

THE MUCKRAKER

the students' voice since 1997

THE INDEPENDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY SCHOOL STUDENTS' NEWSPAPER

Volume XII, Issue IV

Friday, November 14, 2008

Circulation: 600

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We felt rushed to publish another Muckraker, fearing you may forget us among the myriad of papers, the what-are-their-names, Herald something, the Deutsche -uh- Welle, the BILD „Heute schon gelesen?“ (no competition there...) that stormed school halls the days after the historic election. Curious that media outlets were so keen on getting JFKS footage. Of course, there's the fact that we're the Kennedy school and Obama has so often been compared to the legendary "Berliner"; another reason may be the fact that young people have been so interested in the election, so relating reportages to a school might be appealing. However, the results of these extensive interview sessions are quite meek: in the videos, they are reduced to meaningless excerpts, information was falsified (by which paper, you wonder?); the Herald Tribune seems to criticize JFKS students' scepticism toward Obamamania. In conclusion: Long live the Muckraker! Read our election coverage, columns, articles on Kennedy-Shriver, puppy love, and the divide between diploma and Abitur students. We probably shouldn't mention the Sudoku on the last page...Have a look inside! (Vielleicht als Klokeltüre- Wait, no. Not possible. The admiration seems to be notoriously neglecting our calls of nature, locking bathrooms because of alleged graffiti!). Classmates are diligently writing; we even found an article on the new SC in our little brown mailbox. Please keep submitting articles, but remember: We need to be able to communicate with you; leave your name or your email address!

Cheers,
your editors.

Invisible Walls: Visible Discomfort



and Abitur students. JFKS was founded as a school in which German and American children and young adults interact with one another, but it seems more and more as if the two different leaving certificates divide the German and American students, completely contradicting the original ideology of the John-F.-Kennedy school.

The Berlin Wall fell in November, 1989. That was clear. There was an actual wall which was, of course, also a symbolic for a system. The system changed and the wall physically came down. JFKS also has a wall, an invisible wall which many of you, especially students in the Oberstufe, may have noticed. This is the wall that divides Diploma

At a multi-cultural school that does not offer an IB, different types of diplomas are essential. But how can that this lead to such a large division within the student body? Many students are content with the situation or just "don't care". Others, who exclusively attend classes with Abitur or Diploma students starting in eleventh grade, drift away from old

Wall, continued on page 2

Election Collection

You made it: The last of our US election coverage is here! But we were sure to put in a serious end-sprint. Not only will you find your mock election results pie charts, but something long-winded on Obama and the economy in the spirit of the series, and for a real cymbal conclusion (encore?), the longest, most ingeniously rhymed piece of lyric on a political election you've ever read!

on pages 3,5,6

Puppy Love

Infatuations are good, but high school crushes are absolutely unhealthy. True, but that's what makes our high school experience entertaining, argues Leonie Schulte in her analysis of different "puppy loves". For those of you who have never had the joy and pain of having a crush - read this and be amazed! All the others: Find out if you are the shy-type, the stumbling-type, or the "I-can't-stop-thinking-about-you"-type.

on page 4

Interrailing

What to do when you've graduated from high school and are on your gap year before starting university? Pack your bags, buy an interrail ticket and discover nearly all of Europe in a whirlwind adventure! While this may seem like every student's dream, JFKS alumnus Jacob Rotschild took the chance and spent the past weeks backpacking through The Netherlands, Belgium and France. Read about his travel extravaganza and inspire yourself!

on page 7

Zurück in die Kirche!

„Pro-Reli“ nennt sich der Verein, der in Sorge um die geistliche Entwicklung unserer Jugend ein Berliner Volksbegehren nach Religionsunterricht initiierte. Die Werbeplakate der Kampagne habt ihr sicherlich bereits an den Wänden unserer Schulgebäude entdeckt. Sie zeigen strahlende Kinder, beglückt vom Einstieg in die Frömmigkeitskunde. Religion als Ethikersatz ist eine höchst fragwürdige Angelegenheit, kritisch diskutiert...

on page 8

Anthony Kennedy-Shriver Visits JFKS

"Every person has a great gift, and we should celebrate those gifts to enrich our own lives". These were the words of Anthony Kennedy-Shriver, who visited JFKS on Fun Day 2008. Although the initial reason for his visit was the promotion of his Best Buddies program, he took his time to address the school community and elaborate on his personal connection to our school.

Eagerly awaited by parents, students, and buddies, Anthony Kennedy-Shriver arrived at our school before the official opening of Fun Day. His audience witnessed a very moving and inspiring speech, in which Kennedy-Shriver repeatedly addressed the rewarding experience of engaging in community service. He expressed his highest admiration towards parents of children with intellectual disabilities and addressed them with the words "you are my heroes". After his speech, Shriver proceeded to tour our schools campus, and visited the Best Buddies Fun Day booth. On his way, he was warmly welcomed by all members of the school community, adults and students alike. He participated in a game of Dosenwerfen and an impromptu photo shoot with members of the JFKS Best Buddies activity.

Thereafter, he was accompanied to Dr. Reale's office and interviewed by journalists of both the Elementary school's "JFKS Times" and your very own "The Muckraker". He advised younger readers on how to initiate their very own local Best Buddies program. According to Anthony Kennedy-Shriver, "all you need to do, is do what you think is right". He furthermore highlighted the personal relationship his family



has to JFKS and congratulated the school for being the first in Germany to initiate the Best Buddies Program. In fact, He-In Cheong founded the program at JFKS before it was even officially introduced in Germany.

Lastly, the nephew of John F. Kennedy took his time to answer questions about the current political landscape of the U.S. To the question of whether Barack Obama is the new Kennedy, he emphasized the similarities both characters display - their emotional connection to the country and their engagement in civil service; yet he also stressed that John F. Kennedy was one-of-a-kind with his intellect and his unique charisma. Shortly after the presidential elections, this comparison was made repeatedly, describing the President-Elect as "the new JFK" or as "president and rock star." Students at

JFKS also drew the parallel, but compared the two's challenges: Kennedy's faults with the Bay of Pigs and the difficult economic situation Obama inherited from his predecessor. How he will ultimately deal with these issues during his four-year presidency will prove whether Barack Obama really is the new Kennedy.

Anthony Shriver-Kennedy's visit to JFKS was once again an honour for the school community and for the members of Best Buddies and acknowledgement of their valuable contribution to our society.

*Ina Fischer
Max Jürgens*

Wall, continued from page 1

classmates, making new friends easily. Many students, however, find the choice between High School Diploma and the Abitur very difficult for many different reasons.

Parents push their children into one or the other program based on where they think their child will be successful, whether they have money for a college education in the United States and, for the parents who are really informed, what classes will be available to their child. The High School Diploma and the Abitur do offer different kinds of classes (AP classes and Leistungskurse), that much is clear. For students who are not bilingual, the choice is relatively easy.

