

THE MUCKRAKER

the students' voice since 1997



THE INDEPENDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY SCHOOL STUDENTS' NEWSPAPER

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As all of us are returning to school after a hopefully relaxing Easter break, the lingering hope for the soon-to-come warm weather is still within every student walking the JFKS hallways (which might seem a lot emptier with the 12th grade abi students having left). While we await this late spring arrival, we, the Muckraker editors are here to brighten your day with our latest issue.

As some may have noticed, we weren't able to print the previous issue, which we had hoped to release before the ski trip, due to the malfunctioning of ALL the school copy machines. But now all is well, since you're holding this precious paper in your hands! Looking forward to warmer and brighter days,

Your Editors



Where the US Teachers Go - the JFKS Tenure System

Students: How many good teachers have we seen come and go in the time that we've been here? A number of these departures we've truly regretted and, further, we know little about the reasons behind their leaving. On the other hand, how many times have we wished we could have some "say" in a teacher's assessment?

Why do American teachers come and go so much? The administration is often blamed for this, but the situation is actually much more complex. It has to do with policies set in German law by the Berlin Senat, which largely runs the city school system, including JFKS.

Before 2007, American teachers could work two years, "tax free," under a temporary contract. Working tax free seemed to be an attractive offer. At the end

of those two years, however, the U.S. teachers would have to pay all the taxes they would have owed during those two years. That turned out to be quite a hefty burden, and many American teachers naturally chose to leave for a year and return to get re-hired under a new "tax free" contract.

This was workable for some, perhaps. But no one likes inconsistency, especially JFKS students who had to deal with having good teachers replaced by temporary ones. For many teachers, this arrangement translated into a lack of job security. Thus in 2007, the German government passed a new policy striking the "back-taxes" system for its guest workers. The new policy allows international teachers to stay for longer periods of time.

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The SC has some exciting information to share with all of us. This is the first of many newsletters that will be published in the Muckraker.

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The experienced 10th graders have prepared some very useful tips regarding the internship. This article will leave all of you, who are intimidated by it, with a sense of relief.

on page 4

This issue also features international news. Make sure to read the article "Remembering Our Pope".

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An intriguing list of the top movies is once again prepared by our experts, Antonia and Alina. You will all be convinced to immediately watch each one of them if you have not done so.

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JFKS Life



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Many young teachers, not quite ready to settle down, still come and go peacefully. However, if a teacher is to be employed for longer than five years, he or she must be offered, and accept, tenure (a permanent position).

The teacher under consideration for tenure is evaluated. Many students have seen this process: the principals and other important administrators 'sit in' on a class and watch the teacher teach. The observers are usually gone after a single period. Students are not asked for their opinions. If the administrators decide that the teacher is a good fit for the institution, that teacher will be offered tenure. If not, the teacher leaves. (Politics sometimes rears its ugly head here: if a teacher gets on the wrong side of the wrong person at the wrong time, there may be a job to pay.)

Now, as more and more teachers decide to stay, naturally, tenure positions fill up. Fewer American teachers can be hired and kept. People might remember when this issue arose in 2012, in the history department. Rumors spread that a popular teacher had to go, and perceptive students were upset. I signed a petition that some 8th graders circulated to keep the teacher, whom I had in both the 7th

and 8th grade. Those students were brave and pro-active enough to express our opinion, even though it was in vain. It was an exceptional event.

For U.S. teachers, another obstacle on the road to tenure is this: if an international teacher leaves at the end of five years, he or she is given a check with his/her retirement money, which is generous by American standards. This was part of an attractive offer that was accepted by two good staffers last year. If offered, however, tenure means a secure position until retirement, a strong financial bond between the teacher and the school. It's a safe bet that most of JFKS's German teachers have permanent tenured positions.

The relationship among teachers, administration and students should be one of trust. Students have been in the dark about these policies in the past, and consistently fail to seek answers as to why their teachers disappear. I hope I have provided somewhat of an answer to this question, which has bothered me in the past. I encourage you to take a look at your surroundings and seek answers to your own questions, as this is the first step toward productive change.

