

Yellow Door Chronicles

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American Economy Fares Well Despite Woes

By Ryan



It's big. It's current. Newspapers everywhere love it. And it's making people freak out. It's the American economy. Having seen an almost unprecedented rise in growth in the past ten years, it's finally begun to slow down and even out. Fearing a recession, many Americans have begun to spend less and save more.

Even worse is the media's reaction to this. Within days of the stock market tumble a few weeks

ago, most newspapers' business sections were plastered with articles about a recession, and worse, a potential crash. The media's pessimism affected the mindset of many Americans.

"The economy is definitely dropping," says Lizzy, a local student, who also admitted to watching both the news and the stock market frequently. She is not alone in this mindset.

Even though the recent stock market shakeup

stunned some, there is no major worry despite what the media tells you. "In October of 1987, in one day the stock market went down 24%, which is much, much more," says Gary Becker, a professor in economics at the University of Chicago.

The stock market drop, almost 11%, began on Tuesday, January 23, when the DOW dropped several points. Foreign markets, fearing an American recession, reacted and

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Taking on MRSA

By Ashley

Whenever people hear the word "MRSA", they automatically think, "Superbug! Deadly! Unstoppable!" Just the thought of the infection is terrifying, but despite all the Super-Bug hype, is Methicillin* Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus, or MRSA, really as bad as it seems?

MRSA is a strain of Staphylococcus, or staph infection, which is the most common cause of skin infections. "About 30% of the population is colonized with strains of Staphylococcus," said Dr. Alexander, a professor at the University of Chicago. He further stated "People can grow the MRSA bacteria without even knowing it or ever getting sick. When this happens, it is called colonization. When germs get into your body, they can cause infections, such as MRSA, and

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Autism: Going Against the Grain

By Ashley

Albert Einstein, Mr. Bean, Ludwig van Beethoven, Bill Gates, Daria Morgendorffer, and Thomas Edison. What do these six people, real or made-up, have in common with each other? Autism. Does this make you think any less of them? Would you still listen to Beethoven's symphonies, even though he might have been autistic? Would you still use a light bulb

even though Thomas Edison may have been a little different than everyone else? Autism can affect anyone, any child, any family, any celebrity, from any background, no matter their race, ethnicity, social or economic status, lifestyle, religion, or level of education.

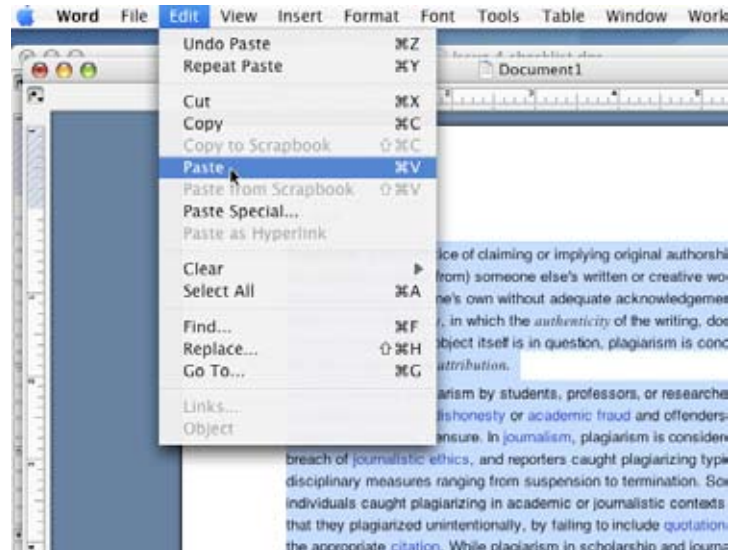
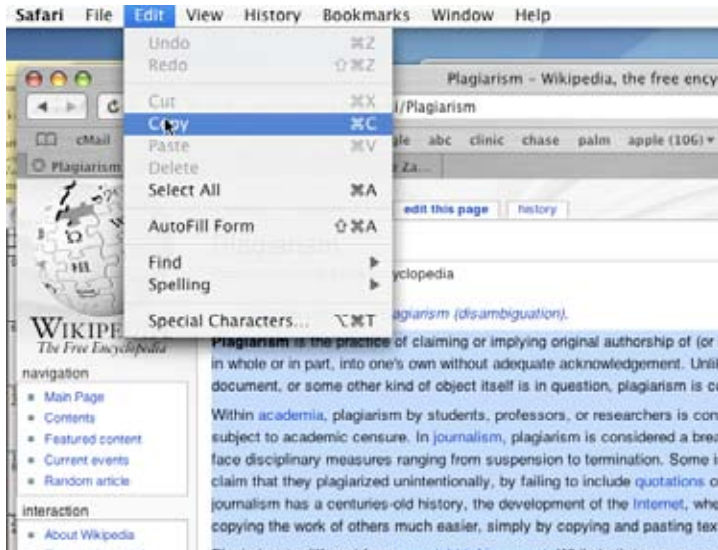
Today, 1 out of every 150 children is diagnosed with autism. "Autism is seven times

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NATIONAL & WORLD

Plagiarism, Why Worry?

By David



It seems that with technology many things have become much easier. We can talk to friends, manage bank accounts, and even shop with the click of a button. With great advances in the capabilities of gathering information, the opportunity for high school and college students to commit acts of plagiarism also skyrocketed. The act of plagiarism is stealing and using work that doesn't belong to him or her, and claiming to have ownership over it.

It has not only become easier to copy others work, but much simpler for

teachers like Michelle P. to catch you, thanks to Google. Whenever you turn in an assignment to Michelle, she will run at least a small section of it through to make sure it is genuinely your work and not something stolen online.

The internet provides an open database compiled of sources and essay help sites that could have been used if a student's paper seems a little too good or different compared to their usual writing style. If Michelle finds that the paper is plagiarized by finding an identical line or

whole paper she is allowed to give an F on the paper in question, it could also go on your high school record and you could get suspended. In college, you can be kicked out of the school.

People plagiarize for many reasons. Sometimes it is because they have been slacking off on an assignment and have no time to work on it. According to *John Carroll University* plagiarizing has negative effects on not only the student responsible but also on other students who actually work hard. The teacher spends

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Finland Faces School Violence

By Lizzy

On November 7th, 2007, an 18-year-old boy came to his home high school and went on a shooting rampage. He killed seven students; two girls, five boys, and the headmistress, and injured ten people before shooting himself in the head at Jokela High in Tuusula, a small town in Finland. The shooter was identified as Pekka Eric Auvinen. He had posted several videos of himself with a gun on *YouTube* where he was practicing shooting and

making threats

This shooting was the first school shooting in Finland since 1989, when a fourteen-year-old student shot and killed two people in the small coastal town of Rauma, Finland. Finnish Police say that Auvinen acted alone, and had no previous record of violence or threats toward anyone, or any criminal record. He had posted 89 videos on *YouTube*, many of which featured Nazi

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Pledging Purity

By Alice

When you hear the term purity ball, an image might come to your mind; religious people in fancy dresses giving their purity promises to their father's in some sort way. In reality, this may not be far from the truth. At purity balls, girls would be dressed in what you could wear to a school dance with hair done nicely. When the girls participate, it's not always because they are religious; they might not be religious at all. Instead, they do it for themselves. The evening includes a dinner where there is a speech, given, about how fathers should listen to their daughters. Then the fathers read together a covenant that they will be fathers of integrity and character, be a protector in their daughter's life, and be there for their family.

