

The Pacemaker

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Hallie Rundle Wins Writing Honor

Each year, the Pirate's Alley Faulkner Society honors Faulkner with a writing contest. Writers from around the nation submit entries in such categories as best novel, best novella, best novel in progress, best short story, best essay,

best poem, and best short story by a high school student. The awards are very prestigious, and winners this past December came from places such as Lexington, Virginia, and Des Moines, Iowa. But the winner of the best

short story by a high school student was quite local- our own Rosary student, Hallie Rundle. Her story is entitled "Skin." We congratulate Hallie on having her work singled out in such a significant way.

Best Buddies Go Shopping!

By Claire Noonan

Start saving up your money, Sacred Heart girls, because March Madness is right around the corner. On March 20th, Best Buddies is organizing a fundraiser based on what many ASH girls love doing most, shopping! Certain select shops on Magazine Street will be donating a portion of the proceeds accumulated that day to the Best Buddies

Louisiana Association to encourage more friendships between those with disabilities and those without. The stores participating in the fundraiser will have balloons marking their doorways. Additionally door prizes will be given out, raffles held in the stores, and there may be TV coverage of this exciting event. This really sounds like a fun way to help out with a good cause, so everyone, come out and shop!

Submit to the Lit

By Emily Scullin

Rather than having the traditional, annual Lit Mag with collected submissions from the entire year, the Lit Mag staff has decided to put out four Lit Mags throughout the course of the school year. Although the Lit Mag staff has just finished collecting submissions for their first poetry contest for which the winner has not yet been announced, there are still two more exciting issues of the Lit Mag to come. Submissions for the short story contest are due March 12, and the winner will

receive a \$200 prize. The final issue of the Lit Mag will have an art contest in which the winner will receive a monetary prize of an undecided amount and her picture or photograph as the cover of the Lit Mag (submissions can be entered by going to lit_mag@ashrosary.org). The Lit Mag staff has decided to judge the writing contests by having each member read the submissions without knowledge of the author and choose the three that she thinks are best. The group will then discuss the top five submissions, and a winner will be chosen. The Lit Mag staff encourages everyone to submit their writing and artwork, so get working!

An Editorial ~ Are Our Laptops Worth the Hassle?

By: Christina Slakey

Picture this: you're writing a major English paper which you have been arduously working on all day when suddenly a light blinks, an error message pops up, and your computer mysteriously shuts down, taking your English paper and your hours of hard work with it. This kind of event is something that many in the high school have dealt with, and for some people, it is a too frequent occurrence. Although computers were originally intended to make organization, note taking, essays, and other school related projects easier, in many people's cases, the Compaq laptop is nothing but a hassle.

I am a lucky member of the unfortunate group of students who frequently deal with laptop problems. My favorite piece of technology is afflicted with a number of problems, including a battery that does not charge past 36%, a power cord that is not functioning, a cracked computer screen hinge, and a CD drive that does not read CDs. Sadly, I am not the only person who deals with these problems. Although there are unique and diverse complaints about laptops, the major issue is the inefficiency of the laptops in relationship to their prices. Some people, such as Lauren Robichaux and Lydia Tompkins, feel they have been "violated" for being required to have a laptop, especially at its relatively high price compared to other laptops on the market. And the laptops do not get better with each new class. Complaints are still frequent in the sophomore and freshmen locker rooms.

Despite the annoying problems that surround laptops, they are still a necessity in our school, which is either a curse or a blessing. Many classes require the network, including history and physics, while English classes use laptops for vocabulary, essay writing, and commenting on Blackboard.com. And many classes use computers for notes. Computers are clearly an academic necessity. And for this reason we need the best-working laptops we can get. I believe we must do two things to make this possible.

First, we must make sure that the Compaq computer is the best for our needs, and second, we must do all that we can to maintain our computers in a way that limits as much as possible the amount of servicing they need.

