

# THE MIRROR



Issue 4  
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"Reflections on the Pratt High student body"

## Tissues and triggers raise funds

Andrew Taylor  
Editor-In-Chief



Photo by: Courtney Witten



Photo by: Andrew Taylor

Top: KAYS Club members organize Kleenex boxes following the Kleenex drive.

Bottom: Pratt High students intently play video games during the Science Club LAN party

Many changes have taken place at Pratt High this year; however, one of the more forgotten ones is the addition of new fundraising activities.

One, for example, is the KAYS Club Kleenex

drive. They developed this creative idea to eliminate the use of toilet paper and paper towel as Kleenex substitutes. The club, with the help of teachers, offered students various incentives if they brought boxes of Kleenexes. These incentives ranged from early dismissal for the class that collected the most boxes to extra credit in class. All of these things together worked to bring in hundreds of Kleenex boxes. The sophomore class demolished the other classes by collecting well over 100 boxes more than the closest competitor. This ensures that no student's nose will be irritated by using rough toilet paper as a substitute for Kleenex for quite a while.

Another inventive way to raise money was thought of by the Pratt High Science Club. The club hosted a LAN (local

area network) tournament in the gym of Pratt High. Halo was the game of choice for the night as a 2 vs. 2 tournament was held, as well as a 4 vs. 4 tournament. Eric Kocher and Danny Mason, jrs., worked together to take 1<sup>st</sup> place in the 2 vs. 2 tournament. They then joined up with Michael Quinn and Bronson Blasi, jrs., to take home the 4 vs. 4 championship. The club also allowed general game play on any one of the 16 projectors available for use. Blasi commented that, "the turn out was a little less than expected. But it was still a success that brought in money." The club gained over \$100 on the night.

With these new and creative ideas paving the way, it shouldn't be long before another plan takes the school by storm.

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## Superintendent rewards USD 382 students

Joe Schmisser  
Head Staff Writer

All throughout the school students are rejoicing. We don't have school tomorrow! What could be better than a day tacked on to our already 12-day-long Christmas Vacation? Well, two days added on would be better, but most of us are content with one.

The reason we got this extra day was because the students at LMS and PHS received five different Awards of Excellence on the 2006 Kansas State Assessments. Our superintendent, Dr. Glen Davis, designated Friday as a "Day of Recognition."

So, instead of having a half-day of school, nearly completely dedicated to finals and Christmas parties, we get to stay home, drink eggnog, and enjoy the idea of a white Christmas. And teachers get this treat as well. They don't have to stick around here after we are all gone

and work, getting ready for another semester. They get to go home and spend time with their families.

Thanks to everyone who took the test last year. Without you we would only have 12 days of Christmas vacation.

## OCEAN BLUE



## Give peace a chance

Courtney Witten  
Staff Writer

With the recent school shootings, the ongoing war in the Middle East, and the pointless violence you hear about everyday, it seems as though our world is consumed by violence and hatred. I know that I walk out of the room whenever the news comes on because it's simply too negative and depressing for me. Even the small halls of Pratt High have seen their share of fights and heard more than enough hurtful rumors and degrading remarks. Teenage suicide is at an all time high due to depression caused by bullying. Belittling people seems to be a favorite pastime for today's youth and the results can be devastating. Over half of the school shootings where the shooter has been a student himself have quoted the shooter as being a victim of bullying.

Bullying is almost undetectable in many cases because more often than not, the bullying isn't the stereotypical tossing-into-trashcans type. More subtle and indirect attacks such as spreading rumors, getting others to reject or dislike someone, or the 'cold shoulder' effect can be just as devastating. Ultimately bullying can make a student afraid to come to school, afraid to be around others, and possibly suicidal.

The effects of bullying are not strictly confined to the victim, though. Children and teens that engage in bullying and the degradation of others are four times more likely to be convicted of crimes by the age of 24.

"We have absolutely zero tolerance for bullying. Quite frankly, I personally believe that bullies are cowards that pick on someone they believe is weaker than they are to make themselves feel better. There is no place for bullies and bullying at school. My stand is very strong on this issue. I believe that threatening a student to beat them up is exactly like beating them up and I will deal with it as such. Students have a right to attend school without having to deal with bullying or harassment. My job is to keep this school safe.", said Curtis Nightingale, Ptatt High assistant principal.

If you or a friend is a victim of bullying, talk to a parent, teacher or counselor. Even if it is just something that gets on your nerves or hurts your feelings, bullying is bullying and it should be dealt with accordingly. It takes a little person to make others feel bad so be big and take a stand against bullying.

Joe Schmisser  
Head Staff Writer

When you think of the ocean you probably see a sandy beach with blue waves crashing upon the shore, or maybe a relaxing cruise with nothing but blue water stretching into infinity in all directions.

Well, those visions of a blue ocean are steadily becoming truer. This may sound wonderful: a blue ocean, what could be better? But this really only means that

the plants that keep the ocean alive are slowing dying off. The reason is because the oceans are steadily growing warmer, keeping the nutrients that keep the plants in the ocean alive from coming close to the surface. Since these plants are dying off, the ocean is losing its green shine and is slowly becoming bluer. This is bad for many reasons.