But what about the students who are bilingual and have roots both in the US and in Germany? Here, the choice becomes much harder. And this choice has to be made in grade 10, when many of the students still aren't sure about what the choices really mean, much less

ready to make such an important decision. Usually, the choice is made on the basis of friends. Everyone knows that the Abitur and the Diploma students see very little of one another. We don't share classes, which means that keeping up on friendships becomes quite difficult. A valid point is that forging new friendships could combat the loss of old friends, but reality is that with our busy schedules, extra curricular activities and family, it becomes increasingly hard to make new friends and maintain old friendships. The everyday reality is that you mainly see the people with whom you have classes, and that there is very little mix of the Diploma and Abitur students after grade 10.

Ultimately, just because a wall is invisible does not mean it does not exist. It is lies in our hands to make this wall fall at the John-F.-Kennedy School.

Katarina von Witzke

The Cynic's Dictionary

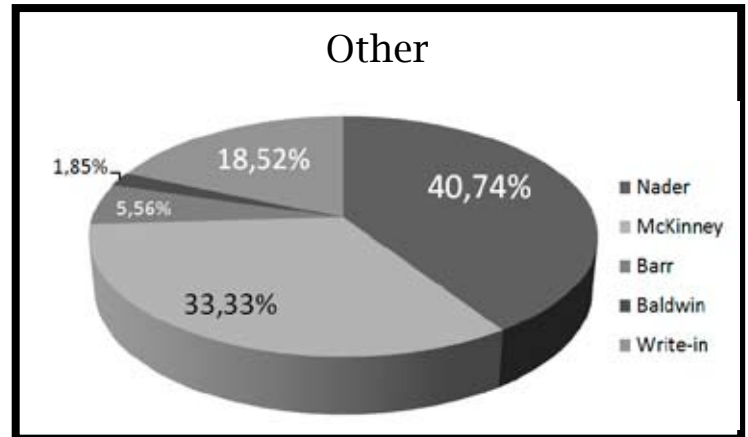
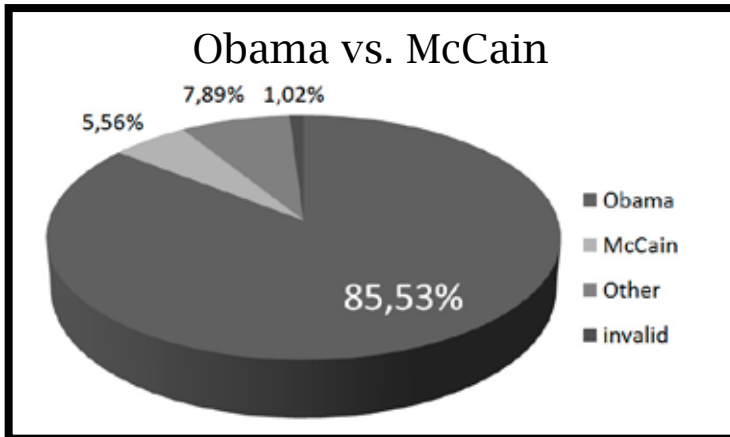
CHANGE

"Something that will definitely happen - if only you can believe in it."

Feeling cynical, too?
Then submit your own definitions to themuckraker@gmail.com by December 8th.

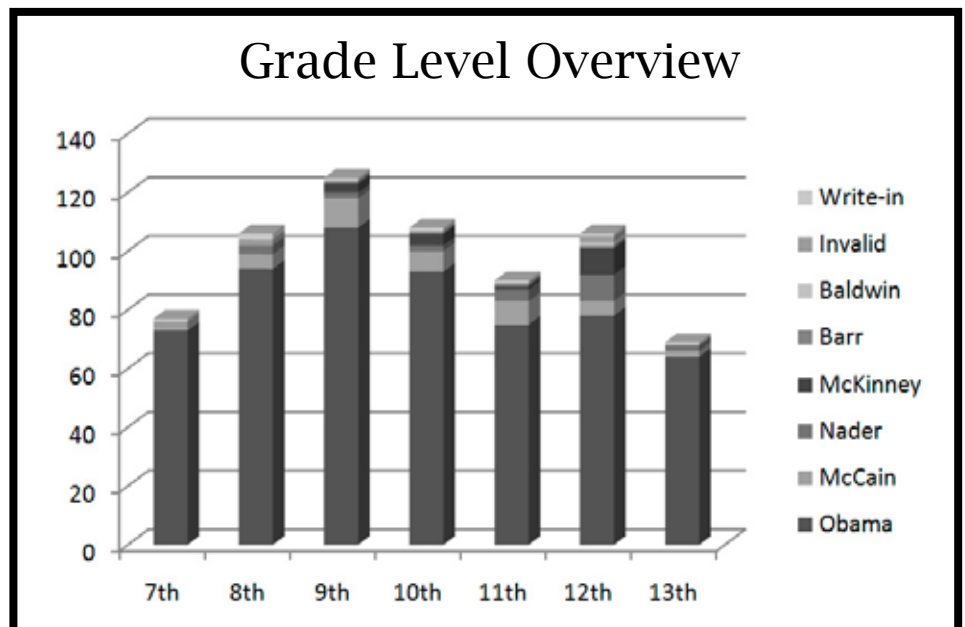
Eileen Wagner

Mock Election Results



Most (684) of you participated in this year's US mock election – no, the Muckraker isn't actually mocking the election, even though judging by the Write-ins (Mickey Mouse, Mel Gibson, Curry Wurst, Arnold Schwarzenegger, and Lenny G., just to name a few), not all of you took it as seriously. The results are quite what we've expected – though we were surprised how many non-Republicans or Democrats, who no one has heard of, were voted for. We suspect McKinney received so many votes simply because students saw she's a Green party member. German students are probably also more apt to choose the alternatives, since with our five-party system, we are used to the idea of pluralism. At least the actual election outcome pleases 86% of the student body. Felicitations!

Editors



Muckraker Poll

Why did Obama win the election?

"He won thanks to his very well-publicised campaign, also on the internet, his charisma, and because he's so different from McCain – easy to classify the 'new, young guy' and the 'old, Bush guy'."

"Sarah Palin's vice-candidacy caused a lot of McCain-voters to change their minds."

"He won because he's black."

"He had more money, he's young, he's like (... ..) KENNEDY!"

"Race was part of his change platform. People thought he was different because his skin colour was different. That's in a way racist, too."

"Credit crisis helped him because he's more about helping people instead of helping corporations and banks."

"Er hat international gearbeitet. Jugendliche haben sich interessiert. Bush war einfach zu schlecht. Er hat ja sogar music videos."

"He had more money and he looks better. Seriously, I thought about that."

"Darf ich mein Brötchen erst zu Ende essen?"

"I think he won because he had the best media campaign, I don't want to say ever, but definitely in the post-war era, because he had more money, more public endorsements. He knew how to market himself cunningly, and he had the voter registration push, which none of the candidates before him did to this degree."

"The Republican Party alienated itself to everybody except conservative right-wingers."

"I voted for him because I liked his policies."

"I think he was a lot better at getting support on the ground, getting people to the polls etc."

What will change now that he is president?

"He'll save the world by saving the American economy."

"He definitely has to bring his own country in Ordnung again, which is in Wirtschaft und Umwelt. I don't know if he can prevent fi-

nancial crisis, but he can steuer against it."

