

THE MUCKRAKER

the students' voice since 1997

THE INDEPENDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY SCHOOL STUDENTS' NEWSPAPER

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January seems to be a rather characterless time of year. It's winter without the holidays, back to school without major exams, and those petty events like the SC dance or the trivia night without any enthusiasm from our side... But January of 2009 inarguably has a theme: It's Obama month, or, setting the public frenzy and anticipation aside and rejoicing for what's really been accomplished, finally, Bush-is-out month! From now on, we will likely see the new President's every move analyzed, the whole world hanging on his words, projecting their need for guidance during a financial crisis and another Middle Eastern war into his person. What a time! You can find two articles on the subject in this issue. Of course, we know large-scale developments shouldn't be one's only concern. We'd go mad if we didn't have our own little worlds to retire into, and Muckraker articles close to it: There are movie reviews on 'Twilight' and 'Tintenherz' and a dystopian novel directory for you entertainment needs, articles on the annual concerns of holiday lard and New Year's resolutions, a look into the life of a homeless big-screen actor, and much more.

We also wish you a pleasant one-week winter break in advance. Ski, travel, party, explore Berlin safely ... or just stay on the couch with a cup of tea, can't go wrong like that. Until then, good luck warding off viruses!

Cheers,

Your editors.

Keep It Vague

American Embassy Officials Advise Thimun Delegates

As formally dressed as they may be, as earnest in their dedication to the event, the students at MUN conferences are sure to struggle to keep an honorable delegate's face at the mention of certain delegations. All heads turn, anticipating something fresh, naughty, and Guevarian, when Cuba approaches the podium; Israel and Palestine – now with a very bitter aftertaste – is the epic feud, the Holy See can't speak without rousing a giggle or at least a smirk. But the big purple elephant in the room, the delegation that faces the most scorn, scrutiny, lashing glances, is the United States delegation. The outcome and quality of debate depends on the country; students are eager to take up a model affront with the giant. At The Hague MUN Conference of January 2009, we, the JFKS, play the giant.



photo courtesy of msnbcmedia2.msn.com

To prepare for the undertaking, the entire 35-student strong THIMUN team, about half of which is US-delegates, visited with six officials from the US Embassy in the new embassy building by the Brandenburg Gate.

Upon arrival, we were reminded that next to real-life diplomats, we weren't such very important people and waited out in the snow for almost three quarters of

Embassy, continued on page 3

Obama

Obama is more than a president; he and his famous campaign-slogans are America's new top merchandizing brand. Change is in demand, after all. And in the US, that means: So we'll sell it! Canada correspondent Alexander Cohen presents shocking stories about money being made on the presidential inauguration.

on page 7

Bruno S.

Bruno Schleinstein is a Berlin actor with a remarkable story. He suffered a terrible childhood ordeal under the Nazis, ended up a homeless, nearly got the break with his success in two big-screen films, but is now back in the streets. Read about this original man's development.

on page 6

Zeidler im Wunderland

Die Seiten wirkten etwas leer, Denn unser Zeidler zapft nicht mehr – Doch lange lässt er uns nicht warten, Ins Wunderland ist er geraten! Der erste Artikel aus der neuen Reihe „Zeidler im Wunderland“ beschäftigt sich mit nichts Geringerem als die Religion: Welche Form eines Kirchenbesuchs spricht einen Nicht-Gläubigen mehr an? Was macht die Kirche trotzdem attraktiv? Eine persönlich Einschätzung findet ihr...

on page 5

Spice

Eine Droge die Halluzinationen hervorruft, einen 4-mal so starken Effekt hat wie Haschisch und auch noch LEGAL erwerblich ist? Das war dann doch zuviel des Guten. Fakt ist: seit Ende Januar 2009 ist "Spice" nun auch in Deutschland illegal. Woher die neuartige Modedroge stammt und was sie noch so alles mit eurem Gehirn anstellen kann, lest ihr...

on page 3

Teacher Feature: Mr. Robertson

Please introduce yourself.

My name is Mr. Robertson. I'm originally from Southern California, Long Beach area, but I moved to Berlin a year and a half ago to teach English here at JFKS. I have a wife and two little daughters, aged 4 and 3. My hobbies are listening to music, going to the movies, and I love watching and playing baseball.

Why did you choose to become an English teacher?

I chose to become an English teacher after the 11th grade. I used to hate my English classes until 11th grade, when I had the best teacher, Mr. Finney, at Carson High.

Were you good in English class?

I was a fairly average student. When I was younger, I didn't really care that much about school. Instead, I played baseball, which was more important to me than some of my classes. But I loved literature as well, and in 11th grade I actually started soaking in, consuming literature.

So was your "dream job" actually something related to baseball?

Yes, it all goes back to baseball. When somebody asked me what I wanted to be when I grow up, I always said that I was going to be a baseball player. But of course, that didn't happen.

Is baseball still the passion of your life?

No, my family is the passion of my life. I'm supposed to say that... (laughs).

So if you were an average student that suddenly chose to become an English teacher shortly before graduation, you must've had natural potential in English, just hidden behind baseball?

Yes, exactly! I've loved literature my whole life long. Growing up, my father had a huge selection of books that I always looked at and read through, but again, I didn't have that passion, or the ability to see the picture of literature until I was in 11th grade.

Do you have a philosophy for teaching or life in general?

Keep it real, keep it fun, keep it alive!

So you're someone who loves entertainment and having fun?

Yeah, if you can't have fun in life, then what's the purpose of it all? Otherwise it'd be just sitting around and doing nothing.

To some people, their purpose of life is their job. Perhaps it isn't for you?

Teaching isn't just a job for me. To be with students, to see them learn, to see the light bulb come on, to see that "Ah-Hah" moment when they get it; that's what makes my job wonderful. It excites me when students get excited about literature. Being a teacher is one of my joys... as long as you keep me in the classroom (winks).



From your experience, how disciplined are JFKS students in terms of moral behavior or attitude?

I find the attitudes completely fine. Students come to class, they're rarely tardy; it seems like they know what they have to do. Students here have the goal to graduate and to go to college. In L.A., on the other hand, students didn't see college as a priority. Instead, they only wanted to get out, find some kind of job, and party.

How would you compare Berlin to California?

I love that I don't have to get in a car to get around. In Berlin, I especially love the transportation system. I love that I can walk to school everyday. I miss certain restaurants, but that's part of missing your original homeland. I have my family here, and that's what matters most to me.