Next in the evening there is a

program where the Regal Daughters Ballet Company performs three songs celebrating God, fathers, and daughters. Then daughters have a silent Procession to the cross where they lay a white rose on the cross to symbolize their vow to remain pure. At the very end of the evening the girls and their fathers dance until midnight. The Purity Balls are not a religious event, however they do celebrate the girls' choices and their step into womanhood. The balls are for the girls, but they are also about building relationships with their fathers as they get older.

The idea of the purity ball was formed by Randy Wilson and his wife Lisa Wilson. The idea was mainly for their oldest daughter when she was turning 13. They wanted to celebrate her coming into womanhood. The Purity balls were formed in 1998 and now at almost every event you can expect 150 to 220 people! During most of the balls the mothers tend to steal the ball from their husbands. The balls have been a booming thing. There are hundreds of these types of balls in 48 states including Illinois, and the balls are even going to New Zealand.

Around our Nation, teens have been becoming more sexually active. The Kaiser family foundation has statistics about Sexual activity. Fewer than half of all high school students report having had sexual intercourse,



declining from 53% in 1995 to 47% in 2005. Males are slightly more likely than females to report having sex. African American high school students are more likely to have had intercourse (68%) than Whites (43%) or Latinos (51%). The Median age at the first intercourse is 16.9 years for boys and 17.4 years for girls. There are differences in age of initiation by race and ethnicity, with 27% of African Americans high school boys, 11% of Latino boys and 5% of White Boys initiating sex before the age of 13.

Over the past years the teen pregnancy rates have gone down. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey says that after increasing 24% between 1986 and 1991, the teen birth rates for girls aged 15-19 declined 35% between 1991 and 2005. After reaching its highest point in two decades in 1991 (62 births per 100 teen girls aged 15-19), the teen birth rates declined to 40 births per 1,000 teen girls aged 15-19 in 2005. Teen birth rates also vary among the three largest racial/ethnic groups.

Parents can prevent risky behavior and lower these statistics by sitting down

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Plagiarism, why worry?

By David

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time preparing classes, giving feedback on students' assignments, even spending extra time to make sure the class material is making sense to all the students, so when a student plagiarizes, it is not only disrespectful, but the teacher may feel betrayed.

Most of you reading this might be thinking, why should I care about plagiarism? I'm not going to get caught. Well, you're wrong. Maybe you can get away with it at least once if you're lucky, but the

average student will be sacrificing their future. Once a plagiarized paper is submitted, you may never be able to enter the doors of a school again, and how can you make money without an education? These are all good things to think about before taking the easy way out of your next big English paper.

Plagiarism is always a choice, but just because something is an option doesn't mean it is intelligent. If having a successful future after high school matters to you, don't take the easy way out; challenge yourself and you will certainly be able to find a way to succeed.

American Economy Fares Well Despite Woes

By Ryan

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dropped simultaneously. To spark the dropping stock market, the federal government released an emergency $\frac{3}{4}\%$ drop on interest rates on Wednesday, which was enough to spark the drooping numbers as the stock market began to right itself again. The interest rate cut was the largest and most

abrupt since the stock market drop following 9/11.

Interest rates play a key role in stocks and the stock market overall. "The price of a stock is determined by what earnings will be in the future, and the interest rate at which you discount them," informs Becker. "The lower the interest rate, the less you discount the

earnings, and the higher the stock prices will be."

Most Americans are simply overreacting to the normal business cycle. "The economy is still in pretty good shape overall. It's just not as good, and that's why people are concerned."

Finland Faces School Violence

By Lizzy

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imagery. All of his 89 videos were taken off *YouTube* immediately following the school shooting incident.

In his videos he practiced shooting his gun, showed images of the school and depicted himself pointing a gun at the screen. The final video that was posted was entitled, "Jokela High School Massacre - 11/7/2007," in which he spoke of a blood bath at Jokela High. The Video, according to BBC News, shows a young man [Pekka Eric Auvinen] pointing a gun and declaring himself a 'social Darwinist' who would 'eliminate all who [He sees] unfit.'" BBC news also reported that the video mimics the one sent to NBC by Seung-Hui Cho in April of 2007. He showed himself as obsessed and fascinated with killing and posted videos of the Columbine shooting and other massacres.

School shootings seem to be a theme these days, now not only in America, but in Finland. After Columbine in 1999, the second of three major school shootings in America, students have copied one another finding new ways to wreak havoc and kill themselves and others in a very public and frightening way. The second largest leading cause of death for people ages 15-24 today is suicide according to the NIMH. Some troubled students who want to commit suicide want to go out with

a bang and hurt as many people as they can along the way.

In 1999, at Columbine High School in Jefferson County, CO, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold attacked their high school, shooting and killing 11 people, wounding another 24 and setting off home made explosives.

Lt. Rich Paolucci of the Summit County Sheriff's Office said that, "none of these kids just snapped, it was a progression." He also said, "studies have shown that in all school shootings a few students knew what the attackers were planning," and still the problem was not reported to people in authority.

Pekka Eric Auvinen was a troubled student who, in a desperate act, killed eight innocent souls and himself. Authorities agree that there are things that can be done to make sure that students cannot do this in the future, in Finland, or America.

At the University of Chicago there is a Student Care Center that is paid for out of tuition by each student. They cover all medical maladies, and refer you to the hospital if they



Jokela High in Tuusula, a small town in Finland

cannot help. This includes mental health services. They have limited mental health services, but they offer referrals for students who need long-term treatment. They offer emergency walk-in service for students during business hours on weekdays, and have an emergency phone consultation on weekends. This is in place for any student to go to in case of emergency, and is put in place to inhibit school shooting rampages. If all schools had case workers and office hours where a student could go and be listened to and receive help, then there may be less violence in schools.

In the United States it is very common for students to bring weapons to school, although school shootings are more

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Editors Note:

The Finland Shooting article was completed before the NIU tragedy, so it is not mentioned in this piece. Our deepest sympathies go out to the families and students and faculty affected by the shooting.

LOCAL

Gloria Keeps the O'School Running Smoothly

By Lizzy

Gloria Rodriguez is an administrative assistant in the front office of the Orthogenic School. Gloria is bubbly and very fun to talk to. Many students don't get to see her because she works in the front office, but she loves working here just because of us. She has been working here for the last five and a half years and has many important duties.

She is a project assistant, "meaning I assist every department in what is needed at the school; mainly purchasing for the school [and] assisting in the front office, assisting with all front office and desk duties. [I work with the] alarm system, phone system, and I coordinate and arrange meetings and luncheons." On an average day, during the morning hours, Gloria is in charge of the doors and phones so Gina has quiet time to do her work. In the afternoon, Gina mans the phones and doors so Gloria can handle, "calls with vendors, and after lunch concentrate on whatever projects or purchases need to be taken care of for our dorms or the school."

