



Panther Paws

Winter 2009

Mr. Bialasik Becomes Assistant Principal: The Case of the Missing Math Teachers

By Gillian Nigro

Earlier this year, one of the Assistant Principals at Sweet Home High School, Mr. Dimitroff, left his position to become the Principal at Lackawanna High School. He is being temporarily replaced by a TOSA, or a Teacher on Special Assignment (Sounds like some sort of spy thing). The subject of this acronym is Mr. James Bialasik. Changing scenes from a math teacher to a formidable administrator, this job has presented Mr. Bialasik with several new responsibilities to face.

Mr. Bialasik has always considered becoming a school administrator, so the rest of this year could be classified as a trial run for him. "I was presented with the opportunity and knew I just had to jump in with two feet," he said. He now works directly with all students whose last names begin with the letters, A through C. Mr. Bialasik feels that although he is not teaching mathematics anymore, he is still teaching. "I'm teaching something different now," he said. "Something more overt." Disciplining students could fall under this category. Also, Mr. Bialasik helped set up the January and June Regents exam schedules and set up a district math team to improve math instruction in grades K through 12.



A point that Mr. Bialasik had to take into consideration when deciding on whether or not to accept this assignment was that he would be forced to leave all of his new students after only one marking period. These students had just become accustomed to his teaching style when he escaped to the Assistant Principal's office. "I would not have done

it if I had not been 100% sure that my students would be in good hands," he said. "I'm not worried about them." However, current Sweet Home juniors involved in the honors math circuit are beginning to sense a pattern. Every single math teacher these students have ever had since freshman year have left for a long period of time for one reason or another. Freshman year it was Mrs. Giufre, sophomore year it was Mrs. Yagielski, and finally Mr. Bialasik this year. "We're sick of all our math teachers leaving!" ranted an anonymous junior. Mr. Bialasik and his old students now have new challenges to face, but I'm sure they will both overcome them in time.

Endless Cycle of Violence

By Rich Polley

The United States will never capture Osama Bin Laden. Any chance we ever had at detaining him has passed and will never come again. He has learned our tactics and isn't easily fooled. So don't think for a second that he will do the same thing twice. Bin Laden is a head terrorist and a mastermind at a deadly game of hide and seek. From birth, he was bright and simple, disliking any extravagant things.

In his youth he was very religious and began to dedicate all his time to the mosque, becoming a religious zealot and devoutly following the Koran. His thinking changed when he met Syed Qtub. Qtub wrote the book *Milestones*, which challenged traditional Muslim faith.

Qtub said, "Don't wait for your enemies to strike; you make the first move." He saw the United States as the biggest threat, enemy and terrorist to Muslims. To bin Laden, American troops are the invading force of his Holy land.

Bin Laden had nothing against the United States until the first Gulf War. Former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. The exiled Kuwaiti government asked the United States to help and intervene. At the same time, bin Laden had offered his own holy fighters to defend Kuwait, but he was denied the honor.

This made Bin Laden furious. Not only did they deny his help, but they also brought outsiders into an Islamic country. Despite his feelings, Bin Laden thanked the U.S. for their assistance, but said that now that Saddam and the Soviets were gone, the U.S. was no longer needed in the Middle East. He warned the U.S. to leave or it would be the last war the country faced. We should have heeded his warning.

Terrorist attacks began around the world in the name of Jihad and after each devastating attack, retaliation would occur – an endless cycle of violence. Bin Laden's early life choices led him down a path to running from the rule of law. He would push himself to the limits through numerous exercises such as heading into the Saudi desert, bringing less equipment each time. This intense training acclimated him to harsh conditions and strengthened his resolve.

To his followers, Bin Laden is a simple man with a lifestyle close to theirs. He would sleep on the floor or dirt, not use the modern comforts of air conditioning and only drink warm water. This has not only strengthened his survival, but also made him a legend among his followers. Bin Laden is always on the move and always has an escape

plan. It is very unlikely that we will ever capture him alive. There is also a likely chance that he will strike again. He has declared both a Jihad and a Fatwa, which allows attacks on civilians, against the United States – why wouldn't he continue his campaign until his demands are met?

Bin Laden will strike again – he himself has said that this is only the beginning. It's only a matter of how and when.