## Peace on Earth?

Meghan Connely  
Head Staff Writer

'Tis the season to be jolly, and in the weeks leading up to the Christmas holiday nothing can dampen cheery spirits. That is, with the exception of a festive southwestern Colorado wreath.

It's difficult to conjure a more soothing holiday wish than the simple desire for peace on Earth. Yet just outside Pagosa Springs, the meaning of an evergreen peace wreath is rapidly becoming an increasing controversy nation-wide.

Truculent members of the Pagosa Springs Homeowners Association are forcing a couple to remove their holiday wreath or pay a daily fine until it is confiscated.

Members justify the accusation by "reasoning," that the peace sign could have been placed strategically as protest for a plethora of reasons; it could be political, an anti-war message insulting neighbors with loved ones in Iraq, or Satanic, even, representing the "broken cross," some say. For whatever reason, the Homeowners Association stands strong in their order

for Lisa Jensen and Bill Trimarco to take the wreath down or cough up the \$25-a-day fine (\$775 total until Christmas day) to display the festoon.

"It was just a time-of-the-year, Peace-on-Earth kind of greeting to people," Jensen said Monday to the Denver Post. "There are no words on it or anything."

However, despite the negative feedback the HOA has caused, many others across the nation wishing for peace this season have sent letters, made phone calls, and even donated money to the couple in support of keeping the wreath up throughout the remainder of the season. "I hope that this will just get dropped," Jensen said, "and they'll retract their letter and realize it was silly."

In the meantime, citizens of Pagosa Springs should try to mend the hurt aroused, ironically, from such an extremely altruistic symbol.

Enjoy the holiday season, and please, give peace a chance.

Check us out on the Web!



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President

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Pratt, Kansas 67124

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Fax: 620-672-9574  
Cell: 620-770-0005  
kgates@prattwell.com

## TIME magazine names you "Person of the Year"

Joe Schmisser  
Head Staff Writer

Really? People who attend Pratt High have become the Person of the Year? To begin with, that makes no sense. What did people in Pratt do? And second, shouldn't it be people of the year? Well, the answer is that students at our school, and Kingman High, and Skyline, and Ulysses, Texas Tech, and your Aunt Susie are all the Person of the Year according to *Time* magazine.

It is the first time that *Time* (ha, get the pun?) has not named some amazing

individual the Person of the Year; in fact it is the first time that the Person of the Year is a group of people. The Person of the Year is you. Seems simple enough, but why you? Why not some politician or scientist. The reason you are the person of the year is because of what you did on the Internet. You created YouTube to show off your directing skill, Facebook to tell the world about your every day life, podcasts that discussed things that you cared about,

and Linux because you did not want to use the normal operating system.

You told the world about yourself, and changed the Internet to the point where anyone with a computer and connection could give themselves a voice that the world could hear.

Before you came along the Internet was the product of experts and professionals, but now each and every person can change it, mold it into what they want it to be.

Because of you the world can view America through non-biased eyes, your eyes. They don't just see the top news stories around the country, but the top news stories in your town, school, and home.

So congratulations to you. Because of your amazing abilities to take the raw material of the Internet and change it into something for everyone, you are awarded the prestigious honor of being the Person of the Year.

## Nintendo recalls millions of Wii wrist straps

Jenna Gatz  
Ad Manager

As most of you know, the new Nintendo Wii is the ultimate gaming system to have nowadays. Hard core gamers even camped out in front of stores to make sure they got a hold of one of these systems. Pratt High had a few members stake a place in front of Wal-Mart.

"Dexter and I camped 16 hours for one and it was worth every bit of our time," said Justin Navarrette, sr.

This long-awaited game system had many special features including a wireless remote that can act as a tennis racket,

sword, or baseball bat. When playing the Wii Sports games, one can really get some exercise. But, one also may get injuries.

Many gamers who own the new Wii have reported various kinds of injuries related to the gaming system. Injuries range from bruises and small cuts to dislocated knees and collarbones. These injuries are mostly caused by intense, concentrated play, using too much force for a simple game. Other gamers are complaining of malfunctioning controller wrist straps. These straps are supposed to be worn

around the wrist to keep the controller from flying during a game. The original wrist straps were considered small, thin, and incapable of withstanding gamers' forceful actions. Nintendo reported that it would replace 3.2 million wrist straps for the Wii controllers. The new straps are understood to be roughly twice as thick as the originals. To see the numerous and diverse injuries and broken household items, got to [www.WiiHaveAProblem.com](http://www.WiiHaveAProblem.com).

## Iranian's Deny Holocaust

Ana Whitson  
Staff Writer

On December 12, 2006, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad held a conference in Tehran to discuss the existence of the Jewish Holocaust. Many leaders argued that the holocaust was a fabrication, and a myth disguised to justify the existence of the state of Israel. But, it's not just white supremacists and Anti-Jews anymore; Some Jewish people are against the state of Israel. The discussion is that the creation of Israel before the coming of the Messiah is anti-Semitic, and the Zionists were responsible for the death of 6 million Jews in Europe.

