

THE MUCKRAKER

the students' voice since 1997

THE INDEPENDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY SCHOOL STUDENTS' NEWSPAPER

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THE MUCKRAKER



In every newspaper, there are good places and bad places to have your article. The cover page is a good place. Pages three and five are fairly good as well; page seven is also not too bad. The page of the staff box is a bad place; so are most of the even pages. The worst place for an article to be placed is, however, reserved for the one article that can be found in each and every issue since volume one, issue one; for our readers, it's a part of The Muckraker just like the header, something you look at without truly reading. You're reading that article right now – "The Muckraker Speaks" – and you're probably one of the half a dozen of people who bother to do so.

The writers of "Titanic" once took on the challenge of writing an editorial entirely void of content. The outcome is rather bizarre, and the concept seems slightly strange; but, then again, what more is our very own "speaks"? Whenever we sit down to put together the new issue, one of our highlights is the boxing match between us editors; the loser ends up spending the next 90 minutes thinking of some way to scrape together the necessary 250 to 300 words – something about the miserable weather and the sickness that goes with it; or occasionally about how school is way too much work nowadays; how Fall/Christmas/Winter/Easter/Summer break is just too far in the future; we might even dare to remark on current political issues while remaining completely neutral; or if we really have no clue what to write about, we whine about writing the "speaks". Then we either end on a really negative note, or we try to encourage you (perhaps with a sarcastic connotation) to read some of the better articles in the issue and to keep a positive attitude – everything's going to change at some point, to the better or to the worse. Except for "The Muckraker Speaks". That will stay where it is, as long as the Muckraker exists, no matter how few people read it. If you do, make a lonely editor happy and get your friends to do so, too.

cheers,
the editors

Nuclear Audacity



Photo: niacblog.files.wordpress.com/

In the past years, a Middle-Eastern country has been secretly developing nuclear weapons. While it has yet to admit to this fact, its religious regime blatantly ignores international treaties and multilateral pressure. In fact, it repeatedly threatened preemptive military strikes on its neighboring countries. This country is Israel. While the world focuses on Iran's supposed atomic weapons program, a nearby country freely enlarged its nuclear capacities, tolerated by the world's greatest powers. Why do these care so much more about Iran?

In 1957, the United States began cooperation with Iran to construct nuclear energy facilities. Shah Pahlavi, reinstated four years earlier by US intelligence services after a brutal coup that toppled the democratically elected Mohammed Mossadegh, welcomed support for Iran's infrastructure and technological development. But after the Islamic Revolution of 1979, coop-

eration ended and foreign investors, including Siemens, left the country. Iran proceeded to put a freeze on nuclear development until the early 1990s, when it signed contracts with China and Russia to build nuclear reactors for energy production and medical use. In 2002, the United States accused Iran of attempting to make nuclear weapons, and a new fiasco began.

While the EU and International Atomic Energy Agency negotiated with the Islamic regime, George Bush's hard-line policy put the United States on a course of confrontation with Iran. But unlike his rhetoric suggests, no conclusive evidence exists suggesting that Iran is actually developing a nuclear bomb. In fact, the Mullah regime cooperated with IAEA officials in most cases and let them inspect their nuclear facilities. Non-cooperation stemmed from the West's refusal to allow Iran to enrich uranium for its nuclear reactors, a right it has in accordance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. By this agreement, every nation can peacefully use nuclear technology. But the West, while it sits on numerous nuclear power plants and atomic bombs, refuses to grant Iran this right.

Why is Iran sanctioned while the rest of the world uses nuclear energy without any restriction? After the Islamic Revolu-

Iran, continued on page 3

China

China: 1.3 billion identical, faceless people, sharing the same thoughts and united by one culture. This Western stereotype is dangerously incorrect and calls for facts. Find out the truth about what is supposedly a monolithic China and the burdens present in the country's 'wild West'.

on page 5

Student Plays

Not sure whether to spend a Friday night and a few Euros on your fellow students' humble productions? Find little teasers about the four student-directed plays...

on page 8

Teacher Feature: Mr. Vo

This edition's teacher feature is about Mr. Vo, one of the new American teachers who has joined us this year. You might have seen this young, fashionable teacher in the hallways before; Mr. Vo teaches Biology in grades 7 through 10. In our interview he shares his impressions of the new culture and school life...

Hey Mr. Vo!

Please give us a short history of your life.

Nice! I was born in California, 1982. I lived in Norwalk, and both my parents came from Vietnam right after the war. I was born and raised pretty much in Southern California, lived in L.A. County all my life, specifically Norwalk. I went to college at Occidental College, which really nobody ever heard of because it's a super small school. I went there, and afterwards got my masters of education there. I taught biology in a city called San Gabriel and coached football there, too. I finally got this job and I wanted to try something new, get out of California and America, and give it a shot. Kinda why I'm here now.

What was your best high school experience?

It's going to sound like a complete jock, and I don't want to come off as a complete jock, but playing football probably. I met most of my friends there, and it taught me a lot more than just the sport...how to be a good person.