He is a master at this game of manhunt. It seems as if he was preparing for this life on the run from the time he was young. Even if the intelligence community could somehow capture or kill bin Laden, it could rain down consequences of Biblical proportions. Martyrdom, which is viewed as almost godlike, would encourage his followers to continue on his path, unleashing a new wave of terrorist attacks.

United States military installations like Prince Sultan Air Base in Saudi Arabia should have been abandoned as soon as the call for jihad and fatwa was declared. Perhaps the best way to end the violence is a refusal to engage such zealots. The U.S. government might sometimes forget that its main concern is the people it governs. Right now they are entrenched in a war.

Prosperity Long After The Guns Have Fallen Silent

By: Rich Polley

“Although a legitimate government was elected by the Afghan peoples, it has been hampered by the corrupt, the drug trades an underdeveloped economy and insufficient security force,” said President Obama in his speech on Afghanistan.

During Obama's campaign in 2008, he stated three policies on foreign affairs: have a responsible end to the Iraq war, expand the US armed forces and invest in humanity by providing foreign aid.

For all those who voted for Obama your dreams have come true.

In Obama's speech he said “we will remove our combat brigades from Iraq by end of next summer and all of our troops by the end of 2011.” He also wishes to increase spending on homeland security and intelligence so we can coordinate better and stay one step ahead. Now he wants to put an additional 30,000 troops in Afghanistan to secure their humanity and unite them. This is what you wished isn't it?

We have all witnessed the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, the American people only desire to rebuild our economy and Obama wants to push us further into a war.

But here the reminder of why we are there on Afghan soil, fighting. On September 11, 2001, 19 men hijacked four airplanes and used them to murder nearly 3,000 people. As we know, these men belonged to Al-Qaeda and Al-Qaeda's base of operations was in Afghanistan, where have Taliban harbored them.

At the time, it seemed as though everyone was on board to fight. The Vote in the senate was 98-0 and the vote in the house was 420-1. Congress authorized the use of military force against Al-Qaeda and those who harbor them. Everyone wanted to see American boots in Afghanistan and Osama Bin Laden's head on a silver platter.

Obama has asked for the 30,000 troops so that we can properly train the Afghans and they can get into the fight. To leave now would hamper the US keep pressure on Al-Qaeda, and create a greater risk of attack on US soil and US allies. When was the last major attack on US soil? It seems like they are dysfunctional outside of the territory since we are in their borders. Don't you want to keep it that way? What if they obtained a few nuclear weapons from Pakistani's stockpiles? We must deny Al-Qaeda a safe haven.

Wherever Al-Qaeda and its allies attempt to establish a foothold, whether in Somalia or Yemen or elsewhere, they must be confronted. Where ever a dark cloud of tyranny America will speak out on behalf of human rights. Once again the United States is brought back into the Cold War policing days.

This is Obama's war. He shall strike fear into the souls of Al-Qaeda and those that come out of their caves will wish they never did.

That's Entertainment

Rumors Has It...

By: Bethany Wolf

New York's aristocratic elite gather at the residence of deputy sheriff Charlie Bronk in order to celebrate his tenth year anniversary with his lovely wife, Myra. A lovely meal is sitting in the kitchen and guests have brought beautiful gifts for the celebrating couple. What could possibly go awry? *Everything*. First and foremost, Myra and the domestic servants are nowhere to be found. Charlie is in the above bedroom with a bullet through his earlobe, which is bleeding profusely. Chris and Ken Gorman have unpretentiously entered into the questionable scene and attempt to cover up the whole situation in order to protect Charlie's career. Meanwhile, party guests are arriving downstairs and are suspicious of the whole situation. As the night continues, rumors swirl among the guests and tensions run high. In an effort to maintain their pure reputations, ridiculous and hilarious attempts are made to conceal the accident from the public eye.

