

In The Talons

Winter 2008-2009

Joys Of Scouting

By Douglas Gibbs

We all know what Boy Scouts are. We also know that Boy Scouts don't always get the respect they deserve. But there's more to scouting than just derbies and meetings. Boy Scouts is about learning skills while helping your community and having fun. Boy Scouts go on many trips that test their skills in the wild and in the community. On some trips, they may learn what to do if they find a person in the wild who has been lost for a while and is at risk for hypothermia. Scouts don't always go on trips to test your skills.

Some trips are just to have plain fun! One of the trips is called Fellowship Weekend, in which other scouts bring their Xbox 360s, PS3 and TVs and hangout and at night they go outside and play a game called man-hunt. So scouting is full of great opportunities to get out of the house and try new things which can be helpful to you in the future. Scouting also has High Adventure Trips. High Adventure Trips are trips that are more

exciting like going to New Mexico to Philmont. On this trip, they get to pick from many activities like rafting, hiking, firing shot-guns, blacksmithing, etc. So the next time you think about scouting, don't think of the bad things you have heard but the things you heard in this article. Troop 359 meets at Saint Cecilia's every Thursday at 7pm in the gymnasium in back of the church. So feel free to drop by and ask questions or talk about joining.

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Massive Black Hole

By Nick Gilfor

It has been confirmed that a super-massive black hole, four million times more massive than our sun, is residing in the center of our own galaxy, the Milky Way. It was discovered by German astronomers, as part of a 16-year study. Using two telescopes in Chile, the astronomers discovered the black hole by tracking of movements of stars circling the center of the Milky Way. Because humans cannot actually see black holes (they're black, like the universe), we can only discover where they are by seeing how they affect other objects in space.

Although black holes are thought to be extremely dangerous, and of course if you get too close they are, Earth and everything else in the solar system is in no danger. The black hole is 27,000 light years from Earth. One light year is, exactly, 9,460,730,472,580.8 km. That's very far away. Not only is the black hole not dangerous, but scientists have reason to believe that it took part in creating all galaxies in the universe. The gravity of a black hole in the center of a galaxy has enough density to bring matter together to form stars.

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Harry Potter and Reality

By Elizabeth Nesbitt

Everyone knows of Harry Potter. The movies are famous nationwide and the books have spread across the globe. We can't *all* go to Hogwarts, but J. K. Rowling captured the minds and hearts of readers everywhere with characters that everyone can relate to, watching and cheering from the sidelines as Harry, Ron, and Hermione battle against Dark wizards and the epitome of evil, Voldemort.

But how many people know how these books have changed humanity? Amazing things—almost magical things—have happened because of what's happened in the halls of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. People flock every year to famous sites mentioned in the books. Bands such as Harry and the Potters pay tribute, and the famous Jelly Belly Co. makes popular wizarding snacks such as Bertie Bott's Every Flavor Beans (watch out for the vomit flavor!).

What's one of the most famous locations of the first book, the very portal to the wizarding world? Yep: Platform 9¾. Some people don't think the King's Cross Station is real, but in fact it is one of the most popular stations in London. So many Muggles gather at the barrier between platforms nine and ten, the station management roped off the wall and placed a sign on it with the hidden platform's name.

As if a few Muggles slamming into a brick wall might not be interesting enough, a group of paleontologists discovered an herbivorous dinosaur with a hard, spiky head. Paleontologists claimed it looked like a dragon of legend, and from that came the dinosaur's name: *dracorex hogwartsia*—Latin for "The dragon king of Hogwarts." The skeleton is on display in the Children's Museum of Indianapolis.

Not enough proof that these books epic? Check out the growing holiday of Harry Potter Day. Celebrated on July 31st, Harry Potter's birthday, this entire day is dedicated to the hero who conquered the Dark Lord. It's a day of Quidditch played on the ground, of Cauldron Cake snacks, of dressing in robes and waving your wand in an attempt to make a new spell. Most people celebrate by hosting a huge wizard feast around midnight and on the stroke of twelve have a toast to Harry Potter: The Boy Who Lived!