What else do you enjoy doing?

I love playing my little ukulele, it's like the small Hawaiian guitar. Besides that, I'm your typical Asian person who likes video games. I like food a lot, I'm really addicted to gummy bears, specifically, to the ones with the fruit juice. Not the other ones, the other ones are okay, but they're too hard. And shoes. I love shoes. And I also really enjoy music, too. A lot.

What kind of music?

Kind of all over the place. I enjoy my hip hop, but there are times where I like to have my acousticky-whiny kind of music. It just depends on my mood.

Why did you choose to become a teacher?

I had a lot of part-time jobs in college and a lot of them had to do with tutoring little kids and I really enjoyed it. Every time I was done working, I felt



good about myself, it's kind of a selfish reason. I felt good about myself for being a positive role model for someone else. But I can't have good conversations with most of the little kids, simply because they're, well, little. Then I decided that high school would be the best fit for me because then I can really have good conversations, about the world.

What were your first impressions of Berlin?

When I came here, the weather was awesome! The weather was really nice. I was sick of how hot it was in California. I am done with the heat! I was excited to be here, and it's perfect weather... but the perfect weather only lasted for a month. Anyway, first impression, I really loved it. But specifically for the school, the kids here are amazing. It's a lot nicer here, where I just have to worry about teaching the content versus controlling the class room. In that sense, it's kind of easy with the control and class management; the challenge now is making the curriculum rigorous enough.

Are you learning the language?

(Sigh.) I suck so bad with my German. I'm slowly picking up more with the listening, I'd say I'm best at reading it. And my best is still horrible. Next would be my understanding, and finally speaking. I just get so embarrassed

when I try to speak.

What's your teaching philosophy?

I would approach it as a "salesman". I always think that if I show that I'm enjoying the subject, the students will enjoy it, too. I always try to lighten up myself, even if I'm having a bad day. All I try to show with biology is that the world's an amazing place, and hopefully you guys are going to appreciate the little things that are happening all around you. Once the students buy into it, then the teaching of it gets really easy. I try to teach them how to get the most out of the food they eat and working out.

Is there anything that you want to say about yourself?

I'm probably the darkest Vietnamese person that anybody's ever met. Uhh.. I get mad when I buy the monthly ticket for the S-Bahn or the U-Bahn and I don't get stopped. Then I think I wasted a ticket. My mission is to try to find as many all you can eat places that aren't like Sunday Brunch. (laughs)

That's pretty interesting! We are already at the end of the interview. Thank you for your time, Mr. Vo. It was great getting to know you better and I am sure students are looking forward to having you as a teacher.

Lisa Liu
Jenny Moegelin

The Cynic's Dictionary

OLYMPIC GAMES

"Originally a Hellenistic sports event that honoured athletes and celebrated cultures; nowadays a propagandistic spectacle to demonstrate national pride and occupy news channels and marketing strategists."

- Eileen Wagner

*Feeling cynical, too?
Then submit your own definitions to
themuckraker@gmail.com*

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT:

www.muckraker.webs.com

Zehlendorfs Café-Szene

Kaffee. Cappuccino. Kakao. Was am Automaten günstig und eher nicht so lecker ist, gibt es anderswo in unserem schönen Zehlendorfer Stadtzentrum in deutlich besserer Qualität, dafür aber auch zu einem deutlich höheren Preis. 6. Stunde. Die Zeit am Tag, die man endlich ohne Integrale, Wirtschaftssysteme und Shakespeare verbringen kann. Also Kaffee trinken. Im Sommer zum mitnehmen, im Winter zum drinnen genießen!

Cafe Anneliese

Wir beginnen unsere Tour nach Zehlendorf-Mitte wie alle JFKler in der Pause in Richtung S-Bahn. Kurz bevor wir am S-Bahnhof ankommen erreichen wir auf der rechten Straßenseite Café Anneliese.

Klientel: Gemischt. Schüler gibt es hier nur wenige, besonders cool sieht es von außen auch nicht aus. Innen ist es gemütlicher. Der Service ist nett und unaufdringlich.

Toll sind... die heiße Schokolade und der frische Kuchen.

Nicht so toll ist... der Kaffee. Leider. Es handelt sich hierbei um sehr faden, nahezu schon „amerikanischen“ Kaffee, der statt mit frischer Milch mit zwei Päckchen Kaffeesahne serviert wird. Schade.

Burger King

Weiter geht es also in Richtung S-Bahn, unter dem S-Bahn-Bogen durch und zu Burger King. Hier gibt es nämlich einen ausgesprochen guten Latte Macchiato. Wenn auch nur zum mitnehmen, dann wenigstens mit viel Milch(-pulver) und zu einen „leckeren“ Preis (ca. 1,50€). Wer besonders dekadent und gleichzeitig billig sein möchte, kaufe sich beim nahen „Wiener Feinbäcker“ noch Kuchen im Super-Feinangebot (z.B. 2 Berliner für 0.50€). Fertig ist die süße Mittagspause.