Max Sherwood

A Student Voice on the Valentines Dance 2013, Hosted by the Student Council

How did you like this year's Valentine's Dance, Nicki Sae (7c)?

"The Valentines Dance started off very well. Everyone was in a great mood and the atmosphere was perfect. More and more people came until the dance floor was crowded. A lot of students first needed to get motivated to dance. Most of us especially liked the light effects. There were a lot of foods & drinks which were enjoyable refreshments. The play list wasn't everyone's taste. The couple dance didn't work out that well this year, but I have to admit it was fun (even though just a few couples danced together). All in all most of us had a fun evening and were glad to come."

The Student Council

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How to join the Muckraker Staff

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



The Student Council Newsletter

- Thank you to all of you who have participated in Clean the School Day! We saw many busy and enthusiastic students helping out. We hope that this successful event encourages all students to keep the school clean in the future, so that the SC itself can be more effective in combating the dirtiness. Also, the Valentine's Dance was a great success. Check our facebook page for photos!
- Members of the Student Council and JFKS Goes Green Group have recently painted the bathrooms in the White and Blue Building. Please keep the bathrooms neat and do not destroy their effort.
- Nearly the entire High School has participated in our survey on Homework and School Cleanliness. Thank you! The SC's future of success strongly depends on your voices. If you did not take part, but still want to, you can contact us at the email below or via facebook.
- Adding to the survey, we need your input. If you believe that the amount of homework must change, please write down the time you spend on school work each night (including projects and test preparation) for about 10 days. Then, send us an email with your results. Your help is highly appreciated!
- The Student Council has formed a committee which will work on the project "Schule ohne Rassismus – Schule mit Courage". It consists of students from both the Elementary and the High School, not necessarily SC members. The committee will work independently; so the SC can focus on other projects.
- The Student Council Presidents have introduced a new point in the agenda of all SC meetings: "Approval of minutes and agenda". This makes it possible for your class representatives to bring up a variety of issues. It is a great way for you to address suggestions or complaints, just tell your class reps!
- The Student Council has a new official email address: studentcouncil@jfkcs.org. However, the SC Presidents will continue check the Gmail address. We look forward to hearing from you! Whether it's problems, complaints, questions or suggestions you share, the SC will be happy to hear from you.



JFKS STUDENT COUNCIL

JFKS LIFE

Internship Tips

Future 10th graders: When you hear the words "10th grade internship", what do you feel? Worried? Nervous? Excited? Afraid you can't speak German well enough and have no idea how you are supposed to survive those two weeks?

Don't worry, we felt the same way, and believe it or not, it turns out all right. Your tenth grade internship will be an experience you will never forget. For that reason, we want to help you make the most of it and tell you that no matter where you do your internship you will get something out of it.

So, as students who've already experienced the Internship, here are some considerable tips for the upcoming 10th graders:

- 1) It is graded.
- 2) Find out the time span of the internship as soon as possible. Many places require your application at least seven months before the Internship is supposed to begin.
- 3) First try to find a place without any help, however it is often the case that the best companies are found through family connections.
- 4) When looking for a place, call to check if the company even offers a place during the time span.
- 5) Be open for negative responses- not every company will have place for an intern, and some places may not even offer an internship at all. In addition, you might not get a place in the field of profession that you are interested in.
- 6) If the company does not reply for an entire month after you sent them your application, politely call/e-mail them and ask again.
- 7) Contact as many places as possible, especially ones that vary in profession for the best chances of success. Many students contact up to 10-15 places and only receive around 2-3 positive responses.
- 8) Be aware that you are on your own for this- teachers don't really offer support.
- 9) Be prepared for interviews. If they invite you to one, make sure you appear confident. They may ask you questions like "What are your strengths," or "What motivates you to work for this company", so you might want to come up with some answers before you arrive.
- 10) The first impression counts. Be open and polite.