If you could be a character from a book, which character would you be?

I would choose Odysseus from the "Odyssey". He's on a long journey to get home. For me, life is a wonderful journey and I'm still on it. I don't know where I'm going to be three years from now. Maybe I'll still be at JFKS, maybe elsewhere, but that's what I love about life: the uncertainties. Everything is an unpredictable journey to me.

Is there anything you still want to tell our readers?

Always strive for the best! I want my students to still be in contact with me after they leave JFKS to let me know that they're doing well in life, at whatever it is. I love to see the fruit of my labor. And trust me, I labor with these kids! (laughs)

Thank you for the interview!

Sarah Lee

Comments, Replies?

send your opinions and articles to:

themuckraker@gmail.com

Opinion / Culture

Thoughts Aside:

The Vacation Phenomenon

No matter how comfortable one might feel at school, we all continuously crave for those way too short breaks. Vacations allow us to follow up on discarded hobbies, socialize with forgotten or neglected friends or family members, read a good book that is not part of the curriculum – in short, unfold our personalities. School forces us to spread our minds across such a wide variety of fields and subjects that it seems nigh impossible to remember anything longer than it takes to prepare for the next Klausur. The content of one brain-compartment needs to make room for the next set of fancy facts or throttling theories so often that we can hardly remember any of life's meaningful details. We feel we ought to know a lot, but realize that we know nothing and can't possibly know anything.

That's where vacation chimes in most beautifully. It gives us time and leisure to think and reconsider who we are and what we want from life. Or it poses an invariably exciting new experience, in case you are the travelling type. It allows you to suck the marrow of life. You can catch up with sleep (watch out, he's a fast one) or spend your nights partying to the fullest. Either way you act according to your heart's desire, which is all that should matter.

Fortunately, the next vacation is already at hand. Isn't it funny, though, that while the time remaining till winter vacation is exactly as long as the break itself, the time spans do not appear equal in length? Time seems to follow a different set of rules in such cases. One might say that vacation is near, even though it is three weeks away and will last merely two. However, after the break one will usually conclude that it was too short. When does time pass slowest for you?

Farsane Tabataba-Vakili

Embassy, continued from page 1

an hour before we were finally called in. Security checks were quite a spectacle. 35 students' chap sticks, deodorants, lotions, batteries, iPods, cell-phones, and a dozen CAS calculators had to be dumped into one big plastic container. Beverages were allowed, but only after the holders demonstrated a sip to prove they weren't toxic. On the wall watching: Rice, a very crooked-looking Cheney, and the head puppet himself. (How good to know they've been removed.)

The meeting took place in a large conference room, modern and functional in architecture, as is the rest of the building. The six officials, who were very generous to field questions, were each of a different department – culture, economics, and political affairs being some examples. After some introductory words, we got to pose our questions. Responsible for various different topics at Thimun, we all wanted to hear how an American diplomat would speak on such and such issue or handle a trenchant question on the Iraq war, Abu Ghraib, or Guantánamo.

The officials' responses gave us interesting impressions of the works of diplomacy. More than once, several of them giggled and joked, "Yeah, we [the US] try not to talk about that. Frankly, we avoid the topic as best we can." Their own dismay for certain aspects of American politics showed through. They seem to have a distinct diplomats' "we", which their tone indicates doesn't necessarily include them personally. Their job, in essence,

they said, is to create "wobble-room", to answer, but always with as much uncertainty as possible without sounding too indecisive... And to "dance" when faced with two separate and incompatible American policies. "Be vague!" was their final piece of advice to us conference-goers.

What furthermore became apparent, apart from their fluid rhetorical skills and specialized knowledge, was America's big transition in the air. The six were lax about showing disapproval for the Bush administration and often concluded their answers implying things will change under Obama. They said we must, as they will be doing, dissect the first administration announcements and clues within Obama's speeches to interpret his direction.

Now Obama has finally been sworn in, and listening closely is what the whole world is doing on these first days of the promised presidency.

Thimun comes at a riveting time. We will try to model a UN post-Bush-era (not to mention in an economic crisis) and witness how international youth receives the new US-delegation. JFKS students will be right at the center of the experience and will have to do their best to let the American elephant dance gracefully. Doubtless, we will return from our trip with a more profound impression of what 2008/2009 and the next few years to come mean.

Lena Walther

Spice - Jetzt Illegal

Spätestens Ende Januar 2009 wird Spice in keinem Geschäftsregal mehr zu finden sein. Denn es steht fest: Verkauf und Konsum dieser Kräutermischung ist ab sofort in Deutschland strafbar. Auslöser der etwas plötzlich eintretenden Maßnahme ist die Studie eines Frankfurter Pharmaunternehmens, welches endlich in der Lage war, nötige Beweise für eine Illegalisierung zu erbringen. Demzufolge beinhaltet Spice nicht nur als solche harmlose Kräuter, mit deren Naturbelassenheit immer geworben wurde, sondern auch ein synthetisch hergestelltes Cannabionid namens JWH-018. Es soll eine ähnliche Wirkung wie Haschisch erzeugen – mit einem bis zu 4-mal stärkerem Effekt.

Wie kam Spice aber überhaupt auf den europäischen Markt? Hersteller der Droge ist die Londoner Firma Psyche Deli, verkauft wurde sie bundesweit als Räucherwerk, „das beim Verbrennen einen entspannenden Duft verströmt“. Unter versüßlichten Namen, wie „Sibirischer Löwenschwanz“, „Tropical Synergy“ etc. waren die bunten Päckchen

ohne Alterseinschränkung in Hatshops oder über das Internet erhältlich. Vom Geheimtipp entwickelte sich das Produkt in einen Kassenschlager, dessen Erfolg nicht zuletzt wegen der übermäßig hohen Preise fragwürdig blieb. Insbesondere mangelnde Kenntnis bzw. Forschung über gesundheitliche Risiken machte die Modedroge bei Jugendlichen beliebt und gelangte somit bis zuletzt in die Aufmerksamkeit der Medien.

Nachgesagte Effekte von Spice seien Halluzinationen und Sinnesbetäubungen, die sich auf Herz, Kreislauf und Nervensystem ausweiten. Oft genug wurde im Zusammenhang auch von Suchtgefahr berichtet. Ein Blick in die Zukunft: Spice ist nun zwar illegal, doch birgt dieses neue Gesetz auch Risiken, wie etwa ein Abtauchen in den Schwarzmarkt. Und sollten sich bei manchem Kiffer noch genug Hirnzellen anfinden, so wäre es jetzt vielleicht mal an der Zeit, diese anzuwenden und endgültig aufzuhören.