Are Compaqs the best brand for our needs? Many people think that it is the Compaq computers that are plagued with the most problems. Students with computers from companies such as Dell and Sony Vaio are seen less frequently in Mr. Forcier and Mr. Sewell's offices. So, do other brands work better? The reason the school fixes more Compaqs is because Compaq is the brand that the school has arranged for students to obtain, so most students have Compaqs. Mr. Forcier says he is always willing to diagnose the problems for other brands, but he cannot work on them because their warranty requires that they be dealt with by another service office. Mrs. Hauber offered the information that *Consumer Reports* says that 25% of all laptop computers need servicing in the first year. But guess what? *Consumer Reports* also says that Compaq laptops have the lowest need for service. Mr. Forcier recently visited a huge Christian Brothers high school in St. Louis where there are one thousand IBM laptops. The service people there see forty computers daily. With our 350 computers, Mr. Forcier sends about 7 a week to service. That gives both schools about a 20% service rate. Mr. Forcier said that another reason we stick with Compaq is because their service center is right here in New Orleans. He takes Sacred Heart computers there for service, and the turn-around

time is much shorter than it would be for other brands that would have to be sent out of town. So it would seem that the Compaq brand is comparable, if not slightly better, than other brands for our purposes.

Research, then, would suggest that Compaq is an acceptable brand. But we must do what we can to reduce the need to service them. Many people, including my father, who is laptop obsessed, have suggested that students learn how to care more fully

for their computers. For example, we should learn how to update programs, backup our notes, and erase extraneous programs. We are taught some of this information when we receive our laptops as freshmen, and we learn more in computer classes. But we need reminders and more extensive training. We may

know how to format items such as this newspaper on Publisher or how to create timed power points, but many of us are unaware, for example, of the benefits and techniques of cleaning up a hard drive. As we become more and more sophisticated in the use of our computers, perhaps the next step in our technology education lies in learning more about maintenance and simple fix-ups for our machines. We could become less helpless in the face of computer glitches and begin to visit our handy "computer men" less frequently. The time has come for us to know how to use a computer and its technology. Mrs. Hauber says the technology department is ready to address our needs. "Nothing would please us more."

No matter our complaints, laptops can do nothing but aid students now and in later life. As I close this article with a blinking light and a "battery charge failure" message, I suggest our school stress to us even more the care of computers. More sophisticated computer maintenance is an essential addition to our technology curriculum.



Heeeey, Jude!

By Sarah Minge

Cold Mountain starring Jude Law, Nicole Kidman, and Renee Zellweger, is just as the movie trailer says: A must-see movie! This movie, based on the novel by George Frazier, presents a romance between two people during the Civil War and its effect on not just their relationship, but also on people's lives all over the South.

A romance formed between the characters of Jude Law and Nicole Kidman is quickly torn apart after



Jude Law in *Cold Mountain*
<http://movies.yahoo.com>

the outbreak of the Civil War. The movie charts the hardships they both go through while separated, from deserting the army to becoming almost homeless. As a Southerner, I believe the Civil War is an event that holds a significant place within all of us, and this movie definitely does that justice.

Cold Mountain is terribly sad but also very moving. I think I was depressed days after I saw it. Because of its romantic connotation, this movie

could be perceived as a "chick flick," but it has plenty of war and violence to satisfy anyone. Jude Law is absolutely enchanting and captivating. I would go see this again, just to see him. As Courtney Williams says, "I was so engrossed in the movie that when it ended, I looked around and had no idea where I was." Although it is very long, I hardly realized it because I became so involved in the plot and characters. Nominated for eight golden globes, this movie really is just amazing and a must-see...really!



We Love Our *Friends*

The final episode of *Friends* will air in May, but if you are thinking that is the last time you will see the inside of Central Perk, I have a pleasant surprise for you. It's not.

Every weeknight at 6:30, TBS (channel 17) plays an episode of *Friends*. Two episodes are played on the WB (channel 13) every weeknight at 9 o'clock.

And, if that's not enough, you can buy the entire first five seasons (Season six will be available January 27th). These are great for sick days, bored days, or random times when you just need to see your six best friends. NBC.com sells the DVD's for about \$45, Barnes and Noble sells them for about \$40, and Sam's Club sells them for around \$30. For the times when you are with other *Friends*-lovers, board games and trivia books are also available.

By: Caroline Tomeny

Sometime in March, NBC will air the top six episodes of *Friends*. Everyone is welcome to vote at www.nbc.com/Friends. Underneath a picture of Rachel, known in the real world as Jennifer Aniston, there is a link to the voting. There are several episodes from each season and clicking on each one gives a summary of that episode.



Until the final episode airs, you can still catch *Friends* at 7pm every Thursday on NBC. For anyone who needs to be caught up in the story, Chandler and Monica have just bought a house outside the city and are waiting for the child they adopted to be born. Phoebe is engaged to Mike, her boyfriend since last season. Rachel and her baby, Emma, are living with Joey. Emma's father, Ross, is hard at work as a paleontologist.