Toll ist... dass der Kaffee schnell fertig ist und zu einem guten Preis kommt.

Nicht so toll ist... das Ambiente. Kuscheilig wird's hier bestimmt nicht, daher wohl eher im Sommer zu empfehlen.

Das Gartenhaus

Wir passieren nun den Platz vor dem „Forum Zehlendorf“, laufen über die Ampel und die Straße links neben Blume2000 hoch. Oben geht's dann nach rechts und nach ca. 20 Metern stoßen wir auf Zehlendorfs versteckte Perle: Das Gartenhaus. Gleichzeitig mit dem Kunstgewerbehandel auf der anderen Seite vor einen paar Jahren gegründet, gibt es hier in einem wunderschönen Garten ein kleines Kaffee. Besonders

schön im Sommer, wenn man draußen sitzen kann.

Toll ist... der frische Kuchen kommt immer abwechselnd von Tillmann oder dem Französischen Bäcker „Aux delices Normands“ – also Daumen drücken, dass ihr eine französische Woche erwischt.

Nicht so toll ist... dass das Klientel hier vor allem aus 50 plus Zeitungslesenden besteht, daher muss man sich mehr in Lautstärke und Gesprächsstoff zurückhalten.

Walter's Coffey

Zurück zur S-Bahn, aber auf der rechten Straßenseite bleiben und dann direkt hinter dem S-Bahn-Bogen die Machnower Straße hochlaufen. Nach gefühlten 10 Minuten kommen wir hier zu Walter's Coffey. Im Sommer kann man in Strandstühlen draußen sitzen, im Winter laden drinnen gemütliche Sessel und Bänke zum Sitzen ein. Es werden gesonderte Preise für Schüler (z.B. Cappuccino - 2€) angeboten. Der Service ist super-nett, schnell und berät euch gerne.

Toll sind... die frisch belegten und gebackenen Bagels; wenn's eher süß sein soll, der Chai Latte. Der ist reichhaltig und süß genug um als zwei Mahlzeiten durchzugehen.

Nicht so toll ist... dass es immer voll ist. Vor allem in den Pausen, wenn sich hier alle Droste, Schadow und JFKS Schüler treffen.

Coffee Cabana

Laufen wir die Machnower Straße wieder runter (auf der rechten Seite) und dann am Teltower Damm rechts, kommen wir zum Coffee Cabana, das Neuste unter den Zehlendorfer Cafés. Die Bedienung ist immer gleich und gleich nett und es hängen in regelmäßigen Abständen Werke unterschiedlicher Künstler an den Wänden; manchmal gibt es hier auch nachmittags Lesungen und Konzerte.

Toll ist... eindeutig der Café au Lait. Der ist hier zwar nicht gerade billig (3,95€) dafür aber groß und super lecker.

Nicht so toll ist... dass es nur zwei Sessel und ein kleines Sofa gibt, also ist eher Stuhl-sitzen angesagt.

Es ist also für jeden etwas dabei - ob es billig und zum mitnehmen, gemütlich oder ruhig, laut und bunt oder einfach nur lecker sein soll; jeder sollte in Zehlendorf sein Café finden.

Iran, continued from page 1

lution, Iran became an enemy of the Western world. Especially the United States and Great Britain, who had possessed great economic interests in the Shah's regime, were outraged by the new government's policy of nationalization. The US embassy hostage crisis, in which Iranian students held US diplomats captive in Tehran for 444 days, motivated the West to completely break its ties with the new regime.

Today, Iran stands fairly isolated in the world. President Ahmadinejad's continued ridiculous verbal attacks against Israel cause other countries to keep their distance. But while he makes vague, unrealistic threats, Israeli and US officials have openly discussed the possibility of attacking Iran. In the spring of 2009, Israeli Prime Minister promised US President Barack Obama to refrain from attacking Iran that year. Accordingly, all possibilities are now on the table again. But military strategists know that a conventional strike on Iran would surely lead to disaster as it did in Afghanistan and Iraq. In their eye, the solution may be a nuclear attack. But can history really be that ironic? The aggressors would, after all, nuke a country to hinder it from producing nukes.

One should never underestimate the irony of history. Currently, a number of countries, several of which possess nuclear weapons and all of which use atomic energy, are pressuring a nation to cease its development and production of nuclear technology. Unmentioned remains the fact that nuclear energy is an entirely backwards technology that poses great dangers to us all. The same applies tenfold to nuclear weapons. Instead of complaining about Iran, we should take a look in the mirror. In Germany, the new government wants to keep old and unsafe nuclear reactors running even though their production capabilities could easily be replaced with renewable energy sources by 2021, when the last reactor is supposed to shut down in accordance with current legislation. On the other side of the Atlantic, Obama plans to build new nuclear power plants. All the while, the United States still has over 5000 nuclear bombs, several of which are stationed in Germany. What gives us the right to tell Iran what to do? Only if all other countries end nuclear power production and dispose of their atomic weapons can we truly tell Iran to cease its nuclear development. Until then, we're all hypocrites.