Annette Lazarus

Culture / Entertainment

New Year's Resolutions

A new year: a new start, new goals, new resolutions. Lose weight. Stop smoking. Work harder. Be more patient. Eat healthier. More sport. Less alcohol. Reduce stress. Better grades. Save money. Learn something new. Help others. Find friends. But in the end - do you ever?

The tradition of coming up with good resolutions for the new year originated in 153 B.C., thanks to a mythical king of early Rome named Janus (after whom the month of January is named, too), because he was the ancient symbol for resolutions. As a god of beginnings and guardian of doors and entrances, he could look into the past and future, thereby deciding what needed to be improved. The Romans also came up with a few resolutions and exchanged gifts before the new year started. During the Middle Ages, the church moved this day to December 25th because the birth of Jesus functioned as the beginning of a new year for them. Over the years, the date was moved back and forth, but finally, in the 16th century, it was set back to January 1st.

The new year is a time for celebrations and wishing others good luck for the coming year. Although it can take weeks, months, years, or even a lifetime to fulfil certain New Year's resolutions, the personal, professional, short- or long-term, arduous or simple goal has the potential to positively and profoundly create a lasting change in your life.

In a study on resolutions, 52% of the participants said they would achieve their goal, yet only 12% actually fol-

lowed through and succeeded. 10% more women than men fulfilled their resolutions.

Perhaps this is just a traditional way of telling people to improve their lifestyle or to get rid of bad habits. Does this mean that humans start as clean and modest people in January and end up leading a problematic life in December? If not, why is the New Year's resolution one of the most commonly abandoned reforms people commit themselves to? Maybe because you know you can never achieve your goal, you've tried too long for it to work. Perhaps other important things came up. Or maybe, you just forgot.

In the end, we all know that those who accomplished small increments along the way will be more successful. Moments of weakness may fail one or more resolutions, but small setbacks can also motivate you to remain determined.

At first, the newly set goal is easy to begin working on. However, doesn't life eventually seem to have been better before the new year? Before you stopped eating chocolate. Before you had time to chill and be unproductive. Before you started changing your life.

Anyone has the chance to change his or her life at any given time. Not tomorrow. Not next year. Now, in this instant. Afterwards, you may ask yourself whether New Years' resolutions serve as the first step to self-improvement, or to self-deception.

Rebecca Jetter

-Staff- Box

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Seth Hepner
Adam Nagorski

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Farsane Tabataba-Vakili

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Movie Review: Inkheart

photo courtesy of imageshack.us



Mortimer, or "Mo", as his daughter Meggie nicknamed him, is searching. Searching for a book titled "Inkheart". But he isn't the only one, and subsequently, when Mo finally gets hold of a copy, he and Meggie are on the run. However, they aren't fast enough to shake off their mysterious follower and his helpers, and Mo's secret is revealed: He has a special gift for reading. His voice lets the words come alive!

Iain Softley has done a wonderful job in filming an adaptation of Cornelia Funke's bestselling book, "Inkheart". Although no ridiculously prominent actors are involved, the mysterious and fantastic feel of the story hasn't been lost. "Inkheart" is shorter than the average fantasy film (only 106 min. instead of the usual 150 min.), but does not lack imagination and love of detail.

All in all, going to the movies to see "Inkheart" is time wisely spent. Fans of fantasy and fiction will enjoy the film version of this worldwide bestseller.

Aletta Bühler

How to join the Muckraker Staff

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

Column

Zeidler im Wunderland: Nun sag, wie hast du's mit der Religion?

Zunächst einmal muss ich mich bei allen Lesern dafür entschuldigen, dass es in letzter Zeit keine Zeidler Zappts mehr gegeben hat, und muss die Entschuldigung gleich auch auf die Zukunft ausweiten: Ihr werdet nie wieder einen Zeidler Zappt zu lesen bekommen. Der Grund ist relativ einfach. Inzwischen schreibe ich seit zwei Jahren Zeidler Zappt, seit einhalb Jahren erscheinen meine Artikel nun im Muckraker, und da habe ich mir gedacht: Es muss mal was Neues her. Ganz so neu ist es dann doch nicht geworden, nur die Überschrift und der Wohnort des Schreiblings haben sich geändert. Sonst sollte das meiste gleich, oder zumindest ähnlich bleiben. Ob das nun gut oder schlecht ist, die Entscheidung bleibt euch überlassen.

So, jetzt aber ans Eingemachte, an den ersten Erlebnisbericht aus dem Wunderland.

Die Frage der Religion ist eine äußerst konfliktbeladene, welcher unterschiedliche Gesellschaften unterschiedliche Bedeutung zumessen. Hier in Berlin an der Kennedy Schule, beispielsweise, interessieren sich nur die wenigsten für die Religionszugehörigkeit ihrer Klassenkameraden. In Südafrika ist das etwas ganz anderes, besonders an der Deutschen Schule Pretoria, die ja auch von einem Pastor gegründet wurde. Dort nimmt die Religion einen ganz anderen Stellenwert ein, man hört Schüler Dinge sagen wie: „Religion is the f***ing most important thing in life“, und nicht selten fühlt man sich wie Goethes Heinrich Faust, den ja bereits vor 200 Jahren das Gretchen fragte: „Nun sag, wie hast du's mit der Religion?“

Schlucken meinerseits. Normalerweise habe ich mit meinem nicht-Glauben keinerlei Probleme, aber bei erwartungsvollen Hundenäuglein kann man das einfach nicht so direkt sagen. „Ja, ähm...“, musste ich mich da immer rausreden. Und so habe ich mich auch einige Male überreden lassen, den einen oder anderen Freund zur Kirche zu begleiten.

