excellent performances: New to this film are Kelly MacDonal as the Grey Lady, one of Hogwarts's four ghosts, and Ciaran Hinds as Albus Dumbledore's brother, Aberforth. Reprising their roles are John Hurt as Ollivander the wandmaker and Michael Gambon in perhaps the best performance of Dumbledore since Richard Harris died. Of course, the three lead actors keep getting better, and Matthew Lewis has a great moment at the end as Neville.

However, the best acting in the last movie might be that of Alan Rickman. He has been excellent as Snape since the first movie, but a whole new side of the character is revealed in this one. When Snape addresses the entire school, Rickman speaks eerily slowly so that every syllable has time to sink in. The scene in which Harry views Snape's memories is one of the most amazing sequences in all eight movies. Alan Rickman needs at least an Oscar nomination!

Put great acting together with dramatic special effects (the fire in the Room of Requirement), very emotional sequences (Harry's walk in the forest), and moments of comic relief (McGonagall brings some suits of armor to life and says, "I always wanted to do that spell!") and you have the finale everyone had been waiting for. I think the last movie was one of the two or three best out of all eight. Ten years in the making... and all because a literary agent said to someone at Bloomsbury Publishing, "Hey, this woman is a great writer! You should read this!"



By Vicki Chilinski

I seem to be one of the few teenagers in this country that has not seen any of the *Harry Potter* movies nor, more importantly, read any of the books. Sometimes, when this comes up in conversation, it gives me an immediate label as a shallow ditz. Some of the assumptions and judgments I have received from some avid fans of the series absolutely astound me. I've gotten everything from, "You must not like to read at all, then. Why are you in A-Level English?" to, "You just don't have enough of a heart to believe in magic, you *soulless b\*\*\*\**." I couldn't make this stuff up if I tried.

I love to read and watch movies, really. It's just that my favorite books happen to be autobiographies of suicidal poets and 400-page long criticisms of the meat industry, and for movies, I'm more of a historical fiction/"so bad that it's good" girl. *Harry Potter* just never really appealed to me, besides a superficial desire to read *The Sorcerer's Stone* in elementary school because all of the other kids were reading it. I found the whole concept rather... well, rather cheesy and tacky.

Because of this, I wasn't all too thrilled when my friends vetoed my idea to see *Bad Teacher* for our weekly summer movie night and instead chose *Harry Potter*. Even though I had no idea where or when the series took place, who the pro/antagonists were, or what Emma Watson's character's name was, my friends insisted that I'd enjoy watching it. We got some hibachi and as we ate, they did their best to give me a summary of the 12 hours/3,569 pages of plot that I've missed out on. It went in one ear and out the other, mostly because my spicy tuna roll was outstanding, but also because I didn't care at all.

My basic understanding of *Harry Potter* immediately before stepping into the theater consisted of the following: we like Harry, we don't like Voldemort, we kind of like Snape but we really don't, Ron's the redhead, Hermione's the chick, and I'm a filthy muggle. Simple enough.

Most movie reviews have a little summary of the beginning of the film as a nice little way to introduce the story without giving anything important

away... I'd do that if I could, guys. I can't for the life of me remember how this movie started. The middle is pretty foggy for me, since I fell asleep a little bit after Harry was talking to a half-dead Snape (poor guy), midway through a friend's hushed explanation of what a Horcrux is.

Once I woke up, I began to find the movie a bit more interesting. Granted, I still had no idea what was going on, but throughout the last 20 minutes or so I found myself thinking "hmm... I'd like to know what's going on." Harry died, but then he didn't. Voldemort and Draco (who I affectionately referred to as "Blondie" until getting immediately scolded by my friends – we *don't* like Draco) were pissed, and then Harry snapped a twig.

Then, we see Harry and company nineteen years in the future watching their kids get on the train to Hogwarts. This is what sparked my interest the most, I think. All that I knew was happening was that those kids were getting on a train to go to a school to learn magic, but that was all that I *had* to know. It was refreshing to almost know what was happening.

I'd like to say that *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows – Part Two* led me to read all of the *Harry Potter* books before this school year had started and see all the movies and wallpaper my bedroom with pictures of Daniel Radcliffe (can't say I'd hate that, though. He's lookin' good), but it didn't. If I'm bored at a relative's house and I happen to see a copy of *The Sorcerer's Stone* lying around, I'll probably pick it up and read it, and I won't completely dismiss the idea of watching one of the movies if it's on TV. Maybe seeing or reading *Harry Potter* from the beginning is what will enthrall me.

I'm not at all saying that it was a bad movie – the acting was truly convincing and the graphics were incredible, even more so in 3-D – but... it's just not my thing. That doesn't mean it couldn't be yours, though. If you're like me and have never dabbled into the world of Hogwarts (I know, I know, it's just their school and not a planet), maybe you should give it a try. For lack of a better word, I didn't find it as stupid as I thought I would have. If anything, I felt like I was stupid because I didn't understand much of anything that was going on. If I could redo that day, I would have maybe scanned a Wikipedia article or five to get a basic idea of the plot and some of the language. I only think three things for sure about *Harry Potter* as a whole at this point:

It's has a culture of its own. If you don't know the fundamentals of the *Harry Potter* universe (Half-blood? Galleon? Butter beer? What?), you'll be super out of it.

It isn't terrible. The vibe that I had gotten from movie previews, talking to *Harry Potter* enthusiasts, etc, wasn't the same as what I felt from this one film. Sure, I still find some of the fans of the series cult-y and pretentious, but that didn't come through in the movie itself.

Bellatrix Lestrange is my new hair inspiration.



# Question of the Month

*What store or restaurant would you LOVE to see in the new development across the street?*

By Vicky Chilinsky



**"Hooters."**

*Aaron Rosman and Adam Thompson,  
seniors*



**"A Mexican restaurant... well, something authentic. Not a Taco Bell - something family owned... but it can't be expensive, either!"**

*-Heather Cote, junior; Sydney Downham and Alicia Snelling, sophomores*



**"A bagel shop"**

*Elsa Nielson, senior*

**"A steakhouse"**

*Zack Pittman, junior*



**"A Big Y... I mean, if I'd want something across the street, it'd be a supermarket. You know?"**

*Janson Erhard, senior*



**"K.F.C."**

*Raman Mama, freshman*



**"I'd like a spa. A full-service spa."**

*Ms. Wiz, health teacher*



**"Wings... we already have a wings place? We can have another."**

*Lucas McCain, freshman*



**"An Apple store."**

*J.D. Hayward, junior*



**"Hot Topic...for jewelry, make-up and Halloween."**

*Kyla Kinney, senior*