Maybe we won't be able to discuss last night's episode on Friday mornings. Maybe we won't be able to speculate what will finally happen with Ross and Rachel. Maybe we won't look forward to Thursday all week the way we do now. But we don't have to say goodbye.

Tulane's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

By: Beth Deichmann

Recently, the entire high school went to Tulane University to watch a performance of one of Shakespeare's most-loved plays, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Instead of a typical Shakespearean tragedy, this play is a light-hearted comedy. The characters go on a dreamlike venture into a magical world. The plot consists of several stories that take place in the city of Athens and in an enchanted forest outside the city. While four young romantics deal with their hilariously absurd and confusing love lives, fairies play amusing tricks on them

"A magnificent work that should be on Broadway."

-Kingsley Blum, junior

and a clumsy group of "rude mechanics" rehearses their play.

A Midsummer Night's Dream and its fun and humorous plot received much more support and praise from students than have previous Shakespearean tragedies

performed at the Tulane Theatre. Many enjoyed the interesting setting changes, from the poles representing the city to the colorful umbrellas

representing the forest. Also, most students thought the actors did a good job portraying Shakespeare's

characters. They liked the way the actors added their own humorous spins to the famous play. Some students were also glad that the girl who played Juliet and Ophelia in past plays was not in it this time.

Jessica Marceaux called it, "a beautiful rendition of Shakespeare's finest work. Demetrius, Lysander, Helena, and Hermia's characters were so beautifully portrayed it brought tears to my 17-year-old eyes." Mea Boykins commented that the play was "creative and cool." *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was definitely a hit!

Home Schooled Students:

Do They Have a Better Chance at College than You Do?

By: Laura Franceware

Over recent years, the number of home-schooled students has increased. Before, the majority of home-schooled kids tended to lean towards attending smaller, more religious colleges. Now, because of the dramatic increase, home-schoolers can be found on all college

campuses nationwide, and most are being accepted to the colleges of their choice. While exact figures are not available, the number of middle and high school students educated at home is now estimated at between 1 million and 2 million. However, do colleges look at a grade point average or at the people themselves? Sometimes social skills and communication, all of which a high

school helps students to develop, are lacking in a home-schooled environment. Home-schooled students have grown up with a bigger emphasis on learning rather than testing, and may be really scholarly. But they may be lacking social skills that enable them to survive in the real world.

First Triathlon Team in ASH History Takes Off

By: Meg Spalitta

The Triathlon Team is a new and exciting activity, but it involves lots of training, hard work, and commitment. Emily Peterson came up with the idea, and it has turned out to be very popular. The triathlon will include competition in swimming, biking and



running. Each triathlon is made up of different lengths of these three events depending on the level of difficulty. If you want, you can be part of a team and participate in only one of the events, but if you are the adventurous and ambitious type, go for all three!!

The first triathlon is in March, so

you should sign up soon and start training. Practice for running is Monday through Thursday right after school and finishes by 4:30. Bike practice is held at the Fly Monday and Wednesday at 5:00. Swimming practice will be held at UNO.

Bird Flu: Follow the DoDo!

By: Sarah Minge

The death of a young boy in Thailand brings to seven the death toll from the bird flu in Asia. This flu could also be responsible for four other deaths in a northern province there. The World Health Organization has yet to find a vaccine because of setbacks. The virus, detected in 1997, has mutated into its present form, so the 1997 vaccine can no longer be used. Scientists believe that people contract the disease through contact with sick birds, and there has yet to be any evidence of human-to-human transmission. They do worry though, that this mutated virus could combine itself with the typical flu and cause the next flu pandemic.

In Pakistan, the virus was detected in chickens, and it is responsible for killing up to 3.5 million chickens. The strand of virus that is killing chickens, however, is not able to move to humans. Asian nations that have not yet had cases of the virus are frantically slaughtering flocks of chickens to try to control the disease. People are encouraged to destroy the carcasses but not to dispose of them in rivers. The disposal in rivers could result in the infection of many other types of livestock and farm animals.

So far, eight countries have reported some strain of bird flu --

Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Pakistan, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam. Indonesia originally denied claims of harboring the disease for political purposes. Thailand has killed close to 10 million chickens so far, which has devastated its export industry. In 2003, Thailand grossed \$1.3 billion in chicken exports to Japan and the European Union alone, both of which have now banned their chicken.