"International relationships need to be improved, and the medical system must be thoroughly reformed."

"Nothing."

"The economic system with tax cuts, I don't know how effective it will be."

"I don't think anything would change because he's only part of the US political establishment. He really isn't that different from the older politicians. He ran on the campaign on change, it was populism, he doesn't even know what he wants to change, his ideas are too vague."

"Different ecological tendencies."

"I think people like to believe that things would change immediately. At first, people will be frustrated, but after a while he'll do a good job."

"Implement medical healthcare for most Americans, and he will make the country less of a capitalistic society in the sense that

Poll, continued on page 7

Puppy Love

I would like to dedicate this article to, what I find to be one of the cornerstones of pubescent existence: High school crushes. Often quite painful and obnoxious, high school crushes can also be exhilarating and have the power of brightening up our school days.

As a soon to be (keep your fingers crossed) Abiturient I have had my fair share of infatuations both exciting and excruciating. In the course of my JFK carrier I have observed a variety of different crush-personas. Exhibit A: The discrete crush. Discrete crush is the kind of person who watches their flame from afar but never actually confronts them about their feelings. They are the type who quietly observe and adore, who follow their heartthrobs around subtly and go running in another direction if the person happens to look their way. Discrete crushes are usually found in the younger grades just like Exhibit B; the tough-love crushes. Commonly found in boys of around 13 (but can also reach until way past the Abi), tough-love crushes are those who make it a point to be as condescending to their love interests as possible. They approach love in the reverse-fashion and instead of fighting for love end up fighting it away.

Next there are the obvious-crushes, a category into which a lot of people fall into, including yours truly. Unlike the discrete-crushes, obvious crushes do manage to muster up the courage to talk to their sweethearts but turn bright red and start spouting nonsense the minute they do. A lot of obvious crushes also develop the habit of giggling uncontrollably when they talk to, see, or hear about their flames. The obvious crushes are usually pretty harmless though, unlike the pushy-crushes. Pushy-crushes are the kind of people that find it very easy to approach their love interests and very hard to stop approaching them. They are the type of constant sms-writing, calling and

following kids who have absolutely no comprehension of the meaning of personal space and proceed to invade every aspect of a person's day.

Infatuations come in all shapes and sizes but they all make our school life a lot more exciting.

Crushes are part of the reason we get up and go to class, they send us running through the hallways looking for our darlings, make our hearts and stomachs flutter and...distract us from class...

Crushes are always wonderful and mind-boggling at the same time. When you are infatuated with someone you spend your free time analyzing every conversation, every gesticulation, every moment you share with them. Even if you're only talking about the weather, when you have a crush, you interpret all kinds of nonsense into the meaning of every sentence.

I brought this idea up in a discussion in my English class and everyone turned to me and gave me a funny look like "No one does that except for you!" Don't deny it! We all do and that's exactly what makes a crush so electrifying. When I have a crush on someone I look for them anywhere I go because crushes make you lose your sense of logic and all of a sudden you are totally certain that your sweetheart is around the corner at all times even if you are in a different country.

The point I am trying to make here is that everyone falls has a crush at some point, especially in high-school and though most people regard them as a terrible burden, it is important to remember that without them school would lose at least 70% of its entertainment, good and bad.

And so, this is to the so called "puppy-love" of high school life; the crush. You are absolutely wonderful and painful, annoying and fun and I am going to miss you!

...I wonder what University crushes are like...

Leonie Schulte

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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. Join the Muckraker Yahoo! Group
4. Drop a note in our mailbox or approach us randomly in the hallways

Politics

Bringing Color to the White House

As unlikely as it may seem to you
I assure you that this story here is really true.
It happened in a country across the sea:
The Americans were anticipating with anxiety
President George Bush's last few days
(A President who deserves very little praise).
He was against the marriages of gays
And had messed up in many other ways.
So before he could waste all their tax money
They decided to find someone else to rule their country.
The people of America searched for candidates
From all over the 50 US states.
And they came from Texas and Nebraska
From Illinois, Arizona and even Alaska,
Wanting only to become presidents
And make the White House their residence.
They did not even need to be very smart
Or even educated in history, literature or art.
No, to become ruler of such great a nation
One needed quite little qualification,
Since it depended not on great intelligence,
But on saying very little in a long sentence.
Finally, two men came forward whom the mob
Thought were most suited for the job.
McCain was an old man whose hair was white
And who could not raise his arms above shoulder-height
And who in his speeches insulted all those
Whose political policies he opposed.
And though skin cancer had made his cheeks grow thick
He was a genuine Republican maverick.
Since his opponent was an entirely different type
His candidacy created an enormous hype
Because he was not only young but also black.
His last name was Obama; his first was Barack.
Though he did not know admittedly
A lot about conducting foreign policy,
Those he spoke to he did always impress
By talking about change with great positiveness.
But suddenly a problem came to pass,
So that the two of them had to save their ass.
Cause while they'd been trying to become president
The stock market had dropped into a steep descent.

Now, for John and Barack, getting elected
Was no longer as easy as they'd expected.
In order for the White House to be theirs to inherit
The two contestants had to show their merit.
John, who was older and wiser by a lot
Came up with a rather brilliant plot –
If he made all of Barack's flaws well known,
He wouldn't have to come up with ideas of his own.
He spread rumors that Barack knew a terrorist
And that his economic plans were socialist.
Surely they wouldn't elect Obama, thought McCain,
If they knew that his middle name was Hussein.
But so concentrated was he on making fun
Of everything Obama would have done
That while he was discrediting the other man,
He didn't notice the audience getting tired of his plan.
Barack however, who was not quite as smart,
Thought he'd just do what he had done from the start.
With positive energy and charisma, Barack
Was showing one thing that he did not lack:
The ability to make plans that were constructive.
The crowd thought his campaign was more productive
And they supported him in every state
Although his ideas were not always first-rate.
For people in financial crisis losing their cash
Do not want a president that does nothing but bash
His opponent. No, they want a positive-thinking man
Who goes out and tells them, "Yes, we can!"
Thus, in the end, Obama won the election
And became the first black president in the collection
Because he had not run a negative campaign,
Unlike his old opponent John McCain.
As for the moral of this tale,
For a story must have a moral without fail,
When you are a presidential nominee
Be it for the Unites States or the SC
Never just disparage or spread a rumor,
Rather think positive and show good humor.
The greatest lesson to learn at any rate
Is never choose Sarah Palin as your running mate.

Politics

Money Mayhem

The President's First Front

Bill Clinton was once asked whether he thought he had more leverage to impact world affairs while in the White House or as an out-of-office activist. He responded that it is in fact easier to succeed as a retiree (keeping in mind: a retiree of unusual status!). As ambitious and clear-cut goals as one may have had running for the presidency, he explained, once having been sworn in, one is forced to deal with all sorts of unexpected struggles, at the mercy of the moment, rather than free to pursue an envisioned direction. One wonders now, what kind of unanticipated developments might come between Obama and the goals he made his golden campaign promise. One such adversary is already known: the President-Elect most probably did not fathom he'd be up against an economy almost as badly bruised as in Great Depression days when he conceived his visions for presidency. Investing in the health care system, in education, in alternative energy -key Obama pledges- will inevitably be second on the president's master list. The mending of the economy, which is a prerequisite for all else, will be first.