These allegations by the Iranians and Anti-Israel Jews have made life for Jewish people in Iran humiliating. The allegations are that the holocaust was a propaganda tool to take control of the Middle East so the Jewish people could obtain Israel as their homeland. But how could the holocaust be fabricated, when all these people have told stories, have undergone such hardships and there is so much incontrovertible evidence.

Pratt High Alumni Benton Stull makes arm motions as Justin Navarrette enjoys the Nintendo Wii. Levi Stephens, and Dexter Deitz, sr., watch the action. (Photo by: Eric Kocher)



## Tom the Ripper?

Joe Schmisser  
Head Staff Writer

In the past few weeks, people living in England have had a new nightmare to haunt them throughout both their sleeping and waking hours. They have a nameless, faceless terror that walks among them, a serial killer attempting to copy Jack the Ripper.

For those of you who don't know, Jack the Ripper was a serial killer in the late 1800s who mainly killed prostitutes. His methods were very harsh. It is assumed that he first strangled his victims, then cut their throats. After that point he would mutilate the body, cutting into the abdomen several times and occasionally removing organs. He always performed his dark deeds near or on the weekends, in public areas where the victim's body would surely be found. The original Jack the Ripper killed over five prostitutes and is suspected to have killed many more.

The current situation in the U.K. is very similar. In just 16 days five prostitutes have been killed, and on Monday British police questioned a man named Tom Stephens. Stephens has been divorced

for a little over a year, and in that time he said that he visited over 50 prostitutes. He worked as a taxi driver and sometimes drove the women to different locations to pick up drugs. He also claimed to be the girls' protector and the closest thing they had to a "pimp." He has claimed to be innocent of the charges and even said that he was a close friend with one of the murdered women and at least knew all of them.

All five bodies have been found fairly close to where Stephens lives. Paula Clenna died from compression to her neck, Aneli Alderton has strangled, and the cause of the deaths of Tania Nicol, Annette Nicolls, and Gemma Adams has not been discovered yet. All of the women were between 19 and 29 years old.

So far, Stephens has said that he may look like the police sketch and he may not have an alibi for many of the murders, but he did not commit any of the crimes. He also stated that if some coincidental information did arise he may get arrested.

## Beloved cartoonist passes away

Elizabeth Short  
Staff Writer

How many of you remember waking up to Tom and Jerry, Scooby Doo, Yogi Bear, and the Jetsons on Saturday morning? You just flicked through the channels until you got to the Cartoon Network, stopped to watch them until about lunch time and sat around for the rest of the day.

The two people who created these characters, and many others, have passed away. William Hanna died in 2001, and now, at the age of 95, Joe Barbera has passed away this Monday morning. He

died of natural causes with his wife Sheila by his side. Barbera did the artwork and painted the famous expressions on everyone of his beloved characters. Hanna said that he could "capture a mood and expression in a quick sketch better than anyone I've ever known."

Today Hanna-Barbera cartoons are still watched, and even though they have left this earth, they will always be remembered in all of our hearts as we watch these



A member of Team Break Skate shows off his moves during half time of the varsity boys basketball game. (Photo by: Neil Goss)

## BRAWL ON THE COURT

Andrew Taylor  
Editor-In-Chief

The tarnished image of the National Basketball Association took another hit this past Saturday night as a fight broke out between the Denver Nuggets and the New York Knicks. A hard foul by the Knicks Mardy Collins on the Nuggets J.R. Smith began the brawl. The fight lasted a few minutes during which many punches were thrown as the players began to span the length of the court.

Right when the fight looked as if it might be over, Carmelo Anthony took a cheap shot at Mardy Collins, which, inevitably, stirred things up again.

Officials finally managed to regain control and preceded to eject the 10 players that were on the floor at the time of the fight.

On Monday the NBA took action to repair its damaged persona. In an effort to maintain the leagues no tolerance policy, Commissioner David Stern suspended seven different players for a total of 45 games. Anthony received the longest ban with a 15 game suspension. The Commissioner also fined each franchise \$500,000 for the disaster.

There was no additional fine for

Knicks coach Isiah Thomas, who had supposedly warned Nugget's Anthony and Marcus Camby not to go to the basket in the final minutes of the game. Some analysts took the supposed comment to mean that Thomas told his players to foul hard if given the chance.

Commissioner Stern, however, prefers to rely on hard facts when handing down punishments. Stern, also, did not like the explanation New York players gave for the hard foul. Their reason was that the Nugget's were supposedly running up the score by leaving their starters on the floor after they had the game "won."

The melee bore a disturbing similarity to the infamous Detroit Pistons and Indiana Pacers fiasco where Indiana players fought with Detroit fans. Both disputes began with a hard foul and then escalated into a serious ordeal. On that occasion, however, Stern suspended all the players involved over one hundred games.

This nightmare will take the NBA a while to recover from, but they have already taken the first steps to putting the incident in their rear view mirror by handing down such stiff penalties.

If you ate a meal today,  
thank a farmer.