Some places that offer a Praktikumsplatz are:

Science:

- Max Planck Institut Berlin
- Natlab in der Freien Universität Berlin
- Kleintier und Polyklinik der Freien Universität
- Botanischer Garten Berlin
- Berliner Zoo
- Adler Apotheke Zehlendorf
- Technik Museum

Stores:

- Hugendubel Steglitz
- Karstadt Steglitz
- KaDeWe Berlin
- Thalia

Journalism:

- RBB Berlin
- Berliner Tagesspiegel
- Axel Springer Verlag

Schools:

- Phorms Bilingual School
- Elementary School BIS
- Bürgermeister Herz Grundschule
- Kindertagesstätten.

Good Luck!



photo courtesy of google.de

Clara Frick and Simona Koch

Comments, Replies?
send your opinions and articles to:

themuckraker@gmail.com



JFKS LIFE

Touring Europe

The Berlin Bear-a-Cudas Swim Team competed yet again in the European Forces Swim League Championships in Eindhoven, Netherlands. Clubs from all over Europe took part in this event on the 16th and 17th of February, and made it a great success. On Friday morning, we departed from Berlin Hauptbahnhof, while our peers had to sit in class all day. Because the Championships took place in Eindhoven annually since 2010,



most of us have traveled to the Dutch city several times before. As a result, we eagerly anticipated the fantastic hotel as well as the beautiful swim stadium. We compiled our teammates' thoughts to recount our trip to Eindhoven.

Senior Georgia Humphries recounts, "After the seven hour train ride to Holland on Friday, it was nearly impossible to wake up at 6:30 on Saturday to swim all of our races. Luckily, the huge breakfast kept us going through the day and many of the swimmers achieved personal bests. In the first day alone, our talented swimmers won lots of medals." For example, Celeste Josse from Eighth grade and Philipp Hegner from 12th grade won their individual 100m Breaststroke races. Congratulations especially to Philipp, who brought home the gold medal in this event for the seventh time in seven years. Later, Philipp Langhaeuser from 11th grade dominated the individual 50m Freestyle race and also achieved gold.

Even though there are only 29 of us, a small number compared to K-Town's 121 and Stuttgart's 96 swimmers, our relay teams remained honorable opponents against the large military base clubs. Out of the 6 relay events, the Bear-a-Cudas claimed four silver and one bronze medal, as well as a fourth and a sixth place. One of our top swimmers, Celeste, recounts, "The relay teams achieved personal bests and good placings in all age groups. Even our coach Peter, who isn't very good with compliments, was very proud of us." Head Coach Peter admits, "You were the best team I have seen at Champs since I have been coaching you. I'm very proud of you".

One of our youngest competitive teammates, 11-year-old Lilli Seubert, scored highest point count individually after swimming eight superb races. Having won five gold and three silver medals, she elucidates, "Our team had a lot of fun while swimming and being in the hotel, and this was possible because the entire team supported and helped each. A good example for was the relays, where the entire team cheered. Thanks to Peter's tough training, everyone succeeded." Seventh grader Charlotte Kreienbaum, who placed second in the 50m individual Breaststroke race, continues, "Even though it was our fourth time in the Netherlands, we had a great time. Our team scored 875 points and that really rocked. We have great team spirit and that's why so many of us swam personal bests. Good job!"

Aside the Championships, the Van der Valk Hotel Eindhoven provided to a great culinary experience. Ninth grade swimmer Lena Riecke explains, "Bear-a-Cudas swimmers seem to always agree that a true highlight is the food. Every night the delicious aroma of antipasti, shrimp and tender steak (which Jan Eric had been talking about since setting foot in the train) welcomed us at the entrance of the restaurant. Jars of marshmallows, gallons of ice cream and an ever flowing chocolate fountain contributed to the fact that everyone felt very happy at the end of the evening." Our ambitious, part-Ecuadorian team mate Zhamy Staiger adds, "Todos se conocen y es muy lindo viajar con ellos. En los viajes olvidamos la escuela y la vida normal para un rato. Otra razón porque todos los nadadores quieren ir a Champs, es la comida que hay en el hotel. Para todos hay algo. La mayoría habla de la carne rica que hay allá." Zhamy describes how the Champs make us forget about school and homework, while the Hotel provides us with unforgettable dinner.