Gloria has four kids, ranging in age from fifteen to two. Her oldest son, Christian is fifteen, her daughter, Celest, is fourteen, her son Lucien, eleven, and her baby, who she refers to as "the O'School baby," is named Isaiah, and he is



two. Being a working mother is hard work, but Gloria manages and does a fine job. With four kids and a career it is a wonder what a fantastic job she does at the O'school.

She speaks of her childhood with the fondness. "I was always very much into fashion and dancing," recalls Gloria, "I always had the latest *Seventeen* and *European Style*

magazines. My whole locker was magazine cutouts of models, and a mirror. Girls would come [to me] for hairspray and brushes. I went to high school in the Valley Girl days,

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Parents Give Support

By Alice

The Parents have been doing their part to make the O'School a better place by bringing us things that we can enjoy! The Orthogenic School Parents Association has been around seven years because parents around the Chicagoland area wanted to sponsor fun events for their Children to participate in and to help out the O'School staff. It was started by a former student's parents and it has been building momentum ever since.

According to the current Secretary of the association, Mrs. Meister, "the main purpose of the parents association is to promote parent involvement in the Orthogenic School and provide support for

the families of the students." They plan and organize some of the events and give us special things including the two new Nintendo Wii game systems! They have also provided the DJ for the O'School Prom and the refreshments and snacks at the Halloween dance.

The association helps with most of the family gatherings such as the Spaghetti Lunch which was held on February 23, and planting Lovely flowers in the spring. They even plan the staff appreciation Lunch that happened in the spring. During the staff Lunch they have a raffle in which staff can win fun prizes. Last year the parents entertained the staff by singing and playing kazoos. "The O'School staffers were very generous about our performance!" says Mrs. Meister.

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The Mariners Throw Down the Gauntlet to Chocolate

By Rebecca

Everybody likes to have their voices heard, especially in such a democratically minded country as the United States of America. Voting and letting your opinion be known are things that most people consider normal, often enjoyable, parts of everyday life. Currently, the members of the Mariners classroom are in the middle of conducting their very own opinion poll, or, to be more exact, poll-a-thon.

There are many organizations worldwide that conduct a variety of polls on an assortment of issues, ranging from the most trivial to some of the most important topics in today's society. One of these organizations is Gallup. According to their website, Gallup is a group that has been studying basically every aspect of society for over 70 years. The organization is divided into several parts, one of which is the Gallup Poll.

The Gallup Poll was founded in 1935 and has since surveyed an enormous amount of people in order to better understand people's feelings on a huge assortment of world-changing topics. In the United States, Gallup is probably best known for conducting polls to discover people's opinions on various political and social issues, from presidential approval rating to gun control and the state of the country's economy. Polling groups are especially visible during election years and help to give the public an idea of how certain elections are going to turn out. This is especially relevant this year, as several candidates compete in a close race to be president of the United States.

The idea for the poll-a-thon came from Mariner student Ryan, but was actually sort of an accident. It started with a few random polls that Ryan put up on the board in the Mariners classroom, such as "peanut butter vs. chocolate." The polls actually turned out to be a lot of fun, so the students decided to make it into a much bigger event. The class compiled a list of 64 different things that they like, split



them into two groups of 32 and have put them up against each other in an NCAA-type competition. Eventually, the winners of the two groups will go up against each other, and the winner of that poll will compete against chocolate for the title of Grand Champion. Chocolate is not being included in the main competition because the students felt that it would be unfair competition for most of the other items in the poll-a-thon.

The poll-a-thon began sometime in November and will hopefully be concluded by the end of the school year. The people taking part in the event are all of the members, both staff and students, of the Mariners classroom. On average, the class tries to do one to two polls each day. Usually one poll is conducted during the morning base class and one is conducted after lunch. One of the Mariner teachers reads off the two things that are being

voted on, one and then the other, and each person raises his or her hand for whichever one they want to vote for. The item with more votes is the winner and moves on to the next round of competition.

After the main competition is over, the winner will get to take part in the honorary fight against chocolate. The Mariners have decided that this final competition will be a school-wide event. When the time comes, surveys will be passed out to all of the students and staff on the school side, and everybody will get a chance to vote. When all of the votes have been counted, the results will be published in the Yellow Door Chronicles. This way, everyone will be able to help decide whether there is anything better than chocolate.

Boys On The Girls Floor

By Casey

No one would have guessed that this would happen in a million years, but lo and behold; there are now boys living on the girl's floor! Part of the Bronco's dorm split off in order to form a new dorm, the Bulls. This is a dorm for boys that are of a much younger age, even compared to the Broncos. It has already gained a few new students, as well as borrowing others from the Broncos.

According to Pete, this decision was made because there were many younger boys that were looking to join the Orthogenic School, but alas, there was no room for them. Senior Staff decided that since the girl's dorm "The Dolphins" had so few students, and that there was plenty of room in the other girl's dorms, that they would move the rest of the Dolphins into the other two girl's dorms, thus, opening a dorm for these younger boys.

Currently the dorm has four residents, all of a younger age. This decision has been in effect for around 2 months, and so far appears to be a good fit for the younger boys. Max feels that it was a great change for

him, and helped him a lot, even though he was anxious about it from the beginning. He was also very pleased with his interactions with the girls and was excited to get to know them and his new counselors. But, of course, another important question is, how is it affecting everyone else?

When asked about the situation on the girl's floor, residents seem to have mixed views on the situation. One feels that it was harder at first, but in the end wasn't very different, while others feel it's still stressful. Some feel that it wasn't much harder to deal with, but were aware that it did affect others. One student has an interesting view to this same question and feels that it has had a positive impact on the girl's behavior in order to try to be role models.

Everyone recognizes that it was tough on the Bull's staff, trying to get used to young, energetic boys as opposed to teenage girls. Also, they were split as to whether it was beneficial overall. One student questioned the choice and felt that it was



stressful, while another noted that she thought it was more beneficial than not.

For the most part, the boy's floor is fairly apathetic about the topic, as it doesn't affect anyone but the Broncos, who also seem content with the move. There are a number of boys who don't think it's a good idea, but also see no reason for concern due to the fact that, once again, it doesn't directly affect them.

This is not the first time in the history of the Orthogenic school that there has been a mix of gender on the floors. At one time, the current location of the Starz was a boys dorm, while the other two girls floor dorms

remained for girls. So, this is not an entirely new change, but for most people working or living in the school currently, it is having a greater impact on them, as it is new to them.

While this decision appears to be both effective and frustrating, it separates the younger boys and the even younger boys, arguably curing much of the conflict between them, while at the same time making space for more boys to join the Orthogenic School. In the near future, everyone will grow used to this change, and all will be well.

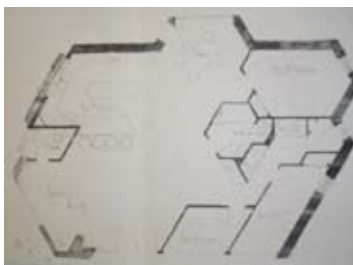
Environment Science Finalists

By Ryan

In December of 2007, the Orthogenic School's Environmental Science class participated in a contest held by the Museum of Science of Industry. In it, Museum staff noted them as finalists named by the judges, though they did not advance to the next phase of the competition.