113 Farms



## Book Reviews:

# Into Thin Air & The Last Kingdom

Andrew Taylor  
Editor-In-Chief

### Into Thin Air:

From the scenic hills surrounding the base of Mount Everest to the breathtaking views on the summit of the monstrous mountain, *Into Thin Air* documents a harrowing Everest expedition.

Jon Krakauer, a writer for *Outside* magazine, takes part in a guided expedition to the peak of Everest. The book recounts his and others memories of the deadly events and the costly mistakes that brought them about.

*Into Thin Air* is incredibly well written, documenting every action with as much truth as possible. Jon writes the book in time-line fashion. He begins with his arrival at base camp where he becomes acquainted with the people that he plans to spend the next 2-3 months of his life with. Following that, the climbing group begins a dangerous yet necessary acclimation process. They must climb up the mountain and then back down within a set amount of time to get their bodies accustomed to the extreme height. The group must repeatedly navigate a vicious icefall where seemingly bottomless chasms could trap a climber for

eternity.

After the acclimation process, the group makes an attempt to reach the summit. However, in those high altitudes, even the most ideal weather can turn nasty in a matter of minutes. The group discovers this as they make the desperate attempt to ascend Everest. However, it soon turns into a desperate attempt to save their lives and those of their comrades.

The book does an incredible job illustrating the dangers associated with many high-risk climbs. For example, it depicts the dangers of lapses in judgment that could very likely lead to the death of loved ones. Also, the book gives startling examples of how oxygen deprivation and extreme cold can affect one's physical well-being.

*Into Thin Air* has been the subject of varying amounts of criticism and controversy. A fellow member of that fateful expedition, Anatoli Boukreev, feels that Krakauer misrepresented many of his actions. In response to this Anatoli hired an author to tell his side of the story. Thus in November 1997, *The Climb* appeared on bookshelves everywhere. Jon considers much of Boukreev's book to be false. He

has good reason to believe this because he checked with many other climbers on the expedition to ensure that the events told in his book were as factual as possible.

Overall, this book is a great read and well worth the time and money. It draws the reader in from the first chapter and never lets go. If you're a fan of adventure books or just looking for a good read, I suggest picking this book up.

Joe Schmisser  
Head Staff Writer

### The Last Kingdom:

Few periods of history are as clouded as the Dark Ages. It was a time of small warring kingdoms and terrible barbarian armies. It was a time when Christianity and paganism met head to head on the battlefield and in every day life.

The book *The Last Kingdom* by Bernard Cornwell describes the life of a young Englishman named Uhtred. When he is young his father is killed in a battle against the Danes and he is taken prisoner. The book describes the internal conflict of Christianity and paganism, and the

external war going on between the English and the Danes. In both battles Uhtred finds it difficult to choose a side.

The book is told in a first person view from Uhtred. I generally don't care for first person books; however, the way *The Last Kingdom* is told is very effective. Uhtred tells the story as if he is an old man telling a young group of warriors about his exploits while they sit in a great wooden hall, waiting for winter to end so that battles can begin again.

The characters are well written. They are both amazingly deep and surprisingly simple depending upon the situation.

The book is also full of action, from Uhtred watching his father's army get destroyed by the Danes or the final shield wall in which Uhtred saves Wessex.

The only thing about this book is that there is a large amount of immoral things, such as the murder of priests and nuns, executions, and violence, so it is not for the faint of heart. However, remember that most of the characters and carnage actually existed and actually happened.

Overall, *The Last Kingdom* is a great book, detailing the violent Dark Ages in an interesting and exciting way.

## CONSTRUCTION UPDATE



Part of the Pedigo building has been torn off in preparation for the new high school. Also some walls are visible in the distance. (Photo by: Neil Goss)



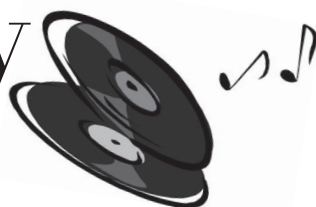
## Editorial: Headphone Headache

Ian Howard  
Copy Editor

Head Phones: The device that is used to listen to sounds without the annoyance of the outside world. You, or maybe another can turn on some good music, or a funny video and not have to bother with the chatter from the student body. But it seems as of late that headphones are becoming obsolete. Around the entire school students play their music, creating a mix of all types of music and funny videos. Let me be the first tell you all that Nickelback and Jay Z don't go together. Also, I think I'm not the only one in this school who gets tired of hearing Techno in a lot of classes. That repetitive "bow bow bow" gets annoying

people. Is the sound a disruption? Not necessarily, since the music is really only played unless everyone is done. But still, the last thing I want after I've done my work is to have a nagging headache thanks to a student who liked playing Weird Al at full blast (I love Weird Al's music, but you have to admit he isn't the best singer). Once again I have the solution! Reinstate headphones! That's right, put those little things in your ears again so you and only you (sometimes your friend) can listen to your music, without disturbing an already disgruntled class.

## Music Review



**Neil Goss**  
Photography Editor

Regina Spektor  
*Begin To Hope*

Wow, thank God! Finally some pop music that doesn't just incorporate one single power chord washed over by nasty distortion. Regina Spektor has all of my respect and attention through this album. The music isn't world changing, it could be life changing, but it is easily a breath of fresh air. Very healthy!