RUMORS



Rumors, a play created by Neil Simon, was both entertaining and exceptionally well performed. The play consisted of Jocelyn Mankowski and Jacob Pandolfi as Chris and Ken Gorman, the couple who first discovered a wounded Charlie Bronk. Claire and Lenny Ganz, portrayed by Erika Frase and Michael Sheridan, were the next to enter the scene after their new BMW had been totaled by an oncoming vehicle. Gary Reed and Leyla Mamedova assumed the roles of Ernie and Cookie Cusack, an uninformed and slightly dimwitted couple. Glenn

Cooper (Oleg Faynshteyn) and Cassie Cooper (Sarah Fiordaliso) were the last dysfunctional couple to arrive at the party. Officers Welch and Pudney, wary inspectors at the scene of the accident, were comically portrayed by Alexxis Butera and Jordan Steward. Mrs. Lona LaChuisa, the director of the production, chose talented young men and women that perfectly suited their roles.

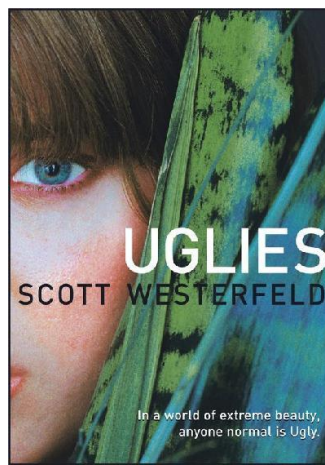
All in all, *Rumors* was a deliciously gossipy production that kept the audience laughing and guessing throughout the entirety of the show. Congratulations cast and crew for a job well done

Book Review: Uglies

By Scott Westerfeld
Reviewed by Julianne Burke

Imagine a world where you couldn't be beautiful until you turn sixteen. As soon as you hit your birthday, the only meaning of your life is having as much fun as possible and stay bubbly. This is the world of fifteen-year-old Tally Youngblood. As a mere Ugly, she dreams of the life of the Pretties, of not having a care in the world. This is until she meets a new friend, Shay. Shay is a rebel, and wishes to leave behind the high-tech stereotype the world has become, in favor of the wild. When Shay goes missing, Tally must choose between being Pretty to the world, or staying pretty to her friends.

I would recommend this book (and the rest of the fabulous series) to any lovers of futuristic science fiction or action/ adventure.



New Moon Review

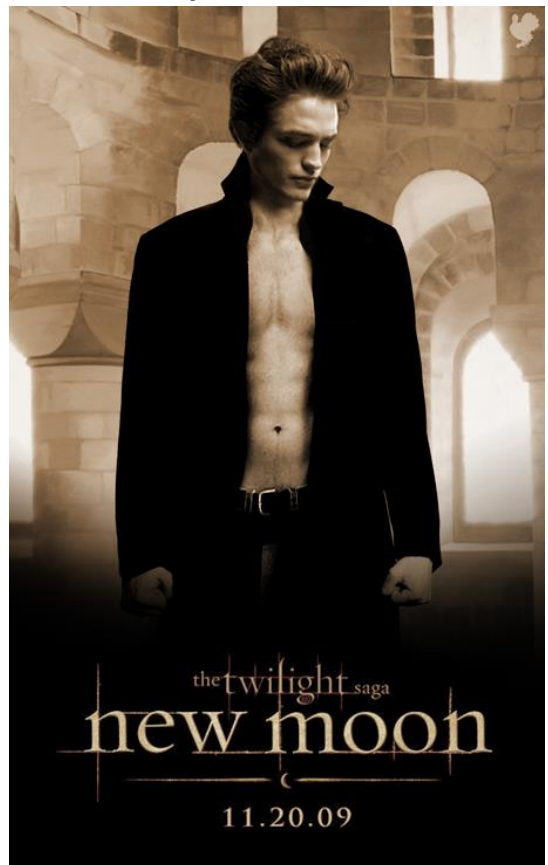


By Julianne Burke and Mary Hejna

Last month, the new addition to the epic Twilight series of movies created a frenzy at the box office. This spectacular movie brought in an astounding 72.7 million dollars on its opening night, breaking box office records. The Twilight Saga: New Moon was directed by newcomer Chris Weitz. He thrilled the enthusiastic fans by keeping the movie as close to the book as possible. He also made it possible to appeal to a wider audience by mixing action with romance.

In the movie, when her beloved boyfriend, Edward, leaves Forks with his family, Bella is left to cope with her broken heart. She finds consolation with her friend, Jacob Black. Unfortunately, when Bella goes to extremes to get Edward back, she must choose between the love of her life who left her, or her best friend who will never let her go.