The contest itself, called Energy Planet, was to assist the museum in developing an upcoming exhibit about green energy usage and ways to save electricity, water and the environment. Classes were to submit formalized ideas on how to present the exhibit.

The O'School class submitted an idea for building a model of an environmentally friendly house, or "Green House." The house would contain several key energy-reducing measures, such as



solar panels, a rainwater collection tank and geothermal water heating. Hands-on demonstrations would explain these technologies in other parts of the exhibit.

The Yellow Door Chronicles congratulates the students of the Environmental Science class and their teacher Linda Kite for their hard work on this project and their recognition as finalists.

Super Tuesday at The O'School

By Alice

On Tuesday February 5th, the O'School Students were handed ballots in order to vote for their choice in the presidential primaries, because that Tuesday was the day of the Illinois presidential primary elections. The idea for O'School elections was Diana's, and Shawna put the ballots together and made them so they had the picture of the candidate right next to the name.



On the ballot for the green Party were Kent Mesplay and Cynthia McKinney. The Democratic Party was represented by Hilary Clinton and Barack Obama. Last, but not least, the Republican Party candidates were Mike Huckabee, John McCain, Ron Paul, and Mitt Romney.

The O' School Votes are now in, and the winners are Barack Obama for the Democratic Party and Mitt Romney from the Republican Party!

Parents Give Support

By Alice

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The parents have a night when they all meet and they even have Officers. Four parents share the four positions. Lynn is the President, Jean is the Secretary, and Lenore and John share the role of Treasurer. During the Meetings, which are at least once a month on visit weekends at 5:30 on Sundays, or sometimes on Saturday's on non-visit weekends, they give each other support and get support from outside sources.

All families are welcome to the meetings. They are for the parents to support one another and to have a way of getting information on different possibilities for their children. When they are at the O'School, they are in the Mariner's classroom sitting around the table sharing different snacks and chatting. Sometimes they have expert speakers come in for the meetings, or have a staff member fill them in on what is happening in the school.

Jean is working on writing the next Parents Association Newsletter which is a lot like the *Yellow Door Chronicles*. Jean interviews dorm and school staff about what they are working on so it can be shared with all of the

parents.

There are Parents Associations in most schools, but they might call them room parents or the PTA. They help out in different classrooms and they also help to organize different events like field trips and school activities that might bring parents and their children together to do things. This is similar to some of the things that the O'School does like the spaghetti lunch, which is important in many ways.

In one of the other schools that I have attended, we had a breakfast which is like the spaghetti lunch. The parents helped organize the event, and there were different games that we played. Families came together and just had fun with different types of people. The parents would serve everyone, people from all different grades even the siblings would come out and help with breakfast to raise money for the school's activities.

The breakfast was like the O'School's spaghetti lunch, and an example of parents, like ours, bringing together a community. The Orthogenic School Parent's Association has made a huge difference for our community by bringing people together under some of the roughest circumstances.

Gloria Keeps the O'School Running Smoothly

By Lizzy

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at Saint Frances DeSales."

Gloria chose to work at the O'School because of the faculty and the children. Her passion has always been teaching, but it is difficult to take time away from her kids to go back to school to become a teacher.

Her favorite book is *Romeo and Juliet*, favorite movie, *The Notebook*, and she also enjoys the television show *Will and Grace*. Although she has a cat, her favorite animal is a dog. She says that her house is too small for a dog, and the only reason she has a cat is because it came with her husband.

Her hobbies include being a soccer mom. "My life is my job with you guys, my friends at work, and my children." Gloria worked hard to get to the O'school and achieve an education. She attended Robert Morris College, where she studied business administration.

"I just [want] to add that working here [at the O'School] is like



having a second family and having the opportunity to interact with the children, and see [them] grow is such a joy!"

Gloria is a very interesting person who works at the O'School, but not too many students really get to know her. She has been working here for a long time and enjoys seeing all the students and watching them progress. Gloria is a joy to have at the O'school, a bright smile in the office and always very helpful. Whether you need your mail delivered, the key to the snack closet, or the coke machine has eaten your money, Gloria is always there to help out and make sure that everything runs smoothly.

We're On A Mission

By Michelle P.

The staff of the YDC is committed to upholding the values of honesty, clarity, respect to our topics, readers and selves, sensitivity, and integrity. Our goal is to provide the O'School community with a source of news that is uniquely tailored to meet their needs. We wish to inform, educate and entertain our audience by providing a window through which they can learn about events at the O'School as well as in the outside world. We will hold ourselves to high standards and only produce work based on accurate, verifiable research. We will endeavor to create a paper of which our staff and community can be proud.

This is the new mission statement of *The Yellow Door Chronicles*. Avid readers may have noticed that there has been a great deal of time between our last issue in November, and this issue. There is good reason for that, and it isn't a lack of news, or a breakdown of technology. The YDC staff is on a mission to create the best possible newspaper; one that represents who we are as a school

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SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Taking on MRSA

By Ashley

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make you sick.”

So what does MRSA do exactly? The most common symptoms of MRSA are boils*, sores, and high fevers. In extreme cases, MRSA has caused Pneumonia, blood stream infections, and deep infections in joints and muscles. Staphylococcus bacteria commonly grow on bodies in warm moist places, specifically in the nose, groin, and underarm areas. Although there have been many recent horror stories in the news, MRSA and staph infection, are not at all new to doctors or scientists.

In the early 1900s, Penicillin* was developed and used to treat many infections. In the late 1940s a strain of staph infection was found that was resistant to Penicillin. In the 1950s, the strain proved to be further resistant, fighting off any Methicillin related compound, including Methicillin and Penicillin. In 1968 the first case of MRSA was diagnosed, but researchers have come a long way in the 40 years since the first diagnoses. There are many obvious differences between the very first case that was found, and the cases that are being found on a daily basis now.

In the 1990s Dr. Robert Daum, at the University of Chicago, discovered that there were many different strains of MRSA. In the 1960s, 70s, and 80s MRSA was only being seen in people with weakened immune systems, such as chronically ill people who'd been in the hospital for long periods of time, or people who'd had surgery and were especially at risk. Those who had been receiving long courses of antibiotic therapy, or people living in long-term facilities like nursing homes or prisons were also likely to contract

MRSA
(Methicillin resistant Staphylococcus aureus)



© MedicineNet, Inc.

the infection. Up until the 90s, it seemed impossible for someone to get infected with MRSA, unless they were chronically ill, or they were in prison.

Thanks to Dr. Daum's research, we now know that there are multiple strains of MRSA. The two most common strains are healthcare-associated MRSA, or HA-MRSA, and community-

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Autism: Going Against the Grain

By Ashley

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more common than diabetes, and 100 times more common than cancer,” according to Dr. Bennett Leventhal, the Director of the Center for Child Mental Health and Developmental Neuroscience Institute for Juvenile Research, at the University of Illinois at Chicago. No one knows for sure how many people have autism; as many as 1,500,000 people are estimated to have some form of autism, just in the United States. Although autism is an extremely common disorder, very little is known about it. Doctors don't know for sure what causes autism or how to cure it. Autism

can be extremely difficult to diagnose, and it can be even more difficult to try to understand.