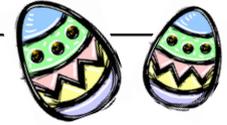
Eighth grade team-mate Jelena Graef, who participated in her first Champs this year recaps, "There were personal bests, broken League Records, and above all that, beautiful friendships were built. I love this team and the support given by everyone." Fellow Eighth grade swimmer Charlie Walzer concludes, as always, our team has become a family. We respect and love our older team mates like older siblings who watch over us and makes sure that we have lots of fun."

Lastly, even though I didn't mention nearly as many of you as I'd like to, congratulations! You all deserve your well-earned results, and of course Van der Valk's outstanding food.

Georgia Humphries and Jan Eric Hellenbrand

International

Remembering Our Pope



On the 28th of February, Pope Benedict XVI resigned from office due to his declining health. He had been elected in 2005 as successor of Johannes Paul II, an event celebrated by many Catholics around the world. Unfortunately, this enthusiasm did not persist for a longer period of time. The reign of Benedict XVI was filled with cases of child abuse, which consequently put the church in a very critical position. Was the Church not responsible for protecting their "brothers"? Was it not the Roman-Catholic Church's responsibility to deal with sexual abuse within their institution, not that of the police? The representative of the Bishop Conference in Germany offered the executive branch to either relocate known abusers to another school or institution to continue their "work", or have them turn themselves in. Additionally, Stefan Ackermann, the "Missbrauchsbeauftragter der Bischofskonferenz", reemployed priests who had sexually abused children for years and at the same time promised to impose stricter regulations on Church members that abuse children. I'm sure all of this happened with a clear conscience and in accordance with the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Honestly, I cannot help becoming excruciatingly sarcastic when describing these events, because they are so absurd and go against so many of our fundamental moral values. The fact of the matter is that many people within the Church, including high-ranking church members, knowingly protect abusers. To this day, we have powerful representatives saying that they are going to "suggest" to abusers to turn themselves in. People who have committed crimes I would have reinstated the death penalty for, remain protected by the Church. If one person could have changed this, it would have been the Pope; the powerful leader of the Roman-Catholic Church. He could have ordered a complete retaliation against all abusers in the institution and redeemed the Church, but he practically did nothing. Benedict XVI could have saved and avenged countless lives of children our age or younger, but chose not to. That is what I will remember him for. That is what everybody should remember him for. It isn't a matter of opinion, but rather a known fact when I state that Pope Benedict XVI could have protected innocent children from having their lives destroyed by abusers but consciously decided not to.

May the next Pope unequivocally protect the innocent, do the victims of the Roman-Catholic Church justice and save the world's future children from a lifetime of trauma.

-ne obliviscaris

Anonymous

Egypt, a Flourishing Democracy

In 2011 the long standing Mubarak regime was overthrown and an interim government was established. It promised democratic elections for both males and females. Western media celebrated this political turn as great victory: another country freeing itself from authoritarian rule and striving towards an equal democratic society. At first this was true. The younger generation was creating and leading a revolutionary movement to establish a more liberal system with job opportunities and the hopes of pursuing individual dreams and ambitions without being tied down by conservative and religious ideologies and bureaucracy. Unfortunately, these somewhat naive dreams of the new generation and the West did not come true and still, many media outlets in Europe and the US do not recognize this failed revolution.

Already during the first election there were signs of voter fraud. Islamist parties, which won the election, forced and bribed people to vote in their favor, especially in the southern regions. Anyone who claims women living with or married to radical Muslims were able to determine their vote independently, completely neglect the harsh reality of the conservative society in Egypt. Slowly but surely the Islamist parties are taking over the government and filling important positions with loyal puppets – a development that is isolating them from the West. Religious fanaticism spreads as women in particular are being forced back into living situations that date back to medieval times. Minorities are discriminated and excluded from society. Those fortunate enough to be able to leave migrate elsewhere. Along the line of this systematic isolation, the government branch concerned with tourism is working towards completely excluding foreigners from everyday life. New hotels are being built next to the common tourist attractions, such as the sphinx or the pyramids, and a complete imitation of the Cairo markets is being planned outside the city in order to give tourists absolutely no incentive to visit the metropolis itself.