JFKS Life

THIMUN 2010: 100 Memories and More

"Het volgende station is: Den Haag." A low murmur of anticipation and excitement rang through our carriage as our train rolled into this small city's central station. This year, like many before, eighteen motivated JFKS students were selected to not only represent our school, but also the Republic of Mexico at The Hague International Model United Nations conference – the largest Model UN simulation in the world with over 3000 participants coming from as far as Peru, China, and New Zealand. This year's general topic was "Good Governance," which focused on the implementation of human rights in relation to the abolishment of corruption in undemocratic governments and organizations. The keynote speaker, Her Royal Princess, Princess Mabel von Oranje-Nassau, stressed the importance of future generations by stating, "The future is in your hands." Thereafter, delegates dispersed into their committees and five days of fruitful, controversial, and enlightening debate commenced. By the end of the week,

the General Assembly had passed many resolutions and, seeing as THIMUN is a non-governmental organization in the United Nations, these resolutions will be brought forward in this grand forum. In addition, the delegates enjoyed the beautiful city of The Hague. In the afternoons, we strolled through the small streets and snacked on stroopwafeln, BRAM fries, and little Dutch coffee candies. The Hague is such a small town that, when in the city center, one usually encounters other students from THIMUN. As a result, all delegates make many friends throughout the conference, and so everyone has many people to stay in touch with and maybe even visit throughout the year. Perhaps one does suffer from a slight case of Post-THIMUN Depression (PTD) or even The Hague Plague (THP), however, the memories that were created, the insight that was gained, and the friends that were made make up for all of it.

Leah Wiedenmann

The School Conference and Our New Principals

It may surprise you to learn that students are involved in more than one S.C. at JFK. Along with the Student Council, there is also the School Conference, which is a governing school body that meets every month. At these meetings the 14 representatives, made up of 4 teachers, 4 students, 4 parents, and 2 administrators, discuss current school issues and make recommendations. One of the responsibilities of the School Conference is to vote on candidates for administrative positions. In these decisions, each official member receives one vote. A student vote has the same significance as the vote of any other member. On January 14th, the School Conference met to vote on who will become part of the administrative team next year. There were three positions that needed to be filled: American High School Principal, American Assistant Elementary School Principal, and German Assistant Principal.

First up was the US HS Principal position. There were two candidates who had been shortlisted, and after interviewing them both separately, the School Conference discussed before voting. The result was that the School

Conference recommended Mr. Joe Kelly from Pennsylvania for the position. There were also two candidates for the US ES Assistant Principal, and after the interviews and a discussion, the in-house candidate, Mr. Rasco Cortinas, was chosen and recommended. Last up was the German Assistant Principal position, for which there was one candidate, Mr. Steffen Schulz. Many of you know him as the current Abi coordinator. However, the vote did not result in a two-thirds majority, which is required for a School Conference recommendation. So after 7 interviews, 3 discussions, and 3 votes, the School Conference adjourned. Now it is up to the School Supervisory Board to confirm the recommendations or not.

The School Conference is a place where students really do have a say, and if there is any student who feels that their voice is not heard, or if any one of you has questions about the School Conference, you can talk to one of the student representatives for this school year: Sarika Dewan, Alex Schmitz, Marcel Starfinger, and Helena Hengelbrok.

Helena Hengelbrok

-Staff-Box

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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

Culture

The Myth of a Monolithic China

A Westerner's image of China: A fuming, polluted nation, bursting at the seams with an overload of people, permitting no individuality. All hold the same 'communist' mindset, voluntarily subordinated to their government's authority. Industrial workers perform the same monotonous movements, sweating under the heat of the big red sun. A uniform, immobile mass of 1.3 billion people: the same eyes, the same hair, the same soul.

Aside the many political stereotypes we associate with China, the Chinese have always been the faceless masses in the Western mind. It's striking that, when discussing the United States, we often mention its diversity in culture, beliefs, and ethnic groups, however, when thinking of China, Westerners often get the impression of an overpopulated uniform mass of people, sprinkled here and there with a few exotic minorities living on the country's borders. In reality, China is far from being comprised of a homogenous population: with 56 official ethnic groups, not to mention some four hundred unofficial minorities, it demonstrates a unique diversity and a challenge to the Chinese government in maintaining the loosened threads that hold Chinese society together. China is ethnically diverse, in fact, one could say dangerously so. This is particularly exemplified by the recent uprisings in Xinjiang, a province in China's west, home to countless minorities including the Uighurs, who hold stronger cultural and ethnic ties to Central Asia than to the dominant Han Chinese. In general, China's Western regions prove to be very different than the image we have of China's modern Eastern cities, such as Beijing and Shanghai. However, it is not only the Western world that understates China's diversity, but the nation's own government seems to neglect the differences in its people out of a deep fear that they could tear the nation apart. The supposedly homogenous Han speak eight mutually unintelligible languages and, despite the government's aggressive attempts to impose ritualistic, linguistic, economic, and political uniformity throughout its borders, China's tremendous cultural diversity remains unneglectable, especially as the spirit of ethnic nationalism rises within the feeble walls of a nation about to be shattered.