The opening track "Fidelity" is one of Regina's singles. It's an uplifting song with a cute beat of a violin, drums, and the original and alluring voice of Regina. She has one of the most unique singing styles, hitting numerous notes through the course of a song. Her voice is very soft, sweet, and awe-inspiring.

The following track is a bit more up-tempo and is named "Better." This song is a bit more of a rockish song incorporating some guitar, drums, and the Spektor's artful beauty.

The fourth song on *Begin to Hope* is "On the Radio" which has a hoppy beat provided by a nice drum setup and a vibrant piano. This is a song of nostalgia speaking of a happy time in Regina's life.

Many of Regina's lyrics tend to incorporate the infinite question of love. She speaks of past loves, past sort-of-loves, etc.

Track 10 "Edit" is a dreary-sounding song that is really prompt with the instrumental tempo. The piano, you can tell, is played down toward the bass end on the ivory.

To wrap this up; Regina Spektor is genius. A very cleansing and purifying sound is emitted when listening to this record. From her voice to her lyrics to her instrumental writings; all are artful bliss.

I do, however, recommend this album to the female division of the school because I think the women would more greatly appreciate this piece of work. However, there are a select few men in the school that could really dig Ms. Spektor, but all in all, everyone should give her a serious listen!

## MOVIE REVIEWS

**Courtney Witten**  
Staff Writer

### DONNIE DARKO

This was really interesting, in a great sort of way. Very complex and odd but it still held unique twists. It's one of those you need to watch twice to completely grasp all of it. Definitely drop what you're doing and go rent this.

### BATMAN BEGINS

Critics were raving about this comic book spinoff. It was super cool even though comic book type movies aren't really my bag....The graphics were really neat and the plot was intense. Sit down and totally have a Batman movie night.

## Ana's Passion for Fashion!

**Ana Whitson**  
Staff Writer

The cold weather is here, then gone, and back again. This proves to make it difficult to pick out appropriate attire. The safest route, I've found, is to layer it up. The girls at Pratt High are doing so wonderfully! We have the freedom to choose what we wear (with respect to the dress code) and we're taking that liberty to heart. The hodge-podge of styles and looks run deep here, and I say "yessssss" to all those that think of different ways of mixin' it up and showing your uniqueness. Neil and I have decided to choose all girls for this issue because we haven't noticed any guys that demonstrate what we consider unique or stylish attire. The message is: guys, think about what you're wearing!

NAME: Natanyah Williams  
GRADE: 10th  
COLORS?: Black Red Whites  
STORES?: Spencers, Hot Topic  
FAVORITE ARTICLE OF CLOTHING? Moccasins, and studded belt, black and red striped stockings  
WHAT DO YOU WANT BANNED? Poofy, layered mini-skirts



NAME: Naomi Williams  
GRADE: 10th  
COLORS?: White, gray, black  
STORES?: Spencers, Hot Topic  
FAVORITE ARTICLE OF CLOTHING? Jeans, ties  
WHAT DO YOU WANT BANNED? Knee length skirts



NAME: Katy Bundy  
GRADE: 12  
COLORS?: Green and pink  
STORES?: Forever 21  
FAVORITE ARTICLE OF CLOTHING? Shoes, and headbanned  
WHAT DO YOU WANT BANNED? Fluffy skirts, guys wearing black nail polish

# MIRROR MIRROR on the wall... ”

“ What would you give Santa for Christmas and why? ”

Jenna Gatz  
Ad Manager



What do you give a guy who has everything?? I know, an iPod, of course!  
Mr. Lee, faculty



“A train to hold all the coal for the bad kids, there’s a lot of bad kids.”  
-Gary Tapia, jr.



“A case of Tab energy, Rockstar, Full Throttle, 180, and Redbull...he’s gotta have lots of energy to deliver those presents.”  
-Briana Lincoln, soph.



“I would give Santa a Nintendo Wii because they’re super awesome.”  
-Wes Vahsoltz, frsh.



“I would give Santa Rudolph’s nose back, right Raeann?!”  
-Alyssa Seidel, sr.

## Featured Website

[www.jacksonpollock.org](http://www.jacksonpollock.org)

Emily McIntosh  
Editor-In-Chief

There is a good chance you’ve never heard of abstract expressionist painter Jackson Pollock. There’s also a good chance that you’ll enjoy this website anyway.

Pollock was famous for creating artwork that looks something like a splatter painting, yet somehow comes out as an impressive art masterpiece. This website, designed by Milos Manetas, allows you to impersonate Pollock’s painting style with the magic of the internet. Simply move your mouse over the blank canvas, and the possibility for awesome splatter artwork is right at your fingertips. Clicking the mouse allows you to experiment with colors, and mouse speed will determine the thickness of your lines. This website will not improve your actual art skills, but trust me, it’s an awesome way to waste time in class.