While the Muslim Brotherhood and its allies are concerned with securing their power and instituting a constitution ratified by less than 25% of the population, anarchy consumes the country. Religious fanatics foster fear in the cities, scaring women into hiding their bodies and avoiding any interaction with males in public. In the South, however, the circumstances are even more dramatic. Clans control large parts of the territories and the police fearfully avoid roadblocks formed by frustrated citizens.

In such situations crime becomes a regular occurrence with gangs plundering and stealing. This development is fueled by the inability of the current government to control the borders. Drug and slave trafficking between the southern and western borders increase drastically, resulting in a massive destabilization of southern Egypt. Possibly an even larger problem posing a great threat to the stability of the region, is the new high-tech weapon trafficking. These primarily originate from Libya, where the enormous weapon reserves of Gaddafi are being plundered and sent via Egypt into Palestine and Syria. These are not some AK-47s dating back to the days of the Soviet Union. We are talking about modern military grade weapons used (and produced) by the greatest military powers around the world. One can only imagine what grave consequences these weapons could have when aimed at Israel or simply people with different beliefs.

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International/Entertainment

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Therefore, what our media has for a long time displayed as a superb revolution towards a more open and liberal society is utterly false. Egypt is deteriorating as its powers struggle, crime syndicates and essentially the anarchy rips the country apart. There is no way of knowing if the situation will stabilize, but another failed state in this region will help religious fanatics support their war for independence and against Western Civilization.

Victor Passfall

Top Movie Lists

Although in this day and age, many films depict fantastical stories filled with special effects and backed by a huge budget, sometimes the best films are the ones that portray realistic human life. In fact, true stories can be the most fascinating. With this in mind, we have compiled our top five documentaries and top five films based on true stories of the past ten years.

Top 5 Documentaries of the Past 10 Years

5. EXIT THROUGH THE GIFT SHOP (2010) and THE INVISIBLE WAR (2012)

Apart from the fact that these films tie for fifth place on my list, they really share no similarities. One revolves around an amateur filmmaker who attempts to locate the street artist Banksy, and then the film begins questioning what constitutes art. The movie as a whole is a lot of fun, and Thierry, the filmmaker, is a compelling and often humorous character. THE INVISIBLE WAR, on the other hand, illuminates the staggering frequency of rape cases in the American military. The film is both horrifying and upsetting as it follows the stories of several victims, both men and women, who seek the justice they are so often denied.

4. DEAR ZACHARY: A LETTER TO A SON ABOUT HIS FATHER (2008)

When a filmmaker tries to memorialize his murdered friend, Andrew, he discovers that the woman who killed him was pregnant with his late friend's son. Its best to go in to this film knowing very little, but what follows is a series of unpredictable twists and turns. Although this crime story is both disturbing and incredibly depressing, it is also uplifting to hear the amazing and touching stories Andrew's friends share about him.

3. GRIZZLY MAN (2005)

When I sat down to watch this a while back, I was ready for a boring nature documentary. But that is not at all what I got. GRIZZLY MAN follows Timothy Treadwell, an activist who spends thirteen summers in a National Park in Alaska to live with and protect grizzly bears. Hundreds of hours of filmed footage reveal a fascinating character. Treadwell is charismatic and completely dedicated to his cause. His knack for showmanship provides humor and also draws in the audience. But as the events unfold its really up to the viewer to decide whether or not Treadwell's extreme activism is justified and, without giving to much away, what responsibility he bears for the ultimate outcome of his story.

2. WALTZ WITH BASHIR (2009)

This Israeli documentary focuses on a film maker who interviews fellow veterans to figure out what happened during the invasion of Lebanon of 1982, since he has lost his memory. This beautifully animated film, based on a graphic novel, really is a visceral experience. Director Ari Folman expertly conveys a harrowing yet personal experience and heightens the war imagery to an almost surreal level, as dreams bleed into reality.

1. CAPTURING THE FRIEDMANS (2003)

This documentary chronicles the lives of the Friedmans: a perfect, upper middle class, Jewish family that is torn apart when the father is accused by the authorities of molesting and raping his students. Told mainly through interviews with students, the police, and home videos, we are privy to the changing family dynamics and the unexpected twists of the case. But CAPTURING THE FRIEDMANS transcends the destruction of a family, as it delves deep into our perception of truth. Told in a Rashoman-esque style, many of the events are up to the viewer's interpretation. This has to be my number one just because of the many arguments I've had with people about what really happened with the Friedmans.