China's "wild West" is of particular interest in proving the unharmonious quality of society the country is composed of. As one travels across China, one realizes the transformation from

Photo: www.denniscox.com/BeijingBicycles.jpg



modern, urban life filled with opportunity to the comparatively poor, rural regions of the West. The people living here don't usually feel affiliated with Han Chinese culture and their first allegiance is to their ethnic group. In Xinjiang, for example, prejudice and discrimination among Uighurs and Han Chinese runs strong. Muslim Uighurs are not allowed to teach the Qur'an in mosques and better jobs are mostly reserved for the Han. Han-Uighur interaction is rare and intermarriage almost unheard of. In an attempt to create a monoculture even in these immensely diverse Western regions, Uighurs are forced to learn to speak Mandarin, but out of concerns that the Uighur culture and tradition will be diluted, resistance to sinicisation is steadfast and they often refuse to speak it. When you ask a member of an ethnic minority what time it is, the common response is "which time?" While all of China officially runs on Beijing time, Xinjiang, several time zones removed from Beijing, runs dueling clocks. Most ethnic minorities will set their watches to unofficial Xinjiang time, demonstrating resistance even on seemingly less important levels. The animosity towards the centralized government becomes evermore apparent with continuing unrest and resistance to assimilation. Many members of ethnic minorities go so far as to claim China a colonial power, occupying Western regions simply to extract their resources. The Beijing government, so critical of Western imperialism and colonialism, seems in some ways to be guilty of the crime itself. Oblivious to the desires and needs of ethnic minorities, the govern-

ment says they are all *zhong guo ren*, Chinese people.

The consequences were seen in early July 2009, as a riot that killed 140 people and injured 800 erupted in Urumqi as a reaction to violent attacks on Uighurs at a toy factory in Guangdong several weeks before.

As I was traveling China at the time, I was able to experience reactions to this incident first-hand. Local newspapers seemed to be in a rush to justify the government's policies as having no influence on any ethnic unrest. China Daily reported on July 22nd that, according to Hu Jintao, the State's 55-year-old policy regarding the nation's 110-million minority population "had nothing to do with the violent crimes" in Urumqi. One could argue that the government has been making efforts in the past years to increase development in China's Western regions, however, the living standards in these areas are incomparable to those in the East, and it is likely that these efforts may go unnoticed until there are drastic changes. For many families it is impossible to support themselves financially unless they are able to send their children to major cities in the East to look for jobs or receive a proper education. While I was staying in Shanghai I met such a person: a 22-year old Muslim worker from Gansu province who had to leave his family in order for them to survive. When he was 12-years old, in 2nd grade, he had to quit school because his family could no longer afford it; they earned roughly 119¥ (13 Euros) a month and his schooling cost 50¥ (5 Euros). His life in Gansu was hard, he lived in a small, Muslim dominated town called Lingxia. Several years ago he came to Shanghai via a 48-hour hard-seater train and has had several jobs since. He now works at a Muslim noodle restaurant from 8:30AM-8:30PM every day except one day in the year, which is a traditional Chinese holiday. He doesn't have time to do much but work and most of his earnings he sends home to his family, which he hasn't seen since he left 8 years ago. He is never able to practice his religion due to lack of time, while his boss does, and he dreams of traveling to Mecca one day. In one year he will go home to Gansu and enter his pre-arranged marriage with a girl of whom he has only seen a photograph, and he hopes to be able to open his own restaurant there and offer jobs and a future to people who, like himself, are illiterate. When I asked him if he's happy he said, yes, at least he has food. However, he

China, continued on page 6

Culture

10 Things You Probably Didn't Know About J.D. Salinger

J.D. Salinger, one of the most reclusive figures in the literary industry, died recently on the 27th of January, 2010 at the age of 91. Most renowned for being considered the most important American writer to emerge since the World War II with his masterpiece "The Catcher in the Rye", J.D. Salinger was an author who was also famous for not wanting to be famous. In memory of his death, here are ten facts about the enigmatic author who dedicated a majority of his life to avoiding the spotlight:

1. Never much of a student, Jerome David Salinger attended a progressive school on the Upper West Side, where he was expelled after just two years. In 1934, he was packed off to a military academy, which became the model for Pencey Prep, the school from which the protagonist of his masterpiece, "The Catcher in the Rye", flunks out of. Like Holden Caulfield of "The Catcher in the Rye", Mr. Salinger was the manager of the school fencing team, and he also became the literary editor of the school yearbook.

2. Salinger was drafted during the World War II; he served with the Counter-Intelligence Corps of the Fourth Infantry Division, whose job was to interview Nazi deserters and sympathizers. In 1945, he was hospitalized for "battle fatigue", and after recovering, he stayed in Europe until the end of the war, chasing Nazi functionaries. He married a German doctor during his stay, but remained married to her very briefly. Her name was Sylvia, but Mr. Salinger is known to have always called her "Saliva".