Obama blames the Bush administration for the woes of the world market, implying that change in Oval Office personnel will immediately lead to improvements. But in a country with a free market economy, how much can a government really do? -Especially in the U.S., where "big-government" is a political curse word since Reagan declared, "We don't have inflation because the people are living too well. We have inflation because the government is living too well".

To approach this question, let's pretend to begin to comprehend the incomprehensible- the disarray that is the 2008 financial crisis.

First, it must be noted that it seems only one aspect of this pandemonium has anything to do with actual commodities, actual goods we make use of in everyday life: the rising oil prices. Because oil is running out, prices are rising, and consequently, prices of all goods that rely on

oil to make it from their production into our hands are also increasing. Namely, food has become substantially more expensive in America over the past few years.

But in general, production hasn't decreased: people have been working as before; value has been created as before. It is a different sector of the economy - once an offspring of the production of life necessities - that is ailing: the money market. Today, the money market is the market, as bizarre as that seems. In 2007, the world brought forth 50 trillion dollars in products. Financial assets that year counted in at a staggering 500 trillion dollars.

Crises of the money market are cyclical and occur in varying degrees of gravity about every 10 years. A simplification of this cycle is calling it a "greed and fear" loop, as economists have. The name already implies the surprising significance of psychological factors in shaping the economy. What it means is that when things are looking up, people become greedy and invest more than is appropriate, buy stocks for more than they are actually worth. Eventually, reality catches up with banks' and investors' over-optimism and things spiral downhill. That's when fear sets in. People are unwilling to make investments; banks hesitate to grant loans. That's where we find ourselves today. 2008 seems to be a particularly steep fall. This may be because of the unique situation of the subprime-lending spree American banks went on at the turn of the millennium. After September 11th 2001, economic strains were so critical that the Federal Reserve decided not to "laissez faire" and lowered interests to revive consumer activity. In deed, people bought houses for far more than they could normally afford. But since house prices were rising as a consequence of this readiness to buy, banks carelessly granted loans even to poorer families, reasoning that if the family couldn't afford mortgage, the house could always be sold for more tomorrow than was paid for it yesterday. Eventually, the government could no

longer keep interests at this artificial low. They rose; homeowners could no longer afford their monthly mortgage; houses were sold, their prices went down, and banks in America and abroad (banks trade credits among themselves) lost incredible amounts of money. And it shall suffice to say that when the banks are out, things look rather grim!

Now back to the question: Can Bush, or any other government, be made responsible for this? They did less than is often contended (except enlist the country in a 12-billion-dollars-a-month war...) to cause the crisis. The economy will swing in sinus curves - sometimes taking deeper dips or arches than before - all on its own. It is what governments don't do that allows it to happen. So will Obama revoke Reagan's formula and realize that government living well and interfering is sometimes rather life-saving than freedom-infringing? Desperate times call for desperate measures: Even Bush came dangerously close to un-American activity with the 700 billion dollars of alms he handed out to banks. Obama plans to jumpstart the economy by granting every American family a 1000 dollar emergency tax rebate and tax relief to Americans making less than 250 000 dollars a year. He also wants to unleash 50 billion state dollars to revive the market. His long-term plans are outlined in detail on his election website, www.barackobama.com. - They've earned him the very honorable title of "Socialist!".

In times like these, it is unavoidable that even the most free of all nations tightens its reigns on money mayhem. Certainly, his efforts to do so will preoccupy Barack Obama and potentially detract from his plans to end the war in Iraq swiftly and efficiently- and all of his other, as leadership students will say- "big, hairy, audacious goals".

The world is watching as he appoints his first cabinet members; the task force that come January 20th will set out to, well...it sounds like nothing short of...save the world.

Lena Walther

Thoughts Aside:

Activities: Why you should care

Whether it is MUN, Yearbook, chess, or basketball you're interested in, extracurricular activities tend to make up a substantial part of a student's school and social life. They are not only a means to counteract daily monotony and meet people from different grade levels, but also a way to enhance our capabilities, perhaps even learn skills we might need in our future careers, and, of course, have fun. Many of you think I totally forgot about college application.

With every activity we participate in, we keep in mind that it will be listed on our report cards. We (sub)consciously plan the fantastic lists of activities we'll include in our personal statements and application essays. Perhaps some of us only participate in activities because they will "look good" on our report cards.

Ms. XY is involved in ten extracurriculars. How admirable! But can she really distribute her time fairly among all of these responsibilities without neglecting her school work? Unless she is a real Wonderwoman, the answer probably is NO. Let's try to analyse Ms. XY's behaviour. Back in the Mittelstufe, she joined all sorts of publication groups (e.g. Muckraker, Yearbook, Literary Magazine), political and leadership oriented groups (e.g. MUN, SC, leadership seminar), and community service groups (e.g. CSA, Best Buddies). She already covered a broad spectrum of what British and American universities want to see in a student. She is proactive, helps her community... in short: she is INVOLVED. However, now that she is in the Oberstufe, she still only "takes part" in these activities. She isn't in charge of any of them. Why? Because she's doing too much. Throughout the years, she barely managed to attend half the meetings, her work was late and sloppy, her progress - if progress could have been expected - was dismal. She didn't profit personally from any of these numerous experiences. Yet she can still tell College Admission Officers all about how wonderful it was to write for the Muckraker or meet up with her Best Buddy because these extracurriculars were listed on her report cards for years. She's committing activity-fraud, but actually she's only cheating herself!

It's hard to balance, but while activities are important to identify who you are and what you enjoy doing, they should never be a means in themselves. You should not go to MUN for the sake of having a profound activity listed on your report card, but to actively participate. - If you're one of those Supermen and -women who can juggle ten balls, that's great. But keep in mind what motivates you to be a part of what you do.

Farsane Tabataba-Vakili

Greater Tuna



For this year's fall drama production, Dr. and Mrs. McDaniel have chosen a topic they should have some degree of familiarity with: the quirky inhabitants of a small town in, as they might put it, their "home state of Texas". Mine too, for that matter, but that complex love-hate relationship is another issue entirely.

The shorter length and smaller scale of Greater Tuna is a significant departure from last year's large-scale production of the musical Working, but neither the quality nor the enjoyment have decreased in the slightest. The casting is particularly well-done; all actors fit into their roles remarkably well. All performances are worth seeing; some of the more noteworthy of

the evening include those by Chasity Crisp and Paul Wolter as two local radio anchors, Frances Copeland as the anxious housewife Bertha Bumiller, and Leonardo Liccini as her up-to-no-good son Stanley, Elissa Daniels as an insane old woman named Pearl Burras, and Ise Tullier as Janie Fisk, the head of the local humane society. Several actors even perform multiple roles. Ben Hull memorably plays a football coach, a fiddle-playing drunk, and an oddball candidate for city council named Phinas Blye, while David Heim, to say nothing of his performance as the Reverend Spikes, puppeteers a dog (appropriately named Yippy) in what may be the evening's funniest turn.