Der erste der zwei Kirchenbesuche, von denen ich euch berichten möchte, war an einem Freitag, und zwar am letzten Schultag des Schuljahres. An der DSP ist es so Tradition, dass an diesem Tag die ganze Schule während der ersten beiden Schulstunden in die benachbarte Kirche geht. Ich

muss gestehen, dass ich nicht besonders fit war, da ich die ganze Nacht zuvor mit einigen Klassenkameraden durchgefeiert hatte. Also saß ich hundemüde in der Kirche, vor uns stand der Pastor und predigte. „Meine Lieben Schüler, es ist doch schön, euch alle so wach und munter...“ Gähnen meinerseits. „...ist ein Schuljahr vorbei. Wie die Zeit doch...“ Das Dach ist aber schön. Das war mir noch nie so aufgefallen. „... dieses Jahr war wieder spannend, es hat sich...“ Das mit dem schrägen Lichteinfall ist wirklich gut gemacht. „... gingen und kamen, wir waren alle fleißig und haben viel...“ Ich gähne erneut. Langsam merke ich, wie schwer mein Kopf wird, deshalb stütze ich ihn zur Sicherheit auf meiner Hand ab. „...sind wir doch trotzdem alle froh, dass das Schuljahr endlich...“ Das Bodenmuster ist ja auch faszinierend. „...freuen uns auf lange Ferien. Ob ihr hier bleibt oder nicht, vergesst nicht, dass Gott immer bei...“ Ich schlafe ein und träume vom Drachentöter Georg, der einen Drachen nach dem anderen abschlachtet, dass das Blut nur so spritzt. Ich höre nicht, wie der Herr Pastor sagt: „Lasset uns beten.“ Georg reitet auf mich zu, und trifft mich mit seiner Lanze in die linke Seite. Es tut eigentlich nicht besonders weh, es kitzelt eher ein wenig. Kichernd wache ich auf, drehe mich nach links und schaue in strenge Augen, die ebenfalls einem Georg gehören, worauf ich sofort verstumme und meinen Kopf im Gebet neige. Denn dieser Georg ist zwar kein Drachentöter, aber mein Klassenkamerad und der Sohn des Pastors, also mindestens genauso gefährlich.

So geht das dann endlos weiter, bis wir schließlich mit einem „Amen“ seitens meiner Mitschüler und einem erleichterten Stöhnen meinerseits entlassen werden. Meine Armbanduhr behauptet, es wären erst eineinhalb Stunden vergangen. Ich beschließe, ihr nicht zu glauben; meine innere Uhr sagt mir, dass ich schon dreimal so lange hier sitze.

Der zweite Kirchenbesuch, von dem ich euch erzählen möchte, ereignete sich lediglich zwei Tage später, also am Sonntag derselben Woche. Dizzy, ein Junge aus der Parallelklasse, dessen Vater Pastor

in einer „schwarzen“ Gemeinde im Norden Pretorias war, hatte mich

eingeladen, mit ihm in die Kirche zu kommen, und ich hatte zugesagt. Das war, wohlgemerkt, noch vor dem schulischen Kirchenbesuch.

Um acht Uhr geht's los. Ich mache es mir gerade gemütlich, lege den Kopf zurück, mache mich auf weitere Stunden der Langeweile gefasst und döse auch schon ein wenig vor mich hin (wusstet ihr, wie schön Fortuna aussieht?), da rüttelt Dizzy mich wach und drückt mir eine Trompete in die Hand. Ich starre ihn verdutzt an. „Was soll ich denn damit?“

„Na, mitspielen natürlich!“ Ich schaue mich um und tatsächlich stehen da plötzlich fünf andere Trompeter, drei Posaunisten, ein Tubaspieler und zwei Trommler. „One, one, one, two!“ zählte einer plötzlich an. Kurzer Atemzug, dann beginnen alle um mich herum in einem Tempo, dass mit dem angezählten nichts zu tun hat, zu spielen. Ich suche die Noten, doch das vergebens. Ich schaue Dizzy fragend an; er setzt seine eigene Trompete kurz ab, raunt mir zu; „Improvisiere!“ und spielt auch schon weiter. Langsam dämmert es mir (und Dizzy sollte meine Vermutungen hinterher bestätigen): Die spielen alle auswendig! Die meisten der Musiker können noch nicht einmal Noten lesen. Einer stimmt einfach einen Choral an, diejenigen, die ihn kennen, spielen die Stimmen, die sie im Kopf haben, die anderen harmonisieren einfach so. Und der einzige, der falsch spielt, bin ich, in meinem verklemmten Versuch, ebenfalls zu harmonisieren. Ich bin begeistert. So macht Kirche Spaß!

Doch meine Begeisterung bricht abrupt ab, als das Lied vorbei ist und der Pastor zu reden beginnt. Na toll. Jetzt geht's los. An der DSP habe ich wenigstens alles verstanden, aber hier ist alles auf Tswana! Doch – Oh Wunder! – der Mann redet nicht lange und schon bald springe ich wieder auf, meine Begeisterung frisch entflammt, und wir spielen weiter.

Und so geht das dann weiter, bis wir schließlich mit einem herzhaften „Amen!“ aller Kirchenbesucher entlassen werden. Meine Armbanduhr behauptet, es wären schon vier Stunden vergangen. Ich beschließe, ihr nicht zu glauben; meine innere Uhr sagt mir, dass wir noch nicht mal 30 Minuten hier sitzen.

Bruno S.:

From the Streets to the Silver Screen and Back Again

Discovered on the streets of Berlin in the 1970's, street musician Bruno Schleinstein became the star of two hit films by director Werner Herzog, becoming an instant icon in the German film industry. Schleinstein was heavily praised for his performance in both films, "The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser" and "Stroszek", in which he plays a homeless alcoholic who immigrates to Wisconsin with his prostitute roommate Eva. In one remarkable and disturbing scene, Bruno is captured sitting in a courtyard in Berlin playing a ballad about his life with Eva on his accordion and "Glockenspiel". His eyes squinted under knitted brow, as though forcing the song out of himself with strain, Bruno impressed with his uneasy, confused behavior, often seeming to forget what chord to play, moving his hand



continuously towards his Glockenspiel, unsure about when to ring them, his head swinging deliriously in circles as he pressed the lyrics out, often interrupting his song with awkward gesticulations. "...Sein Geld, das hat er ganz versoffen beim Schnapps und auch beim Bier..." "Prost, Prost, Prost!" he exclaims, raising his cupped hand to his mouth, imitating a drink. His childish, distracted and irrational behavior amazed audiences. His performance was exhilarating; however, it was never clear whether or when Bruno S. was acting or when he was being himself. Herzog often complained about Schleinstein's hour-long panic attacks before shoots and often spoke about possible psychological distress. The same observation was noted by New York Times journalist Michael Kimmelman in his article on Schleinstein last year. "His performances were riveting, but he was obviously not well mentally, and even as he came across in his own way as knowing, he was at the same time simply being himself, and the question hovered: How much was fiction, how much reality?"