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Neil Goss  
Photography Editor

Santa Clause is coming to town. What do you think? Are the chimneys going to fluctuate and allow his happy chubby self down to give the bright and shiny faces of all the children their beloved joyful gifts? **After all of that, yes, most definitely yes. Everybody will be content.**

Should we leave Santa the traditional “milk and cookies” or should we mix it up a bit? Possibly some carrots or Oatmeal Cream Pies? You know...he could always share the carrots with Dancer or maybe Prancer? **Yes, I imagine he might want a bit of variety this year.**

The New Year, with all the partying that will inevitably occur, will everybody stay safe and well? **Good God, I am hoping so.**

## Christmas Traditions

Katie Walters  
Staff Writer

All across the world, when the clock strikes 6 p.m., one by one each house turns their Christmas lights on. It has been a tradition since the 1600s to decorate for the Christmas season; however, over the years decorations have drastically changed. Germany is initially credited for starting the Christmas tree tradition (all of you know the song O Tannenbaum), yet they contributed many more.

Trees have been decorated in fruits, gingerbread, dolls, toy guns and swords, and costume jewelry to name a few. Nonetheless, candles were actually used on trees before electricity was introduced.

There is also the famous Christmas pickle. In Germany, the green pickle would always be the last decoration to be hung on the tree. Legend has it that the child who spotted it first will be blessed with a good year of fortune. There is also another legend that Santa Claus would leave a special gift under the Christmas tree.

As we all know when two people meet under the mistletoe, it is a tradition to share a kiss. If truth be told, mistletoe was originally simply for decoration. People in the middle ages would use something green with four sides and would put an object in the middle, such as a symbol of the Holy Family or Baby Jesus.

Later on, the boughs were decorated with ribbons, fruit, or nuts. When hung inside churches, the priests would bless the bough for anyone who came to the church during the Christmas season, so that all bad feeling would be forgotten. Eventually, the mistletoe became known as the 'Kissing Bunch' and started the well-known modern tradition.

What traditions did your ancestors start? It might be worth researching.

## The Days of Christmas

Emily McIntosh  
Editor-In-Chief

The holiday season is upon us, and chances are that most of you have completed your Christmas wish lists. I'm sure there are requests for X-Boxes, iPods, cell phones and cameras. I'm also relatively sure that no one asked for French hens, turtle doves, or a pear tree. However, PNC Wealth Management compiled the prices for this year's "Twelve Days of Christmas" gift list, and the result is quite costly. Just in case your true love decides he or she need a few lords-a-leaping or maids-a-milking, here is a list of how much dough you'll have to cough up this Christmas.

Item	Price
Partridge	\$15.00
Pear Tree	\$129.99
Two Turtle Doves	\$40.00
Three French Hens	\$45.00
Four Calling Birds	\$479.96
Five Golden Rings	\$325.00
Six Geese-a-Laying	\$300.00
Seven Swans-a-Swimming	\$4,200.00
Eight Maids-a-Milking	\$41.20
Nine Ladies Dancing	\$4,759.19
Ten Lords-a-Leaping	\$4,160.25
Eleven Pipers Piping	\$2,124.00
Twelve Drummers Drumming	\$2,301.00
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>\$18,920.59</b>



**1344 E. First (620) 672-9205**  
**Pratt, Kansas 67124**



**FUN FACT:**  
IN SCANDANAVIA,  
THEY DON'T CELEBRATE SANTA CLAUSE.  
THEY HAVE JOLLY CHRISTMAS GNOMES.



From Mr. Kahmeyer's  
Refrigerator Door  
Poetry Magnets

"Behind storms flood,  
a thousand summers gone."

# Eric and Joe's HORRORSCOPES

Joe Schmisser and Eric Kocher  
Head Staff Writer and Staff Photographer

**Aquarius** - Your house will catch on fire when a single hot ember falls into your coal-filled stocking.

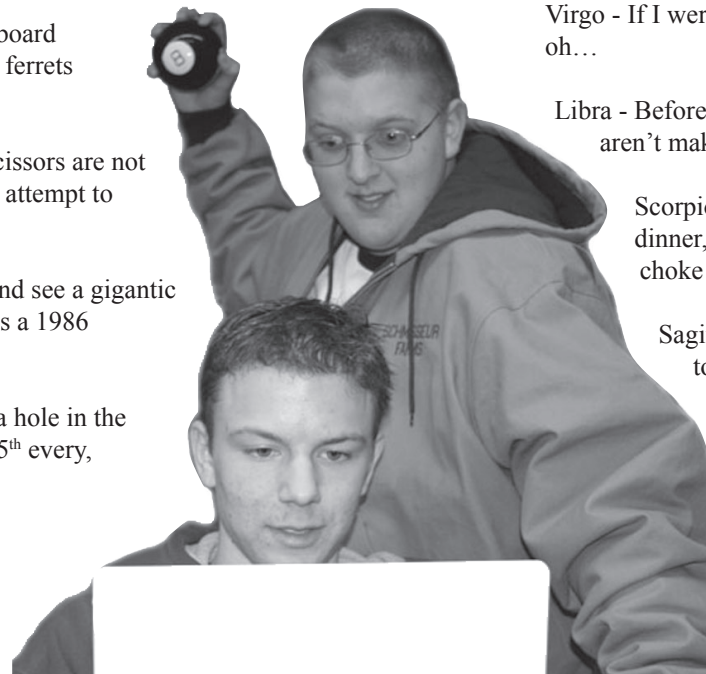
**Pisces** - You know that strange rattle on the dashboard of your vehicle? That's actually a horde of rabid ferrets preparing to eat you.