Though it is, for the most part, funny in a rather light-hearted way, part of Greater Tuna's strength is that, in the midst of a wealth of character-driven comedy, there are moments of surprisingly black humor when characters reveal their darker sides. The ignorance and bigotry present in small towns like the fictional Tuna is satirized with a bite. No pun intended.

Nikolas Jaeger

Poll, continued from page 3

there will be fewer poor people and wealth will be more equally distributed - as in Europe. But I think he won't be able to do it all on his own. It will take several presidents until the US has reached the level which we have here - which is obviously superior."s

"I think there will be a lot more left-wing people in the government and in the public sphere and replace the central right atmosphere that has been cultivated. There might be a lot of reforms similar to what happened in the New Deal."

"Guantanamo Bay should be closed, troops out of Iraq, health care should be improved. Catch Osama Bin Laden. Get the economic crisis under control in his first term."

"I think his hair style is going to change: He's going to let it grow longer so that it looks like an Afro."

Why were Germans so engrossed in the elections, perhaps more concerned than when there's a Bundestagswahl?

"The Americans are Weltmeister at making a show of everything. It's not that dry."

„Das ist der Medienwahn. Es ist genauso wie wenn Britney Spears' Baby stirbt. Viel persönlicher. Und jeder weiß natürlich, dass Sarah Palin hockey mom ist und dass sie gerne schießt."

"American politics is much simpler, the issues are ones that everyone has an opinion about, you don't need a lot of background information take a stance. For example, gay marriage and abortion rights. Although this election, there were far fewer of those moral

debates than in the past."

"American politics are designed to be much more media friendly; it's not as spectacular in Germany. Here, it's gentle. In the US, you got the whole 'ONE candidate, ONE man for good, ONE man for evil. The clash of the titans'. One guy styling himself, 'I'm the Vietnam-veteran, I was tortured for five years, I'm a good person, I'm a strong character', and the other person styling himself 'I'm for change, I'm completely different'. In Germany, it's more about parties than personalities. You have much less of a feeling of direct involvement in politics. I mean, no one can really identify with Merkel."

"American politics are very exciting, especially to Germans, it's like a freak show of sorts."

"German elections are definitely more about substance than character."

"German politics is much less personality-orientated, which is less popular, but more effective."

"Germany lacks a politician with the same amount of charisma. Unless there's someone who manages to spread the same excitement, there will remain a lack of interest in German politics."

"The US president has more control over his country, and that's why it's more important and people are more interested."

Eileen Wagner
Lena Walther

Opinion

Zurück in die Kirche!

Pro-Reli zeigt, wie man Werte richtig vermittelt

Als Bürger einer demokratischen Republik fühlt man sich immer wieder genötigt, ja geradezu verpflichtet, sich an der aktuellen Politik zu beteiligen. Sei es dadurch, bei einer Volksabstimmung ein NEIN anzukreuzen, die Wahl oder Abwahl eines Politikers am Stammtisch laut zu befürworten, oder Eingaben an den Senat zu schreiben – alle paar Monate will der Bürger am allgemeinen Volkswillen herumbasteln. So muss es ausgerechnet im Oktober ein Volksbegehren sein, das die moralische Aufmerksamkeit der Berliner sucht. Für diejenigen, die sich von den allzu moralischen Themen des amerikanischen Wahlkampfes angewidert fühlten, ist dies nun wirklich ein weiterer Tiefpunkt: der Verein „Pro-Reli“. Die Namensgebung erweckt stechende Assoziationen an die „pro-life“-Gebärzwangsbeziehung der fundamentalistischen Christen in den Staaten, doch das ist sicherlich unbeabsichtigt.

Vorausgeschickt sei: Rein theoretisch sind laut Gesetz alle Jugendlichen ab 14 Jahren religionsmündig, d.h. sie haben die „freie Wahl“ zwischen allen Religionen oder sich zu keiner Religion zu bekennen. Derzeit gibt es keinen offiziellen Religionsunterricht als Pflichtfach, sondern das Fach Ethik. Das Land Berlin – unsere Regierung – hatte vor dem multikulturellen Hintergrund Berlins so entschieden.

Was will nun dieser Verein von uns? Pro-Reli fordert die „freie Wahl zwischen Ethik- und Religionsunterricht an Berliner Schulen“, und zwar in den 7.-10. Klassen und möchte so den Religionsunterricht als (Wahl-) Pflichtfach einführen. Warum auch nicht, für die meisten Menschen der Welt ist Religion sowieso der Ethikersatz. Ziel des Vereins ist, durch religiöse Erziehung, gerade in diesen Jahren, in denen Kinder noch leicht(er) beeinflussbar sind (machen wir uns nichts vor!), ihnen ein prophetisches Weltbild zu vermitteln. Denn was will man mehr als

„frühzeitig ein eigenes Wertesystem zu entwickeln und Orientierung zu gewinnen“? Das tut man am besten im Religionsunterricht, denn hier ist alles fromm geregelt. Sollte sich eine stringente Ethik dort einmischen, kann es nur zur Verunsicherung und somit zum Unheil bei der Glaubensfestigung führen.

Wegen der Vielseitigkeit der Weltreligionen besteht Pro-Reli aber auf Toleranz – es gibt zwar nur eine Wahrheit, nämlich unsere, aber wir akzeptieren es auch, wenn andere auf dem falschen Jakobsweg sind: „Respekt und Toleranz gegenüber anderen erfordern, dass man den eigenen Glauben und die eigene Weltanschauung kennt.“ Was gibt es Besseres, als Kinder und Jugendliche nach Religionen zu trennen in Christen, Juden, Moslems und alle andere, sie entsprechend zu erziehen und zu hoffen, dass sie sich hinterher vertragen? (Buddhisten sind in Berlin nur eine Minderheit und müssen wohl mit einem Kompromiss leben – ist ja nicht schlimm, im nächsten Leben bekommen auch sie ihren eigenen Unterricht!) Armselige Heidenkinder können natürlich auch die Ethik abwählen, aber teilnehmen sollen sie bitte an einem eigenen Unterricht mit der vielversprechenden Bezeichnung „atheistischer Weltanschauungsunterricht“ – falls er in der Schule angeboten wird, denn es ist eben nur eine „Anschauung“ und keine seligmachende Religion mit verbrieftem Alleinvertretungsanspruch.

Es war jedoch nicht immer so, dass jedes Kind vor dieser moralischen Entscheidung stand: Es gab und gibt immer noch die Religion-AG, die jeder freiwillig oder unfreiwillig besuchen darf. Die wirkliche Frage ist nun nicht die Möglichkeit, am Religionsunterricht teilzunehmen, sondern den Ethikunterricht für Religionschüler abzuschaffen. Denn wer braucht schon diese Überstunden Ethik, die die Autorität der Heiligen Schrift in Frage stellen? Gemeinschaftsunterricht bedeutet

nämlich unvermeidlich, dass man auch über Abtreibung, Stammzellenforschung, Beschneidung und ähnliche unappetitliche Themen diskutiert!