Senioritis

Even though the class of 2004 has over four long months of school left before graduating, college is on everyone's mind. Many seniors have already been admitted to the colleges of their choices while many others will not know until April where they will be next fall. Nevertheless, it's second semester, the prime time for "senioritis" to begin. Seniors are beginning to want to just relax and have fun, finding it very difficult to concentrate on their schoolwork. One senior said, "Senioritis is impossible to avoid. I got grades last semester and got into college. My goal is just not to ail my classes."

Meghan Donelon added, "I have problems doing my work because I want to spend time having fun with my friends before we

By: Caroline Avegno

leave."

However, there are still some seniors who have remained focused and motivated. One said, "I'm doing my work. I don't get the concept of people thinking they don't have to work. I want good grades."

Another hard-working senior said, "I'm doing my work. I feel guilty if I don't."

If you think there is no way to stay motivated, one senior brought up a good point, "I'm resisting senioritis even though I feel it coming because I don't want to take exams this semester."

*"I'm resisting senioritis even though I feel it coming because I don't want to take exams this semester."
-anonymous senior*

Besides having to worry about schoolwork, leaving Sacred Heart is also on the seniors' minds. Many are enthusiastic to leave, and others are not ready at all. Meghan Donelon expressed her love for Sacred Heart, "I love Sacred Heart so much and don't want to leave at all. I think our class is the bomb diggity."

On the contrary, another senior said, "My senioritis has been increasing exponentially by the day. I'm ready to blow this joint."

However, most seniors explained that they have mixed feelings about graduation and leaving for college. While it's hard to find the balance between work, fun, and wanting to leave or to stay, there is still almost a full semester left.

King Cake Season is Here!

By: Sarah Weiner



Every year in New Orleans, the Epiphany marks more than just the religious celebration of the three kings reaching the newly-born Jesus.

It is the start of the much celebrated, long-awaited king cake season. King cakes date all the way back to the medieval period, when a coin was hidden instead of a baby, and they first arrived in New Orleans from France in 1870. They were originally baked only to honor and celebrate King's Day, but are now sold from January 6 to Mardi Gras Day, and they sometimes appear as early as

Christmas. Local bakeries report selling four to five thousand king cakes each day during the Carnival season. Today, a plastic baby is hidden inside the cake and whoever ends up with the baby must provide the next cake. Some people even honor that person as "king/queen for the day."

There are several places that sell King Cakes around the New Orleans area, and many of them ship the cakes overnight anywhere in the United States. While most grocery stores carry king cakes, there are places that specialize only in the delicious treat. Manny Randazzo in Metairie is one of the most popular king cake bak-

ers and offers traditional king cakes as well as cream cheese, lemon, pecan praline, strawberry, apple, and royal filled cakes. There is also the King Kake King in Metairie, Mandeville, and Covington, which offers many of the same flavors as Randazzo's, plus a "house special," which is three braids of cinnamon pecan, strawberry, and cream cheese. Haydel's Bakery in New Orleans offers both traditional and filled king cakes as well.



Shopping for Your Valentine

By: Margaret Houser

Once again, Valentine's Day is rapidly approaching, and for those of us who are not currently involved, it is a morbid holiday. However, for those with a sweetheart, the shopping stress is on. Picking out the perfect present for your significant other can be a strenuous task, so to help lift the burden, we have constructed a list of places to find that ideal gift.

1. Perlis. If your cutie won't listen to your fashion advice, take matters into your own hands and get him a new wardrobe.

2. Sharper Image. If you're looking for something mechanical that will keep his attention better than you can, Sharper Image has everything from CD players to electronic talking dogs.

3. Jean Therapy. If the al-

lowance has been meager this month, Jean Therapy is the place to shop. It is less expensive than Perlis, and you will find a variety of trendy casual clothing.

4. Amazon.com. For those who don't like to shop in public, Amazon.com has a plethora of merchandise to choose from including such as CDs, DVD, and other electronics.



MADELEINE SOPHIE HELPS OUT

Dear Madeleine Sophie:

I have a problem and I don't know what to do about it. One of my friends wants me to break up with my boyfriend, because she thinks that he's not good for me, but I don't want to. All of my other friends

think that this one friend wants me to break up with him so that she can go out with him.

I don't know what to do. She was supposed to be my friend. Should I break up with him and just let her have him, or should I confront her about it and tell her that I know her real reason. Please help!

Dear problem child,

I think that you should confront your friend about her wanting you to break up with your current boyfriend. You shouldn't just break up with him because your friend wants you to. If you still like him stay with him and try to patch up the problems with you and your friend.