Born in Berlin in 1932 as the illegitimate son of a pros-

titute, Schleinstein was often beaten by his mother. At the age of three he was abandoned and taken in by the Nazis as a „Reichsausschusskind“. Ausschusskinder, Schleinstein was no excuse, were regarded as degenerates and mentally unstable and therefore used in medical experimentation. Spending most of his youth isolated, in and out of orphanages and medical institutions, S. found solace in music, teaching himself to play the accordion, the piano, and various other instruments. He became a street musician and worked construction to pay the bills. It wasn't until the mid 70's that he was approached by the German film director Herzog, who was in Berlin filming a documentary on street artists. Schleinstein's character is notable for his speech: A sing-song mix of made up words and phrases

or borrowed lines from old songs. When referring to himself, Mr. S. usually speaks in the third person. "Everyone threw him away" he says about himself and his short-lived celebrity life style, for not long after his second film hit the screens, Schleinstein's career began to dwindle. He quickly faded out of the scene, and today his pop icon debut is forgotten by most.

Today, if he is not at home in his small cluttered apartment working on art pieces that he sells in the Berlin gallery Endart, Schleinstein can be found wandering about the streets of Berlin, occasionally performing in a little pub off of Anhalter Bahnhof, die Stadtklause, performing all the old songs he played in his films.

Though his work is hardly remembered by most of the German public, it is clear that Schleinstein still lives passionately in the years lost. In the years he was a star.

Leonie Schulte

Alkohol? Lieber nicht.

Der Suchtpräventionsworkshop der 8c

In den letzten Wochen hat unsere Ethikklasse 8c Süchte, ihre Prävention und dessen Auswirkungen bearbeitet. Im Jugendfreizeitheim Düppel (JFE) erlebten wir einen zweitägigen Workshop, in dem diverse Süchte behandelt wurden. Die Klasse bildete zum Beispiel Gruppen und arbeitete an Postern mit den körperlichen und seelischen Auswirkungen unter anderem von Cannabis und Essstörungen. Auch diskutierten wir in ei-

ner Runde, wo Genuss aufhört und Sucht anfängt. Zum Abschluss des zweiten Tages baute der Instrukteur einen Parcours auf, den zwei ausgewählte Schülerinnen mit einer DrunkerBuster™-Brille, die einem alles wie mit 1,5 Promille erscheinen lässt, durchliefen. Auch im Unterricht hat uns unsere Lehrerin Frau Starfinger über Alkohol in den Medien informiert. Wir teilten uns in Gruppen auf, um Alkohol in der kommerziel-

len Kommunikation zu analysieren. Auch nahmen wir an einem Wettbewerb teil, dessen Thema Alkohol in den Medien war und warten noch auf einer entsprechenden Antwort der Jury. Außerdem erstellten wir einen Kalender mit Anti-Alkohol-Plakaten, den man für 3,99€ kaufen konnte – ein tolles Weihnachtsgeschenk.

Maximilian Enthoven
Noah Henckel

Culture

Cohen of The Obama Continent:

Appeal to their minds, reach for their wallets

In America they say any kid can grow up to be president. And in America, there are many ways to measure that kid's success.

There's the media. When there is a story about you almost every day in every newspaper across the globe, you could call yourself successful. When every periodical from Time to Ebony to American Dog runs your face on its cover, people might start mentioning your name along with other successful individuals. When CNN virtually becomes a round-the-clock tracker of every move you make, you could consider yourself accomplished.

That success could be earned in the minds of the people. When you prompt young Americans, who've never cared before in the least about politics, to make signs reading "I trust you", that could be success. When old women who've voted by absentee ballot for the last couple of elections go to the polling station to vote, because you matter more than anyone they've ever voted for, that could demonstrate a successful existence.

But in America, where "the customer is always right", it's not what voters watch, read or say about you that makes you a success. Like all other parts of American life, the success of a politician is measured by consumers' wallets.

It started with the beginning of the campaign. Shortly after Barack Obama announced that he was running for president on a chilly February day in Springfield, Illinois, his campaign began selling buttons, T-shirts, hats, signs and posters though their website. Not that this was different from other presidential campaigns. This is America. There are souvenirs marketed for every important event, place or person, and presidential candidates are no exception. But as the campaign advanced, it became evident that this was different from any presidential campaign America had ever seen.

Time called Obama the first real "branded" candidate, and named his marketing strategy one of the top 50 inventions of 2008. This strategy was distinctly American. Appeal to people's minds and they'll reach for their cash—online mostly. You'll not only make millions in campaign donations, but also acquire the addresses, phone numbers and e-mails of thousands of potential volunteers.

Soon the Obama merchandise spread beyond the usual campaign kitsch. The Obama Store's "Runway to Change" program brought onboard many high-profile designers such as Vera Wang, Beyoncé and Tina Knowles and Shawn "Jay-Z" Carter, all designing Obama gear for

upwards of \$60 a shirt. The "Artists for Obama" section of the store sold Obama artwork from many famous artists, such as Robert Indiana (Turning his famous "LOVE" sculpture into one that said "HOPE" to go with Obama's well known message of "Hope and Change"), Antar Dayal and Shepard Fairly, whose iconic pop-art image of Obama was featured everywhere from the cover of Time to Obama postage stamps in Chad.

By the time of the Democratic National Convention, independent retailers were beginning to catch on to this fad. Denver stores were stocked full of everything Obama, prompting the British newspaper The Guardian to call the streets of Denver "an open-air market of Obama-bilia, with vendors competing for the title of cleverest souvenir". Campaign Buttons, long a sought-after political souvenir, featured everything from Obama and James Bond star Daniel Craig under the headline "Convention Royale" to ones suggesting Obama pick teen star Miley Cyrus as his Vice Presidential Candidate under the tagline "Teen's Choice" (Not likely, as Bill Clinton has already passed her up).

Barack Obama and his people knew from the outset that in this of all years, Americans needed something to believe in. And they knew that when Americans believe in something, they buy into it. Literally. By the time retailers caught onto this trend, Obamania had become a multi-million dollar enterprise and an integral part of Americana.