Aber nein, nein! Pro-Reli möchte doch lediglich, dass die Berliner Schüler auch etwas über ihre kulturelle Geschichte erfahren! Warum z.B. einige den Papst nicht mögen, obwohl er unser Vater ist; was im Dritten Reich alles mit den Juden geschah; und woran die 9/11-Flugzeugentführer geglaubt haben... Das sind nämlich Themen, die einerseits niemals im Geschichts-, PW- oder Deutschunterricht behandelt werden und andererseits bietet das Fach Ethik dazu nicht die ausreichend fundamentalistisch geprägte Ausrichtung. Deshalb ist es gemäß Pro-Reli die beste Lösung, Jugendliche in religiös bestimmten Gruppen voneinander abzugrenzen, damit sie auch fair jeweils unter sich und ohne Gefährdung ihres Weltbildes darüber diskutieren können... Ihnen von Anfang an zusammen klarzumachen, dass sie gleichwertige Menschen sind, nur eine Erde zum Bevölkern und Teilen haben und ihnen dafür eine gemeinsame, wissenschaftsbasierte Ethik zu vermitteln, wäre höchstens eine Alternative.

Aber soweit sind wir Gott sei Dank noch nicht: Berlin, jetzt ist deine Zeit gekommen! Mit einem entschiedenen „JA“ unterstützt du die Disziplinierung der nächsten Generation, förderst das Völkerverständnis und bringst endlich die Moral in Einklang mit der Diktatur des jeweiligen Glaubens! Das ist der ultimative Fortschritt der Wertevermittlung: zurück in die Kirche! Wir unterschreiben nun das Dekret – und fühlen uns dabei so richtig als aufmüpfige Bürger, die es den Gesetzgebern wieder mal gezeigt haben, dass das Volk nicht nur was zu sagen, sondern auch zu glauben hat!

Eileen Wagner

Comments, Replies?
send your opinions and articles to:

themuckraker@gmail.com

Columns

Dear Delilah...

Dear Delilah,
I'm not really sure how you can help me. You see, my parents are getting divorced. We all still live together, but my mother and father fight everyday. My dad his moving out next week. I don't know if I should be angry or sad or both at the same time. I want to fix our family again, but I know that I can't. My mom already has a new boyfriend, and she wants us to like him. But how can I like someone who has ripped our family apart? I feel so sorry for my sister. Since my mum is so raveled up in the whole divorce problem, she doesn't take care of my sister, so I have to do it. And that's not fair to me. I have to help her with her homework, take her out to play (she's four), cook... everything my mom should be doing! I also keep wondering about who my sister and I will live with. If we stay with our mom, my dad will be very unhappy. However, we can't live with him because he's at work most of the time. How can we be expected to choose between our parents?

Yours truly,
confused teenager

Dear confused teenager,
a divorce is never something pleasant to go through, and it is not something that you can fix! If two people don't love each other anymore, you can't force them to live together. I can't tell you how to fix your problem, all I can do is show you a couple ways how to cope with it easier. If your mom wants you to meet her boyfriend, don't fight it. You might be suprised to find that he is a cool guy. He will not be a substitute for you father, no one can ever do that, but he is your moms partner, which makes him part of your life. As for you sister, you should talk openly to your mom about it. No child should not have to take over the responsibilities of a parent! You are entitled to your childhood, and playing mum for your sister is not part of that. As for the living arrangements, tell your parents that you are not comfortable about making such a decision on your own.

Ultimately, you can't influence the turn of events, but you can control the way you deal with them, and thus minimize the negative effect your parent's divorce may have on your life. Good luck with everything,

Delilah

The Tenth of the Nothings

In school, in work, in life and love, all men seek success. Buddhists offer orange flowers, Christians say Hail Mary's, I personally twist around a certain silver ring I wear. Others employ more practical methods: studying for a test, asking a girl out, calling in a favor; using some scheme, some trick, some effort, to try and come out on top. Somehow, somehow, everyone reaches for success. But increasingly, and unfortunately, I have observed that this drive for success and appreciation for those who have achieved it is being eroded in our society by a steadily growing acceptance of mediocrity. Too often one hears excuses for failure: on a test or in a relationship, for flaws and bad habits, for battles lost and battles never begun. The truth is that it is easier to lose than to win, and it's easiest not to start at all. More and more, laziness and fear lead us to reject responsibility over our own destiny and to lose faith in the concept that good, hard, steady work does let us reap rewards. Like those around me, I find it simpler to blame my problems on friends, teachers, parents, lovers, governments, robots, aliens; on anyone and anything, in fact, besides myself. Accomplishing excellence, it seems, is no longer within my own personal capacity. And the more the population ceases to strive for excellence, the more we settle for second best; the more that seems acceptable, even inevitable. Slowly, we are sinking into the comfortable role of victim of circumstances.

Recently, concerns were brought up about the homework load in our school. Twice, in discussions about the justification of this concern I heard new kids who could not believe anyone would complain about the comparatively small work load at our school employ the stereotypical teenager incredulity in their reactions,

"Seriously? Like. Seriously! Are. You. Serious." I can only express agreement with these students and add equally classical adolescent sarcasm to their point. "Seriously, homework in every AP class? All-nighters as part of the high-school experience? How extraordinary. We students must not be responsible for our own grades, and report cards, and nervous breakdowns! The homework load, the teachers, the Klausuren, these external forces impede our success. We are victims. Victims of unfortunate circumstances!"

And yet I find myself, in these discussions, arguing about healthy life styles, about carefree youth, and citing quizzes gone awry and homework checks I was too busy to study for as evidence of student helplessness in the face of unfortunate circumstances. But now, today, after some soul searching, and mental soul slapping, I wish to renounce my victimhood, and claim control over my own fate. Yes, sometimes there's too much work to fit in to the time available, and yes, sometimes stress levels run unhealthily high. But while I am sure that worse is to come, in college and beyond, I also have an inexplicable confidence in the human ability to survive, somehow, the trials and tribulations of life, yes, even homework. Perhaps few feel like I do about the path to success. Perhaps more prefer it littered with debris and impediments, rather than clear for them to trudge upon as they dare. Perhaps I will be dismissed for being hypocritical or for being a smart ass in my opinions and my defence of excellence. For my part, I can only say that I find a certain delicious liberation in the words on the wall of Elaine Maxwell: Whether I succeed or fail shall be no man's doing but my own...

Anna Zychlinsky

Culture

Interrailing Experiences

Berlin Hauptbahnhof, 8:12 am on a cold Tuesday morning: a young man boards a train to Amsterdam with an Interrail ticket, an iPod and a big rucksack full of clothes, not knowing what would be expecting him in the coming 12 days. For those who don't know, an Interrail ticket is a ticket that allows the bearer to board any train in Europe at any given time (except for in the country of purchase). As I got onto that train, still wiping the sleep out of my eyes, I was overjoyed to finally see some parts of Europe that I hadn't fully discovered or seen yet. My trip took me to Amsterdam, Maastricht, Lille, Paris, Névers, Nancy, Strasbourg, Basel, and Geneva. In some of these cities I stayed for a few days, some only for a few hours, but still each city left a lasting impression on me. One of the first things you learn when interrailing is to communicate with people around you. When on a train, bus, or tram in a foreign city, you learn to communicate in broken languages and soon enough discover the interesting lives of people around you.