“We think autism is an early onset neuro-developmental disorder, or a condition that is created when the brain doesn't develop in the same fashion as everyone else's,” said Dr. Leventhal, “particularly in the areas of communication, social interaction, and behavior management.”

Autism is one of many disorders on a spectrum. This group of disorders is known as Autism Spectrum Disorders, or

“ASD”s. These disorders all have multiple characteristics that are similar, but they all differ in severity, the age in which symptoms start, and the way in which the symptoms affect the person with the disorder. The three main disorders on the spectrum are Autism, Asperger Syndrome, and Pervasive Developmental Disorder not otherwise specified, or PDD-NOS. The two other, less common, disorders in the spectrum are Childhood Disintegrative Disorder and Rett Syndrome. Repetition and problems with social interaction and language are common

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Autism: Going Against the Grain

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themes among all five of the disorders.

Autism Spectrum Disorders are developmental disabilities that cause major disruptions in social interactions and communication. Most people with an ASD tend to have difficulty paying attention, and learning from standard methods. The behaviors of a person with an autism spectrum disorder can seem especially shocking when it comes to obsessive routines, reactions to different sensations, and coping mechanisms in stressful or anxiety provoking situations.

Asperger syndrome is typically distinguished by a network of behaviors as opposed to being characterized by one trademark symptom. Typical behaviors exercised by someone with Asperger syndrome include impaired judgment, especially in social interactions, and restricted interests and activities. Unlike autism, there is typically no disruption in cognitive development or significant delay in language. The most dysfunctional aspect of Asperger syndrome is probably the lack of demonstrated empathy. Persons with the disorder sometimes have trouble with some of the most basic elements of social interactions.

Little understanding for nonverbal communication behaviors, such as eye contact, facial expression, and gestures, makes it especially difficult to have effective and appropriate social interactions. Individuals with Asperger Syndrome typically have average or above average intelligence. Recently there has been controversy as

to whether or not Asperger syndrome belongs on the autism spectrum disorder scale, but no changes or decisions have been made.

PDD-NOS, Rett Syndrome, and CDD are all disorders that are being vigorously researched. PDD-NOS is usually characterized by difficulties in using and understanding language, difficulties relating to people, objects and events, unusual play with toys, difficulty with changes in routine or familiar surroundings, and lastly, repetitive body movements or behavior patterns.

Rett syndrome is most often seen in girls and is very easily detectable, since it can be found in the MECP2 gene on the X chromosome. Early on, the syndrome has many of the same symptoms as autism. An individual affected by Rett syndrome will usually lose almost all verbal skills, and 50% of those with Rett syndrome are not ambulatory, or they are not mobile. Scoliosis and growth failure are other common symptoms. Typically, male fetuses that have the syndrome do not make it past the first term.

CDD is extremely rare, and it is very much like autism once it is fully developed, but is usually diagnosed after three years of age. A child who has CDD will develop normally, acquiring age-appropriate communication, motor, self-care, and social skills. From around the age of 2 through the age of 10, the child will begin to regress until eventually, many of the skills the child had once developed are completely lost.

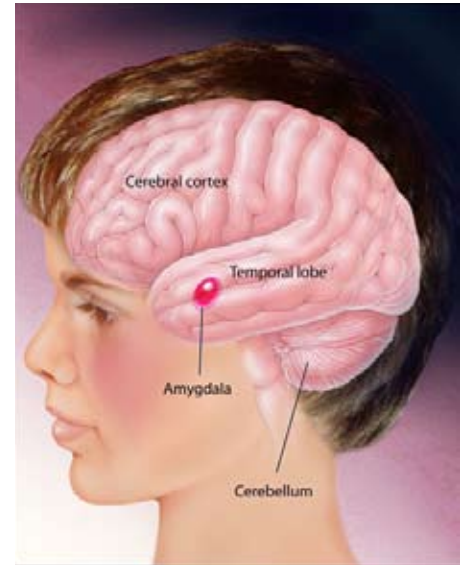
Typically, symptoms of autism first show within the first three years of life. For every four children diagnosed with autism, three of them are male. Autism is the fastest-growing developmental disability.

The medical information website, WebMD stated "As many as 50% of people with autism will never speak." The core symptoms of autism include difficulty with social interactions and relationships, verbal and nonverbal communication, and limited interests in activities or play.

The behaviors commonly exhibited by children with Autism can be incredibly concerning, especially to parents who do not understand, because their children do not have autism. Usual behaviors of a child with autism may be dangerous or aggressive, socially inappropriate, and repetitive. These behaviors may include finger-snapping, rocking, head-banging, placing objects in one's mouth, and little or no verbal communication. A child with autism might use language in unusual ways, such as only using single words to communicate, or repeating words or phrases said to them.

Language difficulties often lead to behavioral problems, especially if a child is not able to communicate their needs.

Some children with autism have problems with sensory input. For instance, cuts, scrapes, or



bruises might have little affect on the child, but eating a fresh peach could cause extreme pain because of the fuzz on the outside of the peach. A child with autism will sometimes engage in self-injurious behavior, such as scratching at their eyes, or biting their arm.

Most people who struggle with autism become intensely preoccupied on a single narrow subject, making up for a severe lack of communication and language skills. Of people with autism, 10% have extraordinary savant capabilities, such as memorization, calculating calendar dates, drawing with exquisite detail, and musical ability.

Autism can be terrifying, stressful, and lonely for the person who has it, but it can also be stressful, lonely, and frightening for families. There's a rumor going around that it's a pretty tough job being a parent in general. Most parents only have to worry about cooking, being a girl scouts leader, carpooling, helping with homework, coaching soccer, shopping, watching every move their kids make, giving advice on boys, making sure all the kids get a

Autism: Going Against the Grain

By Ashley

Continued from Page 10

coolest birthday parties, reading the occasional bed-time story, tucking everyone in at night, cleaning up scrapes, drying their kids' tears after the worst day ever, and keeping up with their careers. For parents of a child who has autism, though, their job is all of that multiplied by 5.