3. As a young man, Salinger fervently desired to earn fame through his literary works. He boasted to his fellow students in college about his artistic talent and capabilities, and wrote swaggering letters to editors of prestigious magazines.

But fame, once it arrived, soon began to burden him. Salinger told the editors of Saturday Review that he was "good and sick" of seeing his photograph on the covers of "The Catcher in the Rye" and demanded that it be removed from the following editions, and ordered his agent to burn all fan mails. In 1953, Salinger officially fled attention of all sorts by moving to a 90-acre compound on a wooded hillside in Cornish from East 57th Street in Manhattan. He seemed to be fulfilling Holden's desire to build himself "a little cabin somewhere with the dough I made and live there for the rest of my life," away from "any goddam stupid conversation with anybody."

4. In 1937, after a series of unenthusiastic weeks at New York University, Mr. Salinger traveled with his father to Austria and Poland, where his father intended for him to learn the business of importing ham and cheese. Deciding the business was not for him, however, he returned to America and drifted through a term at Ursinus College. Fellow students remember him striding around campus announcing that he was going to write the Great American Novel.

5. In his early days, Mr. Salinger was a ladies' man; he is known to have dated numerous women, including Oona O'Neill, the daughter of Eugene O'Neill. Salinger and O'Neill's relationship is said to have ended, because O'Neill fell in love with her future husband, Charlie Chaplin.

6. In 1953, Salinger befriended some local teenagers and permitted them to interview him for what he assumed would be an article on the high school page of a local paper. The article appeared instead as a feature on the editorial page, and Mr. Salinger felt so betrayed that he broke off with the teenagers and built a six-and-a-half-foot fence around his

property.

7. Salinger's elusiveness only added to the mythology growing up around him; some believed he was publishing under an assumed name. For a while in the late 1970s, William Wharton, author of "Birdy", was rumored to be Mr. Salinger, until it turned out that William Wharton was instead a pen name for the writer Albert du Aime.

8. Mr. Salinger's privacy was disrupted in 1998 and again in 2000 with the publication of memoirs by, first, Joyce Maynard, with whom he had a 10-month affair in 1973, and then by his daughter, Margaret. Both books added a creepy element to the Salinger legends; Ms. Maynard wrote that Salinger was sexually manipulative and controlling. Ms. Salinger further wrote that her father was self-centered and abusive toward her mother, and added that Mr. Salinger drank his own urine and sat for hours in an orgone box. Some critics complained that both women were trying to exploit and profit from their history with Mr. Salinger, and Mr. Salinger's son, Matthew, wrote in a letter to The New York Observer that his sister had "a troubled mind," and that he didn't recognize the man portrayed in her account.

9. Salinger's "The Catcher in the Rye", which was first published in 1951, persists to allure readers to this day, despite the fact that some of its well-known protagonist's (Holden Caulfield) preoccupations now seem slightly outdated. It continues to sell more than 250,000 copies a year in paperback.

10. J.D. Salinger died of natural causes in his house in Cornish, N.H., where he lived in seclusion for more than 50 years.

Hyerin Park

China , continued from page 5

is one of the lucky few who are able to make a living coming from the situation he was in. In order to support his family he had to abandon his own ethnic values and learn to speak Mandarin, could no longer practice his religion, and adopted the Han ways. His story proves how hard it is to be part of an ethnic minority in China, that the government primarily supports urban development and tends to neglect the hardships of Western China. The government seems to have introduced a system that says "you can only succeed when you become one of us". Many ethnic minorities are therefore participants in their own destruction: the only way to oppose assimilation is not to go to a Chinese school, but if they don't go to a Chinese school, they can't succeed career-wise.

Beijing's intolerance towards its large minority population in

combination with the hate this spurs in the various ethnic groups is deepening the wedge that threatens to divide the nation. In spite the bottled up tensions and the unmistakable diversity present within China's borders, the world is still stuck in its dangerously outdated view and breathless superlatives of the world's fastest growing economy. While more and more speculations arise about China becoming the world's next superpower, a view on China's internal strife deems this conclusion nearly impossible. With its domestic instability it seems unlikely that China should gain so much power, but rather enter a rise and fall situation.

Carolynn Look

Comments, Replies?

send your opinions and articles to:

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Entertainment

Out in the Whoop-whoops

Thursday night on some lonely country road between Nga Tawa School, Marton and the Cox's place, Levin (New Zealand): A car crammed up with four girls and one – well, in comparison old – man. The music turned up loud, doesn't matter that its quality sucks (the iPod-car transmitter has lived quite a hard life), their singing along makes it even worse anyway. The trunk filled up to the top with bags, tramping boots, sleeping bags, school blazers that were carelessly thrown over the backseat, and somewhere in between, one or two books and pens.

Yes, that's us! That's true Nga Tawa girls on their way from school after five long weeks of waiting for the first long weekend of the term. That's the kind of girls that can't wait to get out of their little boarding school in the "whoop whoops" (or how others say the "middle of nowhere") just to get even further away from civilization into the Tararua Ranges with a sleepover at Brooke's in order to get prepared.