Across the United States, election night was a non-stop party. And where there were crowds, there were vendors. From the streets of Philadelphia, to Sugar Hill in Harlem to Beverly Hills, Obamania was turning huge profits. At Grant Park in Chicago, where Obama gave his victory speech, vendors pedaled every manner of items declaring "I WAS THERE—CHANGE HAS COME". Across America, people voted and they bought. And change came. With 365 electoral votes to John McCain's 173, Barack Obama became the first African-American President of the United States. And more than ever, the marketing opportunities exploded. YES WE CAN became YES WE DID.

Washington leading up to the inauguration has been other-worldly. It literally turned into Obamington. There is no avoiding the sensation that is this African-American man born in Hawaii by a white mother and a black Kenyan father, raised in the heartland by a single parent and representing working class people on the south side of Chicago.

Every bookstore has an inauguration ta-

ble. The Borders chain has even designed their own Obama-Inauguration logo, which adorns buttons, T-Shirts and hats. The National Park Service, which runs the shops in the countless monuments and memorials across the city, has its boutiques stocked full of Obama memorabilia. The Smithsonian Institution has the stores in all of its museums carrying everything Obama, from the usual pens and biographies to Obama family paperdoll books. The gift shops all around the city have turned over most of their space, formerly filled with FBI hats and White House models, to Obama. T-shirts, key chains, postcards and posters have pictures of the Obama family standing inside of the presidential seal. The same assortment of merchandise can be found with the added element of Martin Luther King Jr. under the headline "I have a dream—that dream has come true".

There are problems. While Barack Obama is a public figure whose picture can be reproduced freely, King's face belongs to the King Center and anyone wishing use it needs authorization. The problem is that most of the vendors are small operations on the street that can pack up and go in a matter of minutes. There have also been concerns raised over the use of the presidential seal.

In Washington this kind of party is not unfamiliar. Inaugurations have always been cause for celebration—and sales. But this feels different. Vendors won't even bargain on anything Obama, so confident they'll find buyers among the millions of people who converged on Washington for the inaugural festivities. Ordinary people line the streets selling mint-condition Washington Posts from the day after the election, for \$10 as opposed to \$20 in the store across the street. Retailers have produced everything from Obama hot-sauce and action figures ("an action figure we can believe in!") to decks of playing cards and pins. Unions of Iron and Sheet Metal Workers have banners on their head offices wishing Obama well. Some joke that Barack Obama is the American economic stimulus he has promised.

Whatever the Obama presidency has in store for the nation, most agree that he will never be as popular as he is now. No one will forget this historic run, with all its twists and turns, weather the Obama weather wins out or goes up in smoke. If it does, we'll all know. That'll be when the people stop buying.

Twilight- Bis(s) zum Morgengrauen: Der Film

Kreischend empfing das Kinopublikum Edward Cullen (Robert Pattinson), als er das erste Mal auf der Leinwand erschien. Goldbraune Augen, braunes Haar, blasse Haut und ein mysteriöser Blick auf dem Gesicht - das perfekte Bild eines Vampirs.

Schon die vier Bücher von Stephanie Meyer waren weltweit und besonders in den USA ein riesiger Erfolg. Die Liebesgeschichte von Bella Swan (Kirsten Stewart) und Edward Cullen, einem normalen Mädchen und einem Vampir, spielt sich in dem verregneten Forks, Washington State, ab. Sie verlieben sich sofort und Bella ist begeistert von der Lebensart der Familie Cullen. Doch die Liebe zwischen einem Vampir und einem Menschen ist gefährlich. Bellas verlockender Geruch nach Blut und Mensch bringt sie oft in Gefahr. Ein wohl durchdachter Angriff eines verfeindeten Vampirs der Familie Cullen kostet der 17-jährigen fast das Leben.

Seit einigen Tagen ist das erste Buch nun auch in Deutschland als Film erschienen. In Amerika ist er schon ein Millionenenerfolg. Das Kino am Potsdamer Platz war gefüllt, überwiegend von Mädchen, die bei fast jeder Bewegung Edwards schrien. Das Publikum freute sich, lachte, weinte und alle waren begeistert von dem Film. Die Schauspieler brachten die Buchfiguren bezaubernd zum Leben. Insgesamt wurde die Geschichte sehr gut verfilmt und alle wichtigen Ereignisse wurde einbezogen. Wie immer wurden natürlich ein paar unwichtige Szenen ausgelassen.

Es stimmt einfach alles in dem Film: die Schauspieler, der Text, die Stimmung... Die Musik und der gruselige Drehort



photo courtesy of backseatcuddler.com

im Wald machten alles noch eine Nummer spannender. Wir können nur allen, die schon von den Büchern begeistert waren, empfehlen, den Film zu gucken. Ihr werdet ihn lieben!

Johanna Walther
Victoria Christians

Will they be able to COPE?

„Konkurrenz belebt das Geschäft“ ist eine allseits bekannte Weisheit. Jedoch ist es genau das, was der Südafrikanischen Regierungspartei, dem African National Congress, fehlt. Seit den ersten demokratischen Wahlen im Jahre 1994 weiß der ANC, dass ihm die Zwei-Drittel-Mehrheit sicher ist; er kann also machen, was er will. Und genau das tut er auch, bzw. tat er auch.

Bis der African National Congress vor einigen Monaten eigenmächtig den Präsidenten Thabo Mbeki, Erzrivalen des Parteichefs Jacob Zuma, fällte.

Dies war der endgültige Anstoß für die immer zahlreicher werdende Menge der unzufriedenen ex-ANC-Anhänger, ihrer ehemaligen Partei ein für alle Mal einen Denkkzettel zu verpassen. Dieser Denkkzettel heißt COPE – Congress of the People.

Unter der Leitung des ehemaligen Verteidigungsministers Mosiua „Terror“ Lekota und des ehemaligen Premiers der Region Gauteng, Mbazima Shilowa, gründeten rund 7000 Südafrikaner im Dezember die neue Partei.

Zurzeit deuten Prognosen darauf hin, dass COPE bei der nächsten Wahl im April bis zu 20% der Sitze im Parla-

ment erhalten könnte. In Anbetracht der Tatsache, dass bisher die zweitstärkste Partei (die als „weiße Partei“ verrufene „Democratic Alliance“, kurz: DA) nur 12% der Stimmen einholen konnte, sind 20% auch gegenüber den 70% des ANC eine anständige Leistung.

Bisher hat der ANC sogar die Macht, im Alleingang die Verfassung zu ändern. Die kommenden Wahlen könnten nicht nur das ändern, sondern ihm sogar seine absolute Mehrheit wegnehmen, was ihn zum ersten Mal seit seiner Regierungsübernahme in eine Koalition zwingen würde.