**Aries** - Today you will decide that kid-friendly scissors are not your friend when an army of inflatable snowmen attempt to take over the school.

**Taurus** - You will go outside on Christmas Day and see a gigantic red bow tie. Underneath that bow tie, however, is a 1986 Winnebago.

**Gemini** - You are destined to become trapped in a hole in the space-time continuum in which it is December 25<sup>th</sup> every, single day.

**Cancer** - You are destined to become trapped in a completely different hole in the space-time continuum in which it is December 21st; the day you have four finals and must work for eight.



**Leo** - Your computer randomly changes its date to January 1<sup>st</sup> 1969, so that the Christmas countdown shows 113,508 days until Christmas 2006.

**Virgo** - If I were you, I would refrain from reading any newspaper today. Uh oh...

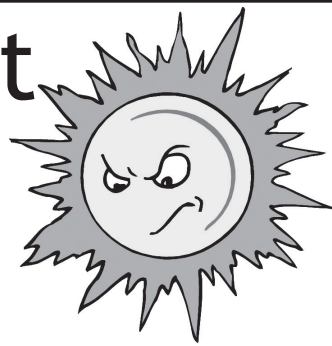
**Libra** - Before you eat your mozzarella sticks, check to make sure they aren't making a ticking sound.

**Scorpio** - Your mom decides not to make a pecan pie for Christmas dinner, but instead chooses to make "Peas-In-A-Can" pie. Try not to choke on the can fragments.

**Sagittarius** - The stars say that nothing interesting will happen today. You might have a slight headache, you might stub your big toe, we don't really know. What do I look like, the Magic 8-Ball?!

**Capricorn** -  
'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house,  
electronics began exploding, even your mouse!  
the stockings caught fire, off your roof flew,  
all I can say, is that it sucks to be you.

## Don't You Just **HATE** That?



Meghan Connelly  
Head Staff Writer

- Those awful "dramatic repeats" in movies; "It'll be OK Linda. [pats Linda's back reassuringly] It'll be OK..." As if the lines they choose to repeat aren't cheesy enough, right?

- When you see numerous underclassmen skipping lunch that don't get called to the office as you did only a couple years ago.

- Staying up into the wee hours of the morning, frantically throwing an assignment together only to find that it's not due, really, until the following day.

- High School drama. C'mon kids, grow up already.

- Moving from one really warm classroom to one that is freezing cold.

## Meghan-isms

*"Un-educating students  
one Meghan-ism at a  
time."*

Meghan Connelly  
Head Staff Writer

To continue your un-education, I present three additional Meghan-ism's.

**1)Imrunningoutofideasforwords-** (It's pretty self explanatory, really) n.  
A ridiculous Meghan-ism created merely due to lack of innovation.

**In context:** Let's hope winter break rejuvenates my mind so we avoid printing additional words like **Imrunningoutofideasforwords**.

**2)Cratanulob-** (Craw – tan – you – lob) n. Lack of motivation to complete assignments as December 22 nears us.

**In context:** Some signs of **crawtanulob** may include saying things such as; "Oh, it's only worth 200 points, I'll just turn it in late" or "Pssh, Government projects? Who needs to know about Presidents anyway?"

**3)Superfluous-** (Sue – per – flew – us ) adj. Wait a minute...this word already exists.

**In context:** I didn't think Mr. Webster would mind terribly if I 'borrowed' **superfluous**, as a Meghan-ism (even though it's already been used for hundreds of years) After all, it's just so much fun to say!



## NeNe and CoCo's NEVERENDING ADVENTURES



Starring Neil Goss and Courtney Witten, documented by Eric Kocher with help photography by Meghan Connelly



After spending 3 nights in prison, Ne Ne and Co Co, with the help of Eric, escape through the obstacle course and hop the fence. A brilliant plan was concocted. They know they must get out of the US, but they have to wait a day so they can get to the airport and hijack a plane.



Following the daring escape, Ne Ne and Co Co needed to find a safe place to hide out until the next day when they plan on heading to the airport. An unlocked soccer mom van was located within a city block. Co Co relaxed by reading a seemingly untouchable newspaper while Ne Ne slept for a solid seven and a half minutes.



After staking out in the van, Ne Ne and Co Co promptly sped to the airport before the police could locate them. Upon arriving at the airport, Co Co spots the plane she wants to steal, a 51JL Niner Alpha, of course Model 3. They pop open the door, put on the headsets, slip on their glasses and hit the runway. Destination: Russia.



After an impossible month and 4 day long flight, because neither Ne Ne or Co Co have a sense of direction or map reading skills, they finally land in Russia. Exiting the plane they sense the bitter cold and realize it will be a long stay.