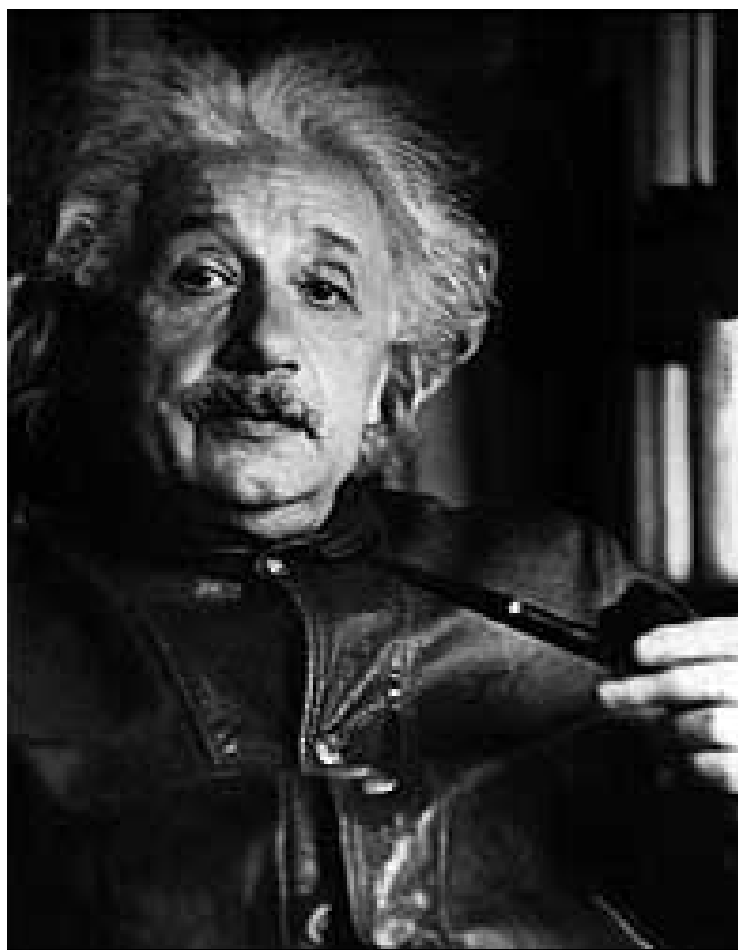
Maybe it's so stressful because of the physical exhaustion most parents with a child who has autism experience. Parents will exhaust themselves just trying to convince their child to be a little bit healthier. Some of the biggest struggles come in trying to get a child to sleep through the night, or eat a wider variety of food instead of diets consisting mostly of starches.

Another one of the main struggles come from parents having to guess what their child wants or needs, instead of their child being able to express themselves. Their child is not able to communicate what they want and therefore the parent has to guess whether they

are hungry, thirsty, sick, or tired, and in the end, both the child and the parent end up frustrated. Other major stressors include taking their children out in public, finances, concerns over future care giving, and not being able to give enough attention to other children.

It can be very difficult for the siblings of an individual with autism to cope with everything that goes on in their home. Often siblings will assume the role of caregiver for their sibling with autism. Sometimes siblings can feel especially embarrassed around their brother or sister who has autism or sometimes they can feel jealous of the attention their sibling receives from their parents. Other common sources of stress include trying to make up for deficits of their siblings, concern for their parent's stress, and being the target of aggressive behaviors.

Being diagnosed with autism does not have to be a burden. Currently, research on autism



is at its peak, and although there is no cure for autism, Dr. Leventhal explained that there are multiple types of treatments

that are designed to address the symptoms of autism. There are support groups for parents and siblings and training seminars

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Taking on MRSA

By Ashley

Continued from Page 9

associated MRSA, or CA-MRSA. HA-MRSA tends to only infect people who have spent significant amounts of time in healthcare facilities. HA-MRSA was originally the only known strain of MRSA. The other common strain of MRSA, CA-MRSA tends to be much more vicious than HA-MRSA and 10-15% of the people being diagnosed with MRSA today are being diagnosed with CA-MRSA. HA and CA-MRSA have very little connection. Unlike healthcare-associated MRSA, community-associated MRSA often

attacks people with very strong immune systems.

Currently, doctors and researchers are rushing to find a solid cure for this tricky disease. As it stands now, there is not one antibiotic that works every time. When someone comes into the emergency room with MRSA, doctors are often forced to use their creativity and years of experience in order to find a way to treat their patients, because the most common or logical treatment methods will not work.

According to Dr. Alexander, there are certain people who are more at risk for contracting MRSA than others. Military recruits and prisoners are among those who are highly at risk to contract the infection because they live in such close quarters.

Athletes are also at risk because of the high amount of physical contact in most sports. Another reason athletes are at risk is because of a common lack of care towards hygiene, especially with locker rooms, uniforms, and fields or courts.

Although anybody being at risk for MRSA is concerning, the most alarming group of people who are at risk are children and adolescents. Typically, children and teens have very strong immune systems. When children are growing, their bodies are prepared to fight off the toughest infections and diseases yet CA-MRSA has been known to attack the healthiest children and teens, and doctors aren't sure why.

Living in a place where there's barely any breathing room, you'd think

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SPORTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Effects of Media on Society, Issue 2: Sex

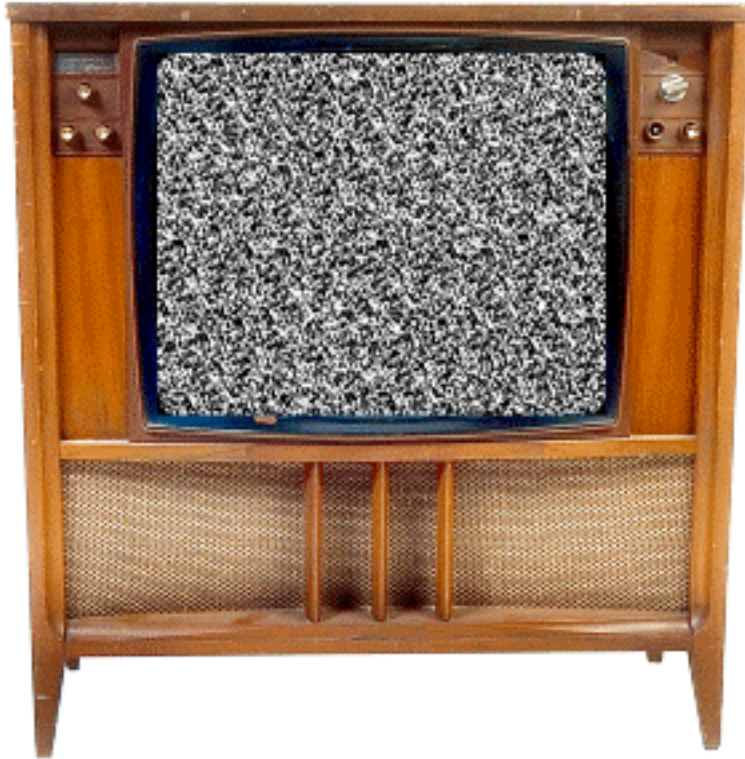
By Casey

Media has become one of the most influential things in the world. What you hear or see on the media often times make up the bulk of what you know. As has been said in the previous article of this series, the media is all around us. How many people can honestly say they go a day without reading a newspaper, browsing the internet, watching the television, or hearing someone talk about something they've experienced while indulging in one of these forms of entertainment? The media is full of the stuff of parent's nightmares; children watching violence, profanity, vulgar comedy, and sex. The list goes on. Have you ever wondered how seeing sex in the media affects you or your child's psyche, whether you're aware of it or not? Then don't tear your eyes from this page, because you will soon find out.

Being exposed to sexual themes at younger ages puts one at more risk to have sex, thus leading to many possible unwanted outcomes. The evils of sex are very obvious. While sex can be a healthy component to a healthy relationship, it is also very dangerous, and is not recommended for teens. Teen pregnancy is a rising problem, as well as the ever-present STDs. Also, thinking logically, most parents don't like the idea of their teenagers having sex, and learning of it may get you in their doghouse.