To bring Stephenie Meyer's renowned novel to life, the design team got creative with CGI technology (computer-generated imagery). What



also drew in frantic Twilight fans was the acting of the highly regarded Rob Pattinson and teen heart throb, Taylor Lautner.

If you haven't yet witnessed this cinematic adventure, hop in a Volvo and head over to the nearest theater.

Chick Flick with Some Testosterone

By Rich Polley

Romantic lovers out there, rejoice.

When In Rome is a hilarious romantic comedy right from the get go. This movie was stuffed with twist and turns; that will make you unsure if Beth will end up with or without her love, Nick.

The movie starts with a girl named Beth that is consumed by her job. Her theory is when she finds a man more important than her job, he is the one for her.

Beth is told that not only her last ex is getting married, but her little sister too. Her sister is to be married in Rome, Italy, next to the Fontana D'Amore. Legend tells if you throw a coin into the fountain you will find true love. Beth decided to steal a few coins instead, which is when it all goes wrong.

Men are all of a sudden falling in love with her and following her. She has no idea why. She calls her sister who says, if you steal a coin from the fountain the person will fall in love with you. Knowing this, she is unsure her love Nick, truly loves her back.



The cast of *When in Rome* is composed of multiple small time actors that are becoming well-known. Beth played by Kristen Bell, Nick played by Josh Duhamel, Lance played by Jon Heder, Gale played by Dax Shepard and Antonio played by Will Arnett make up the cast.

The three funniest romantic followers are Lance, who is a magician that tries to woo Beth with his mystical powers. Antonio is an artist that paints centerfolds of Beth everywhere in the big apple. Gale is a foreign model that tries to sway Beth with his ripped chest, over confidence and constant stalking. Combined they are considerable foes that try to force their way into her life everywhere and when possible.

When in Rome's plot was well-thought out and the comedy sparked a more male interest. Men, you will not be bored watching this chick flick. Women, you will probably cry your hearts out. This movie deserves a solid 3.5/4.0.

Sports Shorts

STATE CHAMPS! The Varsity Football Team Successfully Defends State Title

The Sweet Home varsity football team capped off its second straight state championship season by beating Burnt Hills 34-7 Saturday, November 28 at the Carrier Dome in Syracuse.

The Panthers were led by senior DJ Nettles who had 7 catches for 142 yards and two interceptions on defense and was named the game's MVP. Joining Nettles in the awards circle were senior quarterback Patrick McMahon who was named the game's most valuable offensive back, Steve Spencer named the most valuable defensive lineman and senior Stephan Mendez earned the game's most valuable offensive lineman.

This is the second state title in as many years for Coach John Faller and the varsity football Panthers. The Panthers went 26-0 along the way to capture both state titles. During their entire high school football careers, the graduating seniors of the **2009 State Champion Varsity Football Panthers** had a combined record of 49 wins, 0 losses and 1 tie at the modified, freshmen, junior varsity and varsity levels.

Congratulations to all the players and coaches for another terrific season.



Life and Arts

Ode to LHS

By Kelly Donovan

Liquid hand soap
Liquid hand soap
Oh my darling
Without I can't cope.

Past loves were dirty
But you have come clean
Have you seen their hands?
The sight is obscene.

I love your pale color
Like watery snot
Some find you disgusting
But I love you a lot.

Enriched formula

With vitamin E
I smell lemon blossoms
You're the one for me

Liquid hand soap
Liquid hand soap
A germ-ridden world
Without you I can't cope.
Heat flushed the cheeks for all to see
Underneath it's all the real me.

The Biggest Sorrow

By Mary Hejna

People look, then people think,

And next they ridicule.
What people say to others,
Is bluntly just plain cruel.

People state words can't hurt you,
But how can that be true?
They may not harm your body,
Yet on your soul they just stab
through.

When someone is different
Does that make them wrong?
If no, why has originality
Been put down for so long?

Who I am will not change
When your back is turned around.
So why must you slander me
When I'm nowhere to be found?

Your uniqueness make you, you
And not another person.
So why put others down
With harsh words and lots of cursin'?

I will never be a duplicate,
For that is just not me.
I only wanted to show you
The biggest sorrow of reality.

My Noise, My Music!