Having no money or food in the great country of Russia Ne Ne and Co Co go in search of a spring for some water and to possibly hunt down a wild beast for nourishment. Hearing the babbling of a near-by brook, Ne Ne and Co Co sprint to the water's edge. After drinking gallons upon gallons of the freezing water, they take a well deserved nap.



Upon waking, Co Co finds Ne Ne tossing around in his sleep with a fever of 124.6 degrees. She picks him up and carries him to a near by cottage where he gets tucked into bed. Upon examination, the doctor decides that Ne Ne must have consumed some toxic waste while he was quenching his thirst at the creek. Hopefully he'll be alright and able to continue on their journey soon.



A knock on the door tears Co Co away from Ne Ne's side where she was reading him his favorite book, Cat in the Hat. Without looking through the window Co Co swings the door open and is face to face with a mysterious man. She is shocked and taken aback when she finds herself staring down the barrel of a rifle.



Angered by the intruder, Co Co grabs a sword off of the coffee table and fights back. After several minutes of tussling about in front of the cottage, she corners him and deals the death blow. Who is this masked stranger?

To Be Continued...

**Tune in next issue to see who the dude is and find out if Ne Ne will recover from his radiation poisoning!**

December 21, 2006

## Boys Basketball: Early Season Struggles

Ian Howard  
Copy Editor

Although the semester is coming to a close, the basketball season is just getting started, and it hasn't started well. The boy's basketball season tipped off on the first of December with the boys playing Collegiate. However, the game didn't go according to plan as the boys suffered a devastating 83-37 loss. The team just couldn't get it going as Collegiate took control early and never looked back. It was a learning experience for the sophomores and juniors who saw their first varsity play. After a disappointing opener, the boys tried to regain their composure and play well at Kingman's annual tournament. Instead,

Kingman, Wellington, and Nickerson handed them 3 more defeats. With the road trip finally over, a very tough Larned opponent came to town for the home opener at the Frog Dome. But once again they came up short as Larned dominated nearly all the game. Finally, Ulysses came to town on Friday. A strong performer from Chris Nicholson jr. and Andre Dinkel sr. kept them in game, but Pratt just didn't have the experience to come away with a victory. Pratt's record is now 0-5 and their last game before the break will be here at the Frog Dome today against the Medicine Lodge Indians.

## PHS grapplers start season strong

Eric Kocher  
Staff Photographer

The Pratt High wrestling team is doing exceptionally well so far this season. With a fifth-place finish at the Pratt Invitational and a win at the Ulysses High School Wrestling Tournament, the grapplers are making their presence known around the state. Pratt's standout athlete this year is Jonathan Prater. Prater has won both of the tournaments he's been in, was awarded the "Outstanding Wrestler" at the Ulysses tournament, and has a perfect 12-0 record. Last Saturday was the first big challenge for the varsity, as the team traveled

and for the Holiday Classic Tournament. Jon Prater, Darnell Bortz, and Caleb Campbell emerged undefeated from the exceptional tournament. The Junior Varsity team is wrestling well also, with a 2<sup>nd</sup> place finish at the Ulysses Invitational Junior Varsity Tournament. The only team to beat them was Boys Ranch, a tough school from Texas. They wrestled in Hillsboro on Saturday, and came home sporting five first place medals. The Greenback grapplers are taking a break until January, when Varsity goes to Liberal and J.V. travels to Wakeeney.

UPCOMING ATHLETICS			
Dec. 21	Jan. 5	Jan. 6	Jan. 9
Basketball vs. Medicine Lodge H 15 P.M.	Basketball @ Scott City, 6:15 P. M. Wrestling @ Liberal, 1 P. M.	Wrestling @ Liberal J.V. Wrestling @ Wakeeney, 9 A.M.	Varsity & J.V. Basketball @ Mac

## Injuries slow Lady Green Basketball

Ian Howard  
Copy Editor

On December 1, the girls traveled to Collegiate to begin their basketball season. They had to start off their season without two key seniors. Both Kelby Freeman and Taryn Dean were out due to injuries. The team didn't get off to the start they wanted, as the Collegiate girls dominated the Greenbacks the whole game. The girls didn't have time to regroup as the very next Tuesday they went to play in the Kingman Tournament. Once again, the girls couldn't get it going early and almost failed to score in the first quarter. They never recovered and once again the girls suffered a bad 70-16 loss. Just like the boys, the girls

also came up winless before their home opener. Taryn Dean returned for the home opener against Larned, and although she provided some relief for Jenna Gatz down underneath, the girls just couldn't stop the talent of Larned as the girls once again suffered a loss. The game of the season so far came against the Ulysses Tigers. In a back and forth grudge match, the girls took a commanding ten point lead in the fourth quarter. But experience hurt the girls and Ulysses stormed back and eventually won by two. Their next game will be at 6:15 today in the Frog Dome against Medicine Lodge.

*Left: Senior Andrew Dinkel puts up a shot at a recent game. Right: Freshman Ashton Neumann prepares to shoot the ball.*



Photo by: Neil Goss

Photo by: Neil Goss