A group of American researchers, published by the UK paper "The Guardian," claim that they have found a definitive link between sex in the media and adolescent sexual activity or intentions of sex in the future. The study was conducted on over 1,000 American adolescents, a third of whom were from poor or lower class backgrounds. They were given a survey asking what kind

of sexual activity they had been involved in already. The researchers then went through a list of media they had been exposed to, picking out 264 items, which included teen targeted shows, movies, and magazines. The selected items often portrayed sex as risk-free and harmless, almost never reinforcing the use of condoms or precautions. It also



often displayed sex between unmarried couples. The study concluded that, "The strong relationship between media and adolescents' sexual expression may be due to the media's role as an important source of sexual socialisation for teenagers."

Given this information, it's no wonder sex in teens is becoming a problem more and more. It is said in many studies that a very large portion of the media is centered around sex, and glorification thereof. Teens are exposed, more and more every day, to sex, and it doesn't seem to be slowing down.

So, you're probably wondering, parents, how you can help your teen through this tough issue. The Professionals at the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychology reinforce the idea that parents should discuss sex with their children. They advise parents to encourage children to "ask questions and be curious." They share the following list of recommended ways to approach your child or adolescent about sex.

"Maintain a calm and non-critical atmosphere for discussions. Use words that are understandable and comfortable. Try to determine your child's level of knowledge and understanding. Keep your sense of humor and don't be afraid to talk about your own discomfort. Relate sex to love, intimacy, caring, and respect for oneself and one's partner. Be open in sharing your values and concerns. Discuss the importance of responsibility for choices and decisions. Help your child to consider the pros and cons of choices."

This study also states that more than 1 million teenage girls become pregnant each year, and over 3 million teens contract an STD each year. They also state

that talking to your teen or child about sex may encourage a much healthier sex life. The media is a dangerous source from which children and adolescents can get incorrect information about sex and sexuality.

Parents, be vigilant. Make sure you are aware of what your kids are watching. And kids, don't fall victim to media pressure, it never works out in your favor. Don't let the media tell you what to do.

OP ED

No Love For Valentines Day

By David

I know this time of year I am not alone in saying that February can be one of the most depressing months of the year. First we have a holiday where hundreds of people depend on a groundhog to see if winter will drag on, and then, most importantly, there is Valentines Day. This day comes like an affliction and makes a good number of people dread how it will be reminding them that they will be spending it alone.

I personally am not a fan of Valentines Day. If I did enjoy it I probably wouldn't have written this article. There's something really tiring about having a specific day to show your affection in a relationship. People really should use less energy thinking about how to make Valentines Day special and more time on making every day together count.

I just can't say enough about this sickeningly sweet

and overly affectionate holiday. Being blunt, I could live without it.

Valentines Day has such a dreaded reputation that it has spawned many sites protesting the holiday including www.antivday.com/ and www.miccah.com/xiaoxin/lie.htm a site protesting not only valentines day but love itself. Many card companies have gotten smarter as of late, noticing how Valentines seems to be losing steam, and are taking a more satirical twist on the holiday cards. One of these includes a card with a realistic looking heart on it and the quote "I give my heart to you".

The post offices must love this time of the year. According to the U.S. Greeting Card Association approximately one billion cards are sent each year worldwide. It kind of makes it more angering knowing how many random valentine cards are floating about, particularly if



you aren't on the receiving end of any. Sadly, out of a majority of the people I talked to on Valentines Day, for every three people that had gotten Valentine, ere were at least double the amount of people who didn't get one.

The good news is, I survived another year. Luckily I

won't have to deal with all the overly affectionate garbage for a little over 340 days. I can't express how excited I am not to have to worry about another organized holiday for a month or so, because I am always late with the gifts. I won't be writing about Easter because at least that gives me a vacation.

You(th) Should Try Voting Sometime

By Rebecca

I was pretty excited when I turned 18 last June. In Illinois, as well as every other state in the Union, 18 is the age at which a person becomes legally responsible for his or herself. This new freedom comes with many new opportunities and responsibilities. One of the things that I was most excited about on my birthday was that I was now old enough to vote.

I feel that voting is both a benefit and a responsibility. The vast majority of people, especially teenagers, desire to have as much control over their lives as possible. Many young people may not realize it, but voting is actually a great way to exercise control over your life. Free elections exist in order to give citizens a chance to help decide exactly who it is that is running their country. Once you come of age, you really have no right to complain about what is going on in this country unless you actually take the initiative to go out and vote.

Unfortunately, there are many young people in America who do not vote, despite being eligible to do so. Whether it is because they are lazy, uninterested, uninformed, or simply confused about the process, many young people do not vote. In 2004, there were about 25,000,000 United States citizens between the ages of 18 and 24. Less than half of these people actually took the initiative to go out and vote, and only 58% of them were even registered to vote. Of those in this age group who were registered to vote, 81% did indeed vote. So, the issue seems not to be that people don't vote once they are registered, but that many people never bother to register in the first place. All other age groups had higher percentages of voters in 2004 than the 18-24-year-olds.

The population of young voters is growing rapidly. According to the *Young Voter Strategies* website, citizens ages 18-31 will soon make up nearly a quarter of eligible voters, and this number will continue to

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You(th) Should Try Voting Sometime

By Rebecca

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grow. Clearly then, we have a lot more power than many people think. Our vote has the potential to make a huge difference in who is making the decisions and how things work in our country. The problem is, people aren't voting, mostly because they are not registered. Many people aren't sure where or how to register, or they forget to do so.

Well, fortunately, it is quite easy to register to vote. All you need is a social security number and a state ID. Anyone who has gotten a driver's license should already have these things. In fact, if you got a driver's license on or after your eighteenth birthday, you should have been offered the opportunity to register at the same time you were getting your license. This is due to the National Voter Registration Act of 1993, also known as the "Motor Voter Act," which helped to make it much easier to register to vote. This Act requires that people be given the opportunity to register to vote when they apply for, or renew, a driver's license, requires that "states offer voter registration opportunities at all offices that provide public assistance and all offices that provide state-funded programs;" and allows people to register by mail. A list of places in your area that offer voter registration can easily be found on the internet. So, basically, you have no excuse not to register to vote.

Once you are registered, all you have to do is go to a polling site on Election Day and cast your ballot. Even if you are unable to do this, it is possible to vote ahead of time, during the designated "early voting" period. If you are out of the state, you can vote by mail using an absentee ballot. If you are confused about the issues, or unsure who to vote for, there are a plethora of resources available to you. Many politicians today have their own blogs or an account on MySpace or Facebook. These allow you to read first-hand accounts about the candidates' views and ideas.

This year, the Illinois primaries were on Tuesday, February 5,



and, for the very first time, I got to cast a ballot and be part of the election process. Since I knew that I would be at school that day, I had actually already voted about a week-and-a-half earlier, but the thrill of it was still very real. This was something that I had looked forward to for many years, something that I was very excited about. Thanks to my interest in politics, I already knew who I was supporting for the major offices, and my mom helped me to figure out who was best for the more minor offices and various judgeships. It meant a lot to me to finally get to exercise my democratic right to vote.