By Stephanie Eremionkhale

I am listening to my radio and going through the stations.
Some songs I know, some I don't.
My chemistry teacher says the music we are listening to is also known as noise!
Wow, good to know.
Why am I listening to noise, I mean music?
Well, it's the noise I listen to when...
It seems like the world does not
I feel like crying, shouting, dancing,
I want to sing along, to sleep, and to be on my own
I want to fell close to someone, something, somewhere
I just want to do nothing.
At those times I do not care if it is noise.
It is my noise.
It is my music.

UGLY

Author Unknown; Submitted by Gabriel Chen

Everyone in the apartment complex I lived in knew who Ugly was. Ugly was the resident tomcat. Ugly loved three things in this world: fighting, eating garbage, and shall we say, love.

The combination of these things combined with a life spent outside had their effect on Ugly. To start with, he had only one eye, and where the other should have been was a gaping hole. He was also missing his ear on the same side, his left foot has appeared to have been badly broken at one time, and had healed at an unnatural angle, making him look like he was always turning the corner. His tail has long since been lost, leaving only the smallest stub, which he would constantly jerk and twitch.

Ugly would have been a dark gray tabby striped-type, except for the sores covering his head, neck, even his shoulders with thick, yellowing scabs. Every time someone saw Ugly there was the same reaction. "That's one UGLY cat!!"

All the children were warned not to touch him, the adults threw rocks at him, hosed him down, squirted him when he tried to come in their homes, or shut his paws in the door when he would not leave.

Ugly always had the same reaction. If you turned the hose on him, he would stand there, getting soaked until you gave up and quit. If you threw things at him, he would curl his lanky body around feet in forgiveness. Whenever he spied children, he would come running meowing frantically and bump his head against their hands, begging for their love. If you ever picked him up he would immediately begin suckling on your shirt, earrings, whatever he could find.

One day Ugly shared his love with the neighbor's huskies. They did not respond kindly, and Ugly was badly mauled. From my apartment I could hear his screams, and I tried to rush to his aid. By the time I got to where he was laying, it was apparent Ugly's sad life was almost at an end.

Ugly lay in a wet circle, his back legs and lower back twisted grossly out of shape, a gaping tear in the white strip of fur that ran down his front. As I picked him up and tried to carry him home I could hear him wheezing and gasping, and could feel him struggling. I must be hurting him terribly I thought.

Then I felt a familiar tugging, sucking sensation on my ear- Ugly, in so much pain, suffering and obviously dying was trying to suckle my ear. I pulled him closer to me, and he bumped the palm of my hand with his head, then he turned his one golden eye towards me, and I could hear the distinct sound of purring. Even in the greatest pain, that ugly battled-scarred cat was asking only for a little affection, perhaps some compassion.

At that moment I thought Ugly was the most beautiful, loving creature I had ever seen. Never once did he try to bite or scratch me, or even try to get away from me, or struggle in any way. Ugly just looked up at me completely trusting in me to relieve his pain.

Ugly died in my arms before I could get inside, but I sat and held him for a long time afterwards, thinking about how one scarred, deformed little stray could so alter my opinion about what it means to have true pureness of spirit, to love so totally and truly. Ugly taught me more about giving and compassion than a thousand books, lectures, or talk show specials ever could, and for that I will always be thankful.

He had been scarred on the outside, but I was scarred on the inside, and it was time for me to move on and learn to love truly and deeply. To give my total to those I cared for.

Many people want to be richer, more successful, well liked, beautiful, but for me, I will always try to be Ugly.

Call for Articles!



Attention all aspiring journalists, photographers, and poets! Panther Paws is always accepting new members. Newspaper advisors, Mrs. Feyes and Mrs. Hiller, welcome all Sweet Home High School students to submit articles to *Panther Paws*. We are interested in your ideas, opinions, reviews, poems, cartoons, thoughts, advice and observations.

All piece submitted must include the writer's or artist's name and be in compliance with our district's policy on appropriate material for the school newspaper.

So what do you think? Have any compliments to give? Have any complaints? Did you especially enjoy a school event, field trip or class discussion? Write about it! If you would like to contribute to the paper, please seek out Mrs. Feyes or Mr. Hiller for more information on meetings, submission guidelines and approaching deadlines.

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