After meeting my relative and enjoying a good night of sleep, I set off to discover what else Amsterdam has to offer besides the red light district or the coffee shops, such as an amazing history and hilarious inhabitants. During my visit I saw the Anne Frank museum, and can only recommend the free walking tour, which tells you everything you really need to know about Amsterdam. My next destination was Maastricht, where I met a JFKS Alumnus, had lunch with him and discovered the small and pretty boring city (unless you are over 65 and enjoy staring at passers-by from your coffee table). So far so good, I thought. I still had 200 Euros in my wallet and had encountered none of the problems or scenarios that I had worried about, until I rolled into the town of Liège in Belgium. The connection train to Lille had been can-

celled and there I was, in a state of panic and having trouble to even understand the stationmaster who was telling me in French that there was no train to Lille. As many of you might know, my French is extremely limited and the most common phrase I heard back in High School was, „Jacob! Tu est un catastrophe! Fermez la porte!“ In the end, I struck up a conversation with an Ivorian mechanics student, who explained to me very slowly that my best shot was to go to the border town of Tournai and pray that my friend had a car. Luckily, he did, and by midnight I was rolling into Lille with a mate who I met while he was doing his exchange year at JFKS. Lille is a great city. Although it is relatively small, it has a lively university with many international students.

The next trip was to Paris, the city of love, and it was fascinating! The day of my arrival was „El Clasico“ Stade Francaise Rugby vs. Stade Toulousian Rugby, which I had tickets for... but it blew my mind the way the Parisian rugby supporters dressed. All in pink! The team colours are pink and baby blue since the owner (a proud homosexual) took over the team in 2004. It was indeed amazing to see 15 big, hulky, testosterone-filled men smash around in pink, and 70.000 cheering fans dressed accordingly.

Following this great experience, finding a youth hostel in Paris turned out to be hard business. But a two-hour tour of the metro and several stations later, I found a bed for the night. The next day, after a breakfast of baguette and a bottle of water, I went on the Paris free walking tour. It was also fabulous, and I can only recommend the tours (also in Berlin) to anyone fit enough for walking around. After that, I met some BERMUN delegates who lived in Paris and we enjoyed a night out in the Latin quarter (the place to go for Parisian nightlife). My next destination was a

small French town called Névers, which is home to many French wines. However, a distillery tour and a cousin twice removed was probably the only thing it had to offer. I said my goodbyes and returned to Paris to celebrate my 20th birthday with my numerous english-speaking hostel buddies, a grand evening. After waiting until the last possible minute, I got up and dashed towards Gare L'Est for my train to Strasbourg. This was probably the most enjoyable trip of the whole experience because I was accompanied by two blonde Swedish girls who were also interrailing. We shared a few good laughs and swapped information on previous cities and cheap places to eat (my wallet had 30 Euros left in it); and eventually explored the beautiful but rainy city of Nancy with its stunning architecture (even to an artistic nincompoop like me). I soon enough said my goodbyes to the girls and made my way towards Strasbourg. There, I was taken care of by a rugby friend and his mother, who really made me realize why the French cuisine is so famous. The next two stops were Basel and Geneva, which are probably beautiful cities, but with the rain pouring down like in Yorkshire, my impressions of the cities are restricted to its train stations and the balcony view of my cousin's Genevan apartment. I boarded the ICE towards Berlin the next day with 20 francs (10 cent) left in my wallet and a dream of my own bed.

To end this travel memoir, I have to recommend some culinary tips like the knooflook-mayo (garlic-mayo) of Amsterdam, the Croissant aux Almande in Paris, and the Alsatian beer to you.

I can only advise all of you to do an Interrail trip. They are eye-opening experiences that enable you to enjoy the breathtaking scenery out of a train window and discover parts of Europe that one rarely sees.

Jacob Rothschild

Entertainment

Try Some Relaxation Tips!

...Now that we have some time.

1) Look at your daily schedule. Go over it. Maybe you will find your day too cramped with activities? Probably yes. Fix it! Either rethink if you want to do the activity or try to take a break in between each activity so that in the end you're not all sweaty and tired!

2) The morning part of our routine is the most important. Getting up, brushing, and so on...

If you wake up in a dirty room, that might bring your mood down. Try cleaning up! - I know, I don't ever feel like doing it either, but once it's clean, you do see a difference!

b) Maybe if you can decorate your walls with posters and even paint the walls in bright colors like yellow, to make your room look more spacious, tidier, and happier!

Good mood guaranteed!

3) Look at your wardrobe. I don't know about you, but during a school day (packed with tests) I don't think about

stuff like outfits! Use your time and maybe exchange boring gray or depressing black outfits with something colorful!

4) How about a change of food? Instead of grabbing a burger, spend time on making healthier food.

5) Go out for walks! Not any marathons, but just little strolls in the park. These clear your mind and let your body relax. (If you are "lucky enough", you might meet some ENTERTAINING old people there...)

6) Try relaxation baths! Add some sea salt inside, maybe a vanilla scent and some strawberry Duftkerzen and some colorful, bubbly, fun soap. Not only does it smell super, but it also looks super cool! :D

Try out different smells mixed together. Sometimes it comes out funky... But usually, the water turns into a cool color with an awesome smell!

7) I don't think many guys would do

this - but if they want to, then sure! Try face masks! They let your face breathe and they leave your face smelling really nice.

8) How about yoga? Or gymnastics? I recommend yoga more, though. Firstly, you let your bones stretch after a long month of slouching over books. Secondly, you can play some nice music and let your mind wander. And thirdly, you have an excuse to lie around on a mattress and snooze and pretend you're doing yoga!