Like many other young people, I like to have as much control over my own life as possible, and voting is one way to have some of that control. It is also an opportunity that many people do not have. So, when November comes around, and you are deciding whether or not to vote, remember this: this is your opportunity to let your voice be heard, and, unless you make an effort to change things that you don't like, you have no right to complain about the way things are.

We're On A Mission

By Michelle P.

Continued from Page 8

community, and that takes notice of events in the Nation and the World.

Following the Journalism Education Association conference that the Michelles attended in November, we, as a staff, took a little more than a month to go over information that had been gathered, and to make changes in our paper. You may notice some of them in flipping through the

issue.

First of all, we developed an editorial policy that outlines what news we will cover, how we will cover it, and how we will make decisions. This was a long process as any time many minds come together, it takes effort to reach a consensus. Within this process we also wrote the mission statement above.

One of the most noticeable changes is that we now have very clearly defined sections

and requirements for the number of articles sections must contain. For the first time we will have an OpEd sections for students to voice their opinions. We are also including an expanded local section to give our paper more of an Orthogenic feel. We will still be bringing you news from the Nation and World, and sharing features on Science, Technology, Sports and Entertainment.

We hope that you enjoy the new look YDC.

Hot Topic: What Would You Like to See Happen at The O'School

By Alice

I want to see the rules changed for phone calls, to where we are able to call our families more than once a week.

I would like the school to start serving better food.

No more cheesy themes for the dance and us letting us have fun for the dance. –Justin

NO School on Mondays!

Better food

I want to see a real tree house in the side yard and an increase in allowance.

A vending machine

Nothing Yet

A small pond in the Garden- L.C

I want to see the O'school student-body unified like it used to be.

I miss being able to be outside with everyone- Nick

Everyone being allowed in the side yard. And internet access in the dorms.

More activities with the whole school not only on weekends.

Vocational classes.

I would like to see the teachers teach me how to be less nit-picky – though that's highly unlikely.



A snow ball fight!

Get rid of the merry-go-round.

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MRSA wipes, Photograph taken by YDC Staff

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Gloria: Photo taken by YDC staff

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Pollathon: Photo taken by YDC staff

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Bulls Dorm: Photo taken by YDC staff

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Drawings from Env. Science Competition

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I Voted Sticker: Photo taken by YDC staff

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Students Voting: Photograph taken by YDC Staff

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Sonia Shankman Orthogenic School, Photo taken by YDC staff

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A Note from the Yellow Door Chronicles Staff:

If you are interested in contributing to our paper please submit your articles, poems or artwork to Michelle P. or Michelle Z. Your work will be reviewed by the YDC team for our next issue.

Pledging Purity

By Alice

Continued from Page 3

with their child and talking openly about the dangers of having intercourse and about a safe way to protect themselves from sexually transmitted diseases.

According to The Kaiser Foundation, One-quarter of teen's ages 15-17 have not had discussions with a parent or guardian about how to say no to sex, or about birth control, condoms, or STDs (Sexually Transmitted Diseases). Among sexually active teens age's 15-17, only 6 in 10 have ever seen a health care provider about their sexual health.

The Purity balls are one way to help children and young adults become informed people on the dangers of sexual activity. In the United States, there are not many programs to bring teens and their parents or guardians together about sexual activity and to open communication between them. Lack of communication can become dangerous.

Finland Faces School Violence

By Lizzy

Continued from Page 4

Illinois between 2000 and 2001 there were 32 weapons discovered to be brought to schools, and between 2001 and 2002 there were 53. This is very minor compared to the 204 weapons brought to schools in Virginia between 2000 and 2001. It is

difficult to know, however, whether the problem is bigger in Virginia, or if Virginia is just better at catching these students. Fortunately, there has never been a mass school shooting in Illinois as there was at Columbine, Virginia Tech, and the school in Finland.

Autism: Going Against the Grain

By Ashley

Continued from Page 11

and classes to teach parents, caregivers, and even siblings how to handle situations, and how to deal with stress.

Common treatment methods include medication used to treat symptoms, as well as behavior, psychosocial, and educational interventions. Speech therapy, occupational therapy, sensory therapy, relationship development intervention, pivotal response training, and verbal behavior intervention are all different methods of interventions. Dietary changes and vitamin or mineral supplements are often used in helping change how a child may feel or act. Many public schools have programs for children with special needs, and there are also thousands of day schools and residential treatment programs for people with autism.

Dr. Leventhal stated that 90-95% of people with autism will need some sort of assistance as

adults. Whether the assistance needed is driving to work, cooking their meals, or help with everything an individual with autism does throughout the day. There are thousands of different options for an individual with autism once they graduate from high school. Just like anyone else, a person with autism can go to college and be successful, but there are thousands of other options as well. There are group homes and other types of living centers. There are also tons of vocational programs that are just for people with an ASD.

Edward Scissorhands, Charles Schulz, Jim Henson, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Vincent van Gogh, Emily Dickinson, John Nash, James Taylor, Andy Warhol, Sherlock Holmes, and John Denver. What do they all have in common? They all have an ASD, and everybody knows their names.

Taking on MRSA

By Ashley

Continued from Page 11

be more at risk to contract this highly contagious infection, right? Well actually, as long as everybody washes their hands every once in a while and covers their scrapes, students living at the O'School aren't any more at risk than any other kid their age.

MRSA sounds really scary and painful, and it might be, but MRSA is also something that is very simple to prevent, which is something that a lot of people don't know. So how can you avoid catching this so called menace to society? One of the Superbug's biggest weaknesses is soap and water. That's right! If you don't want to get MRSA, make sure you wash your hands. Another extremely important thing to remember is cover all your cuts and scrapes; an open sore is one of the easiest ways for an infection to enter your body.

There are also a few other important protective steps that revolve around hygiene. Be careful about things that you borrow or share, especially personal items such as towels, razors, or bars of soap. Use alcohol based hand sanitizers, especially after you work out or you blow your nose. Wash your clothes weekly; it's really easy to spread germs that you pick up walking around or from bumping into people. It's particularly easy to get infected from dirty clothes, especially jeans that have been worn 4 days in a row and that have picked up millions of bacteria. Make sure you wash your sheets weekly, so that bacteria don't continually build up on your bed. And lastly, throw away plastic bottles and paper cups after one or two uses, because that is all they are made for, and they are like a trap for germs.

People might continue to associate MRSA with the word "Deadly" for quite a while, but compared to world hunger or AIDS, MRSA is more like a bee-sting or even a mosquito bite, and soon, with the technology and resources we have today, hopefully doctors will have an antibiotic that will clear the infection without a doubt or even a vaccination that MRSA won't be able to withstand.

*Boils-A hot red painful lump in the skin that contains pus and is caused by infection

*Methicillin, Penicillin- Types of antibiotics that are all in the Beta-Lactam group of antibiotics. Both are used to treat bacterial infections. Methicillin is a synthetic antibiotic while Penicillin naturally grows from mold.