Schlechte Karten hätte COPE jedoch, wenn der ANC anstelle Jacob Zumas einen Überraschkandidaten für das Amt des Präsidenten aufstellen würde, z.B. den amtierenden Präsidenten Kgalema Motlante. Da das gesamte Wahlprogramm von COPE in erster Linie ein gegen Zuma ausgerichtetes Programm ist, könnte solch ein taktischer Schachzug zu einem K.O. in der ersten Runde für die junge Partei führen.

Moritz Zeidler

The Cynic's Dictionary

PRESIDENCY

„The greased pig in the field game of American politics.“

Feeling cynical, too?
Then submit your own definitions to themuckraker@gmail.com by February 16th.

Eileen Wagner

Column / Culture

Unsere Kultour: German Brass

photo courtesy of germanbrass.de



Sie sind die bedeutendsten Blechbläser Deutschlands, spielen in den wichtigsten Orchestern des Landes mit. Sie spielen so ziemlich alles zwischen Bach und Jobim. „Weihnachten ohne German Brass ist wie Schach ohne Würfel“, soll einst Lukas Podolski gesagt haben, auch wenn das sicherlich positiver gemeint war, als es klingt. Sie spielen fantastisch, grandios. Sie begeistern seit 30 Jahren ihr Publikum. Im Rahmen ihrer Weihnachtstour am 15. Dezember traten

sie in Berlin auf, die 10 Blechbläser und der Schlagzeuger des international renommierten Ensembles.

Zu sehen war German Brass im Konzertsaal am Gendarmenmarkt, wo das Ensemble vor einem bedauerlicherweise recht kleinen Publikum auftrat.

Die erste Konzerthälfte bestand aus barocken und klassischen Stücken, wobei besonders die Werke Bachs im Vordergrund standen, während in der zweiten Hälfte eigene Medleys aus zahlreichen Weihnachtsliedern verschiedener Regionen präsentiert wurden, unter anderem Weihnachtslieder aus Amerika, England, Frankreich und Russland. Das Konzert wurde schließlich mit dem Jazz-Klassiker „Sing Sing Sing (With a Swing)“ abgeschlossen.

Die Gruppe überzeugte mit perfekten Harmonien, viel Rhythmus und besonders mit den für sie typischen, teils fetzigen Arrangements bekannter Stücke, wie zum Beispiel eine Kreuzung zwischen Ravels „Bolero“ und dem bekannten „Drummer Boy“, welche wieder einmal die Kreativität und den Humor der Gruppe bewies. Auch der Hornist Klaus Wallendorf brachte mit seinen kabarettistischen Einlagen zwischen den Stücken das Publikum zum Lachen.

Fazit: German Brass ist ein MUSS für alle Freunde lebhafter Musik. Wann sie das nächste Mal in Berlin spielen, steht noch nicht fest, wer will kann aber regelmäßig unter www.german-brass.de nachschauen, dort werden stets die neusten Konzertdaten veröffentlicht. Auch wir werden euch rechtzeitig vorher Bescheid geben!

Moritz Zeidler

How to Lose Your Christmas Carbs the “Fun Way”!

Christmas season is ending, school is starting, and it's time to face the music. Get ready to clear your guilty conscience of the sweet sins Christmas had to offer. Motivate yourself and watch how your body gets back into shape, without the usual discomfort that one usually has to face. Let's start with some simple facts:

1. The most common mistake one can make is to starve yourself. A result of this is the so called “yoyo effect.” What happens is that after you hunger, you lose control over your eating habits which results in pigging out. This means that you gain more weight than you lose.

2. Always eat breakfast. Even though you may not think so, we can confirm that eating breakfast really does help. If you have a good basis to start your day on, you will not succumb to the temptation of snacking even when you're not hungry.

3. Drink A LOT of water. It is easy,

doesn't take much effort, and flushes out all your superfluous fat. Every morning, drink a glass of water (preferably warm). It helps with your digestion.

4. Take the stairs. Whenever you can, integrate little “workout” sessions into your daily life. Instead of taking the bus to school, get off earlier and walk the rest of the way. An alternative to being picked up from a friend's house is taking your bike. Even though these actions seem unnecessary, they are almost effortless and effectively substitute a full workout session.

5. Keep motivated. Do little things that keep your mood perked up. Listen to good music, hang out with your friends, or go on a shopping tour. You'll be amazed to see what that can do to your attitude towards life. WARNING! Don't shop for clothes, because that usually leads to low self-esteem, for the clothes usually never fit and never look good on the first glance. Look

for books, jewellery, decorations, and our favorite: shoes!

6. Little tricks do make life easier. Bag your goodies in small amounts. It has been statistically proven that once a bag is empty, the craving ends. So, if there is a smaller amount in the bag, there are fewer calories to be consumed.

7. Most important of all: Make the plan fit you and not vice versa. If you are forcing yourself into rules, you will likely have an urge to break them. Make working out a habit, a fun past time. Don't see it as an obligation. To make things fun, join an after school activity that makes you move. Dance classes or team sports are favoured, because you're focusing on the fun factor.

Remember the two Golden Rules:

- A) Make habits, NOT rules!
- B) Stay motivated!

*Aletta Bühler
Marissa Fuchs*

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT:

www.freewebs.com/muckraker

Entertainment

Dystopian Novel Guide

Over the Christmas break, I decided to read some dystopian novels and tremble in fear under my blankets. I was tired of horror movies but was in the mood for fear and, man, books can also be frightening.

The dystopian novel genre was very common in the 20th century, and it is now considered one of the classics. The term 'dystopia' was first used during a speech of the British philosopher and economist John Stuart Mill. Mill created a new word by adding Greek words *dys* (bad) and *topos* (location). Since then, dystopia was used as an antonym of utopia, an ideal society with perfect political, economical, and social systems. So a dystopia is a negative utopia, a society in which the conditions of life are miserable. Dystopian societies are characterized by human misery, poverty, violence, oppression, disease, and/or natural hazards.

Reading dystopian novels can be of great help in your English and history classes, give you the shivers, but most importantly, they are page-turners. So use this top ten dystopian novel guide to familiarize yourself with some of them! There are many more books which fit into this genre, but these are my personal favorites.