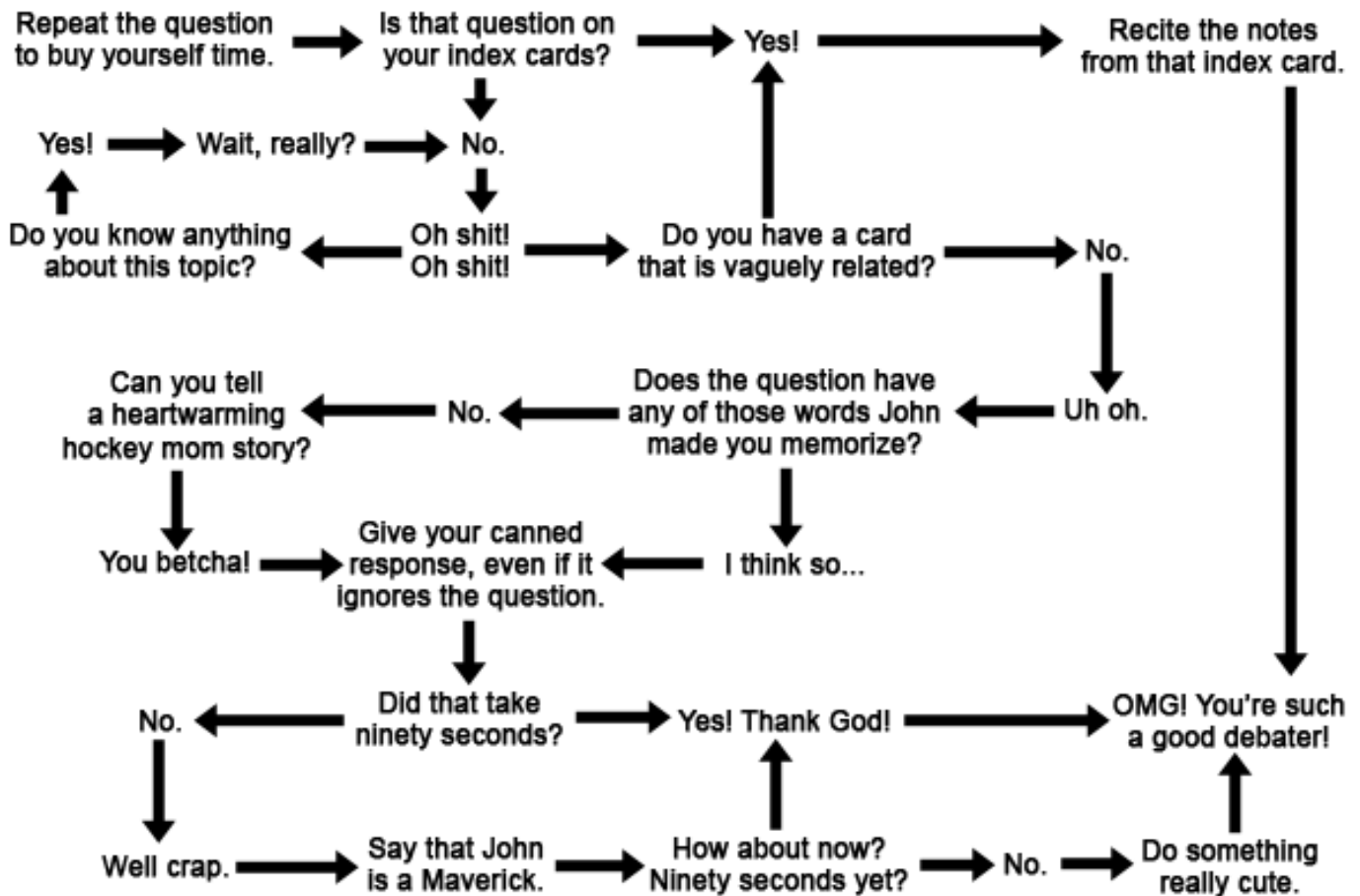
9.) And last but not least, go to bed early for once! Try 9:30 pm. You will fall asleep by 10:00pm, which lets you have a perfect night's sleep. (Something we don't get often around here...)

Enjoy! Hope to see some well-groomed people in the beginning of this month - while there are still no tests!

Mira Godiwala

Sarah Palin Debate Flow Chart

The Muckraker has always had a liking for sophisticated flow charts. We wouldn't let one this brilliant slip through our fingers unpublished!



courtesy of www.adennak.com

Entertainment

Berlin Tipp SPEZIAL:

Hauptstadt für lau

„Am Ende des Geldes noch soviel Monat übrig!“ Mit größter Wahrscheinlichkeit haben viele von uns diesen oder einen ähnlichen Satz schon mal gehört oder sogar von uns gegeben. Besonders jetzt, wo wir langsam aber sicher auf die Weihnachtszeit zusteuern, überlegt sich der eine oder andere besonders gründlich, ob die 10€ Eintritt für den Club am Wochenende es wirklich wert sind. Doch was tun, wenn das Geld dann erstmal weg ist? Sich im eigenen Zimmer verkriechen, illegal Filme aus dem Internet herunterladen (kostet ja nix!) und sehnsüchtig auf den neuen Monatsbeginn warten? Spätestens nachdem die Socken farbig sortiert, sämtliche Oberflächen entstaubt und alle Ausgaben der GLAMOUR seit 1998 durchgeblättert worden sind, zieht es uns dann doch auf die Straßen Berlins. Ein Blick ins Portemonnaie und wir schrecken vor sämtlichen Starbucks- und CineStar Filialen zurück, von Schuhgeschäften ganz zu schweigen. Doch keine Sorge, man kann sich auch ohne viel Geld in Berlin vergnügen. Denkt dran: Not macht erfinderisch!

Kunstbegeisterte Berliner können sich freuen: jeden Donnerstag ist ab 18 Uhr

der Eintritt in den Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin kostenlos! Hierzu gehören unter anderem die Neue Nationalgalerie (z. Z. "Kult des Künstlers"), Pergamonmuseum, Bode-Museum, Hamburger Bahnhof (Museum für Gegenwart), das Museum für Fotografie und viele mehr. Eine Übersicht aller Museen sowie Informationen zu den verschiedenen Ausstellungen sind auf www.smb.spk-berlin.de einzusehen.

Wer Lust hat, neue Leute kennenzulernen, muss nicht zwangsläufig sein hart erarbeitetes Geld in diversen Bars und Diskotheken liegen lassen! Ein wahrer Geheimtipp für alle, die gerne neue Kontakte knüpfen und von den Berliner Sehenswürdigkeiten nie genug bekommen: die „NewBerlin Free Walking Tour“. Diese findet jeden Tag statt (selbst an Sonn- oder Feiertagen) und beginnt immer pünktlich um 11 Uhr am Brandenburger Tor (Ausschau halten nach den Tourguides, welche rote T-Shirts tragen). Die „Free Walking Tour“ dauert ca. 3,5 Stunden und wird auf Deutsch, Englisch und Spanisch angeboten. Wer sich schlau anstellt, kann somit nebenbei sogar seine Sprachkenntnisse aufbessern! Die Tour wird übrigens nicht

nur in Berlin angeboten - mittlerweile gibt es sie auch in London, Edinburgh, Amsterdam, München, Paris, Madrid, Jerusalem und Tel Aviv. Mehr Informationen hierzu auf www.neweuropetours.eu.

Nach soviel Kunst und Kultur kann man die neue Bekanntschaft von der „Free Walking Tour“ am besten gleich ins Berliner Nightlife einweihen. Wer nicht die nötigen Gästeliste-Connections (oder einfach keine Lust auf Kommerz-Partys) hat, kann bei moderaten Eintritts- und Getränkepreisen, guter Musik und interessantem Publikum im Magnet Club abfeiern. Das musikalische Spektrum ist breit gefächert, von Indie/Alternative über Elektro, Minimal oder Rock ist hier für (fast) jeden etwas dabei. Aufgepasst: an manchen Dienstagen kostet die "Rockbar" Party nur 2€ Eintritt, inklusive Freigetranke solange der Vorrat reicht! Nächster Termin hierfür ist der 16.12, das gesamte Konzert- und Partyprogramm findet sich auf www.magnet-club.de. Der Magnet Club befindet sich in der Greifswalder Straße 212/213 in Berlin-Prenzlauer Berg.

Ina Fischer

Sudokus!!

Eileen Wagner

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

Easy Sudoku

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

Hard Sudoku

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