Finally in Levin, we "only get an old bachelor's dinner", as Rob calls it – baked beans on toast, but who cares? At least it doesn't look like last night's meal made into mince like some of the school food. And anyway, the good food is just about to tumble out of the shoppingbags in the corner. Because you need a lot of energy to go tramping, half of the bags is full of chocolate and lollies which are divided into five evenly big and two smaller stacks – strong men don't need as much as little girls! "Are you done? Food isn't the only thing we have to pack!" And so the part of the floor that is not taken by stacks of food gets covered in clothes. Everything has to be there, but not too much. "13 kg is enough to carry on your back and you will all smell the same so you can wear the same shirt twice", is Rob's opinion. He also makes sure that we pack everything the right way – it is a science of its own where to put which piece of equipment so that everything you need is handy and the weight distribution is optimized.

So, after a long time of getting things together and checking waterproofness of boots and jackets, we are released. All the stress is washed off by the warm bubbly water of the spa while watching the stars above.

Around lunchtime the next day everyone is assembled in front of the house, including Cha and her older brother Shaun who just drove here. With seven backpacks, five loud girls, Rob, Shaun, and one excited Golden Retriever – who don't know what is waiting for them –

drive out of the gate. Everything starts like any other tramp, but I can already tell you it gets worse the more time passes.

Every 30 minutes we have a little break to eat and drink something and on the way we get used to our 13 kg backpacks as well as the partly steep mountain. But after a while boredom starts and we need a game, so for the next few hours we practice the alphabet forward and backward with everything from car brands and insects, to countries and cities. About an hour before it gets dark we arrive at Field Hut and, of course, the first thing girls find interesting is the axe and the firewood that needs to be split. Everyone gets a chance to try and to the men's surprise there actually are a few blocks successfully cut, maybe it took two girls five minutes for each of them, but we got there. Inside the hut the so nicely split wood vanishes quite soon – it was cut for burning after all, and it does help to warm up the hut which doesn't have electricity or water pipes. We decide that 5pm is too early for dinner and so we have to find something to do, but what? Well, someone did think of packing cards and there is a table in the hut so we...no, we don't play cards, that is so last year! We build card houses.

Unbelievable, but true, it finally is 6pm and so we allow ourselves to get out the gas stove and tin pans. Some of the water from the tank outside has to do for making mashed potatoes out of powder and the sausages are all either burnt or not quite done. Nothing really tastes good, but we all blame each other and are hungry enough to eat up like good girls. And dessert is already in the back of our minds: Between the firewood everyone finds themselves a stick with a pointy tip and the bag of marshmallows gets divided fairly, even Rob and Shaun get some. Now everyone finds a place around the fireplace, and a discussion over the quality of a perfectly roasted marshmallow ensues, but maybe it is individual taste that defines it...

Suddenly, we hear steps outside, but no one comes in, so two of us tough girls go out and take the dog with us, just in case... The dangerous invader is just a harmless man who comes up with his dog every second night, has a little snack and walks back down in the dark – maybe he is even crazier than we are.

The next morning we crawl out of our sleeping bags and pack up after breakfast. But this time we are not taking our back packs all the way, they just

get dumped in the bush behind the hut. So now all of us, except for Rob, who is carrying everyone's lunch and the emergency equipment, can walk freely. In Long Johns and shorts we walk through the forest, but soon we are above the trees and we see the first white spots on the ground: snow! Of course, everyone tries to reach the snow first to start a snow ball fight. Soon enough, we are concentrating on something else, though – now the snow is knee-deep with a tick layer of ice on the top. So most of the time, we can walk on it, but every minute or so someone falls into a hole with one leg and has to get back out somehow. We all make it to the next hut without any injuries and have our lunch, which really is a bit better than last night's dinner.

But the most exciting part of the day is definitely the completely frozen pond on which one can ice skate – in tramping boots, of course! So by the end of the day back at Field Hut everyone is well tired out and luckily our bags are still where we left them. The evening progresses very similarly to the prior – dinner is bad, the card houses get higher, 'Cheat' is still the best-loved card game and each of us gets a piece of chocolate that is measured by the millimeter. Everyone sleeps in the same sleeping bag and on the same mattress as last night and breakfast is at the same time, afterward we put on the same clothes as yesterday.

The path that took us up on day one takes us back down on day three and the alphabet also needs some more practicing. The only difference is that we are walking much faster – it goes downhill and some of the weight we carried up is left behind in the long drop up at the hut.

Finally, we reach the foot of the mountain and are looking forward to a shower at home. But as we are tough girls, we don't need a shower! Why? Five minutes before reaching the parking lot, we see a river that has water of the nicest blue. Does it matter that it was snowing ten minutes ago? No, we just put down our backpacks, take off our boots and jump in. By the time everyone has been to the other side of the river, we don't even feel the cold anymore. Just the right time to get changed, get into the car, and hope that the hot chocolate at home won't take too long to get hot.