SOFT DRINK POLL! By: Margaret Sanders & Trishala Bhansali

Ever wonder how many students in the high school don't check their email? This question never came to our minds until we received 90 emails out of the 264 students in the High School. We thought it might be interesting to see the number of soft drinks consumed by the student body every day, and unfortunately, we weren't able to get completely thorough results. This is what we found:

- Coke- 20%
- Diet coke- 47%
- Lemonade- 1%
- Cherry coke- 3%
- Root beer (Barq's)- 9%
- Sprite- 6%

- Sprite Remix- 1%
- Dr Pepper- 19%

There are a total of 161 drinks bought out of 90 people every school day.

Out of the 5 teachers that responded to the poll, there were a total of 11 soft drinks consumed.

Delivery of Love By: Lauren Slakey

The season of love is coming upon us, and the question we all are asking ourselves is, "Who is going to be my valentine this year?" Well, for everyone who has already found an answer to this question, for those people who are still looking, and even for you jealous friends, the Student Council's annual Valentine's Day Deliveries are a perfect gift. Whether you want to give a valentine to your boyfriend or send one to your crush, purchasing a Valentine from the Student Council is affordable and will go to a great cause: YOU! All the money that the Student Council raises throughout the year, in some way or another, goes back to the student body, so why not spend a couple of dollars not only to support the Student Council, but also to send a cute gift to your valentine?

LIVIN' IT UP AT EIGHTEEN

By: C. Williams with contributions from the staff

Most of the seniors are realizing that they are finally eighteen years old. This is fun and exciting, and something we have all been waiting for. On the other hand, it is frightening. Here are some pros and cons to finally being eighteen:

PROS I can vote.

I can buy various tobacco products (not that I want to).

I can get into establishments that require an age of 18.

I can call psychics.

I can order products off the T.V.

I can join the army.

College—I can finally start to live on my own.

CONS

If I commit a crime, I will be tried as an adult

I'm old.

My parents can kick me out of the house.

I can no longer relate to songs such as "Hold on to Sixteen as Long as You Can," "Seventeen Only Comes Once in a Lifetime," and "It was Labor Day Weekend, I was Seven-

teen."

I can be charged with contributing to the delinquency of a minor.

I am actually older/same age as all those characters in the high school movies that we love to watch (i.e. *Sixteen Candles*, *Dazed and Confused*), yet they have always seemed older. (See number two under CONS.)

College— I have to start learning how to live on my own.

mon among you youngsters but, as you know, it is not legal or good for your liver, to drink, especially in excess. Smoking and drinking are not good to do and if your friends are pressuring you into doing it maybe you are not hanging around the correct crowd. But, more likely than not, your friends will understand if you decide to abstain from drinking, and may even respect your decision enough to stop as well. All in all, going against the grain to be a better individual just shows your strength and integrity, making you a better, and healthier, person. Mother Barat

More Advice for Saint MS

Dear MS,

Mardi Gras is coming up soon, and I am scared and don't know what to do. I know that some of my friends will be drinking and smoking. I don't want to, but I am scared that I might have to because my

friends will be drinking and smoking. I don't want to but I am scared that I might have to because all of my friends are doing it. What should I do?
HELP ME

Dear Good Girl, Yes, drinking is com-

Brad Pitt



Age: 42

Birthday: December 18, 1963

Height: 6'

Hair color: Blonde

Eye Color: Blue

Residence: Beverly Hills, Ca



OUR DREAM DATES

By: Forrest Richards

Chad Michael Murray

Age: 23

Birthday: August 24, 1981

Height: 6'

Hair color: Blonde

Eye Color: Brown

Residence: Los Angeles



Collin Farrell

Age: 25

Birthday: May 31, 1976

Height: 5'10"

Hair color: Blonde

Eye Color: Blue

Residence: Dublin, Ireland

Heath Ledger

Age: 25

Birthday: April 4, 1979

Height: 6'2"

Hair color: Blonde

Eye Color: Brown

Residence: Los Angeles



Josh Harnett

Age: 27

Birthday: July 21, 1978

Height: 6'3"

Hair color: Brown

Eye Color: Brown

Residence: Los Angeles, CA



Tom Cruise

Age: 42

Birthday: July 3, 1962

Height: 5'7"

Hair color: Brown

Eye Color: Blue

Residence: Beverly Hills, Ca



Paul Walker

Age: 31

Birthday: September 12, 1973

Height: 6'3"

Hair color: Brown-Blonde

Eye Color: Blue

Residence: Sunland, CA



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