#10. We by Yevgeny Zamyatin

This book is generally considered one of the first dystopian novels. It was written in response to Zamyatin's personal experiences with the Russian revolutions, and was translated into English in 1924. Zamyatin writes about a society called One State, a nation made entirely out of glass, and where everything is organized according to numbers.

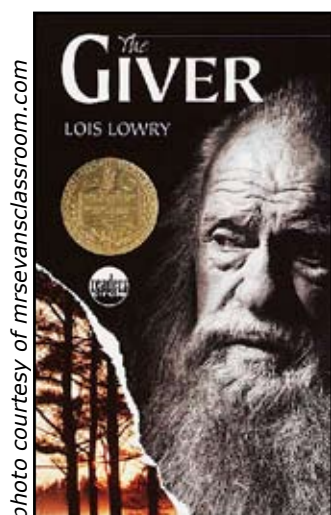


photo courtesy of mrseavansclassroom.com

#9. The Giver by Lois Lowry
Most of you have probably encountered this book, with the school edition's infamously weird smell, in 7th grade. In The Giver, it

first seems like a utopia is being described because the characters take all possible steps to eliminate pain, but as the book progresses, it becomes clear that the society has lost contact with the ideas of family and love. The protagonist, Jonas, gets selected to be the only one in his society who receives memories.

#8. Stasiland by Anna Funder

This book is not fictional. Anna Funder's Stasiland is a non-fiction book about living in East Berlin under the Stasi, the official secret police. It was the ministry for state security of the GDR. Funder's Stasiland is a collection of the grim, but true stories of people living in East Germany. Almost everything in this book can be found where you are living right now- Berlin! And which is why it is more frightening.

#7. Brave New World by Aldous Huxley
Huxley's Brave New World is about developments in reproductive technology and sleep-learning that combine to change society.

Like in The Giver, everything appears to be perfect at first- free and legalized drugs, promiscuous lifestyles, sleep-teaching, and no fear of death. What could be the problem then? Read it yourself and find it out.

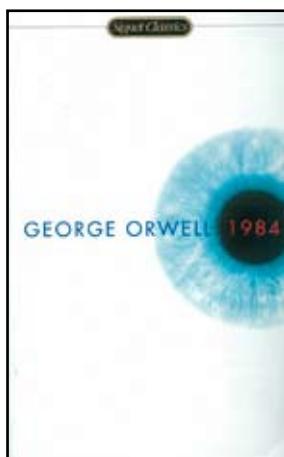


photo courtesy of tpet.com

#6. 1984 by George Orwell

Probably considered one of the greatest books ever written, George Orwell's 1984 is almost the exact opposite of Huxley's Brave New World. In 1984, Winston Smith lives in London, which is part of the fictional country Oceania. The world is divided into three countries: Oceania, Eurasia, and Eastasia. Oceania, and both of the others, is a totalitarian society led by Big Brother, which censors everyone's behavior, even their thoughts. Having sex is banned, a new type of text-message-style language is created, and even thinking or dreaming about betraying the party can result in

death. Be careful while you are reading this book- Big Brother might be watching you!

#5. Player Piano by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.

Vonnegut's debut novel, Player Piano, is about a society set some time in the future after the third world war. Imagine a society where there is no labor.

Machines do everything. This might not seem frightening at first, but think again. What is the purpose of your life then?

#4. The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood

This book takes place in the Republic of Gilead, a country formed within the borders of what was originally the US after nuclear, biological, and chemical pollution. To put it in a nutshell, imagine a society where women are valued only if their ovaries are viable.

#3. Animal Farm by George Orwell

This book is a blend of dystopian literature and satire because Orwell depicted Stalin and his regime (dystopian) and wrote a satire about it. Stalin, Trotsky, the major Russian communists, common populace, and even political spin-doctors are all represented by animals. This novel is just amusing to read because you can compare the real history and this book.

#2. Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury

Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451 will blow your mind. This novel presents a future American society in which the masses are hedonistic, and reading books is considered as committing a crime. Side note: The title refers to the temperature at which paper burns.

#1. What is your favorite dystopian novel? I'll leave the number one up to you.

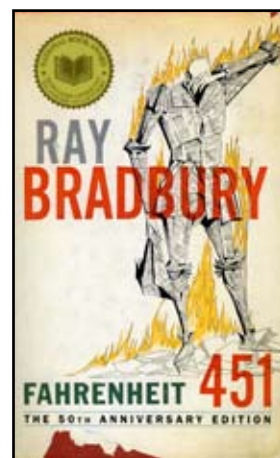


photo courtesy of mccc.edu

The College Application Process

"This book" refers to a prospectus of the University of Rochester. The images below are taken from said book's envelope.

Farsane Tabataba-Vakili



DO NOT



EAT THIS BOOK



WEAR THIS BOOK



TAUNT THIS BOOK



PUT OUT FIRES WITH THIS BOOK



FIGHT BEARS WITH THIS BOOK



USE THIS BOOK AS A PARACHUTE



USE THIS BOOK TO WARD OFF VAMPIRES



USE THIS BOOK AS A SUPPORT

MAYBE



DRAW A MOUSTACHE ON THIS BOOK

DO



READ THIS BOOK



Book Review:

The Problems of Philosophy by Bertrand Russell

What characterizes a book worth reading is an intellectually stimulating content combined with a pleasant writing style. In this respect, Bertrand Russell's *Problems of Philosophy* is a highly recommendable book, for it provides philosophical insight on the theory of knowledge in a delightfully logical manner. In a little more than 100 pages, Russell explains difficulties in the pursuit of knowledge and thereby reveals many questions of epistemology. Commencing with the basic question 'Is there any knowledge in the world which is so certain that no reasonable man could doubt it?', Russell explores the limits of human knowledge by analysing the existence and nature of matter, the correlation between appearance and reality, idealism, induction, a priori reasoning, knowledge by acquaintance and by description, and possible errors in our perception and preconceptions. Coming from a mathematical background, Russell possesses the ability to investigate philosophical difficulties with logical purity. Nevertheless, one is able to follow his train of thought without having to relinquish enjoyable language because Russell systematically develops his questions and supports his answers with valid and sound arguments and simple yet powerful examples. This precise and succinct style of writing produces a cleansing, almost cathartic effect. For these reasons, *Problems of Philosophy* not only exhibits invigorating substance, but also offers a clear and assessable introduction to philosophy. It is in every aspect a timeless and yet refreshing book.

Eileen Wagner

Entertainment

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

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

Hard Sudoku

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

Cartoon Corner

Jakob Marsh