HONORABLE MENTIONS: Tabloid (2010), Catfish (2010), Hot Coffee (2011), The Queen of Versailles (2012), The Cove (2009)

Top Five Films Based On True Stories Of the Past Ten Years

5. THE SQUID AND THE WHALE (2005)

Writer-director Noah Baumbach depicts the impact divorce has on a family living in Brooklyn in the 1980s in this quirky and honest semi-autobiographical drama. THE SQUID AND THE WHALE is a charming coming of age story that relies on its script (nominated for an Oscar) and actors, rather than its budget, to make the audience cringe, laugh, and cry.

4. CONTROL (2007)

The british film CONTROL examines the rise and fall of the 1970s rock band Joy Division's lead singer, Ian Curtis. Curtis' health, romantic, and professional struggles all contributed to the singer's suicide at the age of 23, the night before the band was set to fly to the U.S.A. where they surely would have found worldwide success. However, even those who have never heard of Joy Division can appreciate the film. Sam Riley completely embodies Ian Curtis, particularly in the scenes on stage. His performance as this performer suffering from the incurable disease of epilepsy is truly fascinating and heartbreaking. Director Anton Corbijn made the bold decision of shooting the entire film in black and white, but it pays off

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Entertainment

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CONTROL is an emotionally harrowing work of cinematic art.

3. ZODIAC (2007)

Director David Fincher (FIGHT CLUB, THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO) is on this list not once, but twice. As one of my personal favorite directors, he never fails to entertain with his edgy direction and compelling storytelling. ZODIAC, the story of the hunt for the infamous "zodiac" serial killer during the '60s and '70s, is a prime example of Fincher's ability as a director. The film creates tension with each scene, while still incorporating humor and spending time developing its characters. This nuanced thriller will put you on the edge of your seat and keep you there until long after the credits have rolled.

2. 50/50 (2011)

In 50/50, writer Will Reiser tells the semi-autobiographical story of Adam, a 27 year old diagnosed with cancer and given a 50/50 chance of survival. Although that sounds depressing, the film is by far the funniest on this list. Stars Joseph Gordon-Levitt and Seth Rogen deliver the jokes and the drama in this touching and charismatic film in which the characters are relatable, the story is engrossing, and the direction is simple but effective.

1. THE DEPARTED (2006) and THE SOCIAL NETWORK(2010)

David Fincher once again lands a spot on this list with his Best Picture nominee, THE SOCIAL NETWORK. The 2007 Best Picture Winner, THE DEPARTED (directed by Martin Scorsese), is a very different film. Although it is not directly based off of a true story, the characters are based on real people. Irish mob boss Frank Costello (Jack Nicholson) has known Colin Sullivan (Matt Damon) since he was a boy, and Sullivan is now working in the Massachusetts State Police as a mole for Costello. Meanwhile, Billy Costigan (Leonardo Dicaprio) is assigned by the State Police to infiltrate Costello's mob as a mole for the police. Still following? THE SOCIAL NETWORK does not have as intricately tangled a storyline, and most people already know what it is about. While one is a gangster drama and the other is a dramatization of the creation of facebook, both set the stage for fantastic performances. While the Godfather-esque editing of THE DEPARTED contributes to the excitement of the film, the soundtrack of THE SOCIAL NETWORK perfectly underlines the emotion in the film. Both films have different things to offer, but they share an amazing script and absolutely sensational performances (Leonardo Dicaprio and Jesse Eisenberg are particular standouts). Two of my favorite directors tie for this number one spot because of their brilliant storytelling and captivating direction.

HONORABLE MENTIONS: Hunger (2008), 127 Hours (2010), Friday Night Lights (2004), The King's Speech (2010), Into the Wild (2007), Magic Mike (2012), Hotel Rwanda (2004)

Antonia Nihsen and Alina Albrecht

Sudokus! Easy Sudoku

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

Hard Sudoku

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