JFKS Life

Student Directed Plays

Black Mass

By *Edward Bond***Directed by** *Moritz Zeidler***With** *Alaina Mack, Emma Epps, Sarah Clark, Julius Heitz*

On March 21st, 1960, 69 black men and women were shot dead by policemen at the end of a protest that had begun peacefully in Sharpeville near Vereeniging, South Africa. The event that came to be known in history as the Sharpeville Massacre was spurred on by the South African Apartheid (a system based on racial discrimination against black African natives and other non-whites) government's creation of the so-called "homelands" or "Bantustans"; areas granted certain levels of independence within South Africa reserved for black and "colored" people according to the heritage they were – often falsely – assigned. For the men and women living in these homelands to travel to the rest of South Africa (many of them could find employment nowhere else) they needed to carry passports with them. On March 21st, the anti-apartheid movement PAC rallied its supporters, encouraging them to travel outside their homelands without passports, thus provoking arrests, hoping to flood prisons and ridiculing the apartheid government. The police tried to disperse the crowd by intimidating them with Saracen armored vehicles and low-flying jets, a tactic that had worked earlier that day in similar protests near Evaton. As this failed, the police opened fire on the crowd at 1:15 pm, later claiming that they had been provoked by members of the crowd throwing rocks. Most of the 69 killed and over 180 injured were shot in the back as they fled the police's relentless fire.

On March 22nd, 1970, the apartheid movement held the Sharpeville Massacre Tenth Anniversary Commemoration Evening at the Lyceum Theatre in London. For this event, British playwright Edward Bond wrote his play "Black Mass". On March 21st, 2010 – less than a month from now – people all over the world will commemorate the Sharpeville massacre's 50th anniversary. Join us at our contribution to this event by watching our production of "Black Mass".

A Good Time

By *Ernest Thompson***Directed by** *Ruby Mehnert***With** *Samantha Harris, Julien Kalleja*

Did you ever go on a date with someone who is uncommonly obnoxious and has trouble keeping their thoughts to themselves? Usually, one very intentionally ignores these people that chant out loud in public just to calm themselves down. But when these crazy people find each other, it gets really bizarre! This humorous occurrence is the subject of the one-act play *A Good Time*. The very attractive and cynical 30-year-old New Yorker Mandy Morgan who knows it all meets the handsome, young, and enthusiastic police officer Rick Selby on her birthday in Los Angeles. Unfortunately, they meet on bad terms; Mandy is breaking the speed limit. She tries to convince the boyish lieutenant to drop the traffic fine and instead offers him "A Good Time" when he comes to visit her in New York, never imagining that one day he'd show up at her door in New York, ready to take her up on it. Two and a half years later the eager athletic Rick is awaiting his promised "good time" in New York confronted with a very forgetful Mandy Morgan. Will Rick go away empty-handed? Starring Samantha Harris, 11th grade, and Julien Kalleja, 10th grade, the deranged play gets an almost natural touch. Enjoy this nutty version of a love comedy directed by Ruby Mehnert and try to forget the disaster dates you've had by getting some laughs.

Come see this year's student directed plays on **Friday, the 26th and Saturday, the 27th of February at 19:00 in the Small Aula.**

Also showing is the one-act play "Suppressed Desires" by Susan Glaspell, directed by Mrs. McDaniel and starring Paulina Heßmann, Carina Rieder and Sean Ackerman.

No Exit

By *Jean-Paul Sartre***Directed by** *Paul Wolter***With** *Max Merrill, Leah Wiedenmann, and Marissa Fuchs*

Jean-Paul Sartre was not a typical playwright. That's what makes his existentialist piece "No Exit" so vastly intriguing. The premise of the play brilliantly showcases the philosopher's theory; contrary to all major world religions and their visions of the afterlife, Sartre imagines a hell in which damnation is comprised by the mere company of others. As simplistic as it appears to be, the plot unfolds as the three characters, a former journalist, a privileged woman of the upper class, and an off-beat, indiscreet postal clerk unveil their reasons for being sent to spend eternity in this destitute room. From a directorial standpoint these characters were already visible in the three-actor cast selected at the auditions. The piece's minimalistic stage setup only further underscores the true drive to the piece: dialogue.

It is the balancing act between dramatic exhibition and philosophical profoundness that characterizes this play. The performance alone is a reason not to miss it by any means.

Bitter Stranger

Written and directed by *Ruth Friedman***With** *Fanny Steckel, Farrah Kalleja, Daniel Joslyn*

The play deals with a story about a mother and her daughter's inability to help a friend. The mother proceeds to tell the story of her husband's death and the grief she endured. At the end of the play, a stranger who has suffered in a similar way enters. It remains up to the mother to decide how to handle the situation.

The play examines the different approaches to grief and suffering. These events can either trap an individual or develop their character. The mother's loss of her husband in the early stages of adulthood nearly extinguishes her future; however, she is able to move past her suffering and continue on with life. The stranger, on the other hand, holds onto the bitter feelings of rejection and isolation, which destroy his progression in life. The daughter, Emily, learns from these examples the best way to approach her friend dealing with her parents' divorce.