The Harry Potter books have definitely changed how Muggles go about their daily lives. And to think, all this started with a fictional little boy with a strange past and a lightning-shaped scar.

Hachikō: The Subway Dog

By Savannah Paul

Hachikō was an Akita dog born in the city of Odate, Japan on November 10, 1923. He was taken to Tokyo by his new owner, Hidesaburō Ueno, a professor in the agriculture department at the University of Tokyo. During his life, Hachikō would go with his owner to the subway station and watch him board the subway to get to work. He would wait for him at the subway station every day until his owner returned from work.

This continued until one day in May, 1925, when professor Ueno didn't return. It turns out on the same day Ueno suffered a stroke at the campus, and died, never returning to Hachikō. Hachikō was given away after his master's death, but routinely escaped, showing up again and again at his old home. After time, Hachikō realized that Professor Ueno didn't live at the house anymore. Soon, Hachikō started going to the train station every day.

STORY CONTINUED ON PG 4

World's Largest Prehistoric Snake

By Sam Conway



Would you believe a snake could grow 32 feet long? That's the size of a school bus! Well you better believe it because a team of researchers for the University of Toronto recently found remains of a snake that big and nearly 60 million years old. The snake's name is the Titanoboa. The team of researchers say it lived in the rain forest of north east Columbia. The snake was so large that at its greatest size it's back would be up to your hip. The snake is a relative of the modern boa constrictor. It is believed to have lived in the water, like an Anaconda. Its prey was believed to include alligators, big fish, and crocodiles. Compared to an anaconda the Titanoboa's vertebrae makes an anaconda look like a dwarf.

Riddle

Little Nancy Etticote in a white petticoat and a red nose. The longer she stands, the shorter she grows. What is Nancy?

Answer on next page

The Best Super Bowl Ever?

By Sam Conway

The best Super Bowl ever? I don't know, but the ending to Super Bowl 43 will never be forgotten. The Pittsburgh Steelers won their league high 6th Super Bowl. My score prediction was close, as the Steelers just squeaked in their 6th Super Bowl win. Although the final score at 27-23 might make you assume it was a tight game, the scoreboard doesn't tell the whole story. The game was going the Steelers' way throughout the first three quarters. Although the game was a battle between both quarterbacks who each played a superb game, the defense did its part throughout the first half. The Steelers took the opening drive 71 yards downfield for an 18 yard field goal. Then the Steelers quickly scored again, with a one yard touchdown run and a 10-0 lead. After that, the Cardinals answered back with a one yard touchdown toss to their tight end, making the score 10-7. Unfortunately for the Cardinals, a Kurt Warner mistake gave the Steelers a comfortable lead. As the Cardinals were driving downfield right before the half trying to take a lead Kurt Warner threw an interception to Steelers defensive star James Harrison who took it 100 yards for a touchdown. The Steelers went into the half with a comfortable 17-7 lead. But the game wasn't over yet.

The Cardinals got the ball at the half but ended up punting to the Steelers who drove 79 yards capping off the drive with a 21 yard field goal and a 20-7 lead. After a low scoring 3rd quarter, the Cardinals seemed to wake up. They quickly drove 87 yards downfield in eight plays, resulting in a one yard touchdown strike to star receiver Larry Fitzgerald to make it 20-14. What happened next was perhaps the most crucial play of Super Bowl 43. The Cardinals were rewarded a safety after the Steelers were called for holding while the quarterback was in his own end zone, which gave the Cardinals two points. Now, at a 20-16, lead the Steelers were extremely nervous. The safety kick was fair, so the Cardinals didn't have great field position. Within a blink of an eye, the Cardinals were on top. In just two plays the Cardinals engineered a 67 yard touchdown drive in 21 seconds that ended with a 64 yard catch and run touchdown to Larry Fitzgerald. The game that was once a 17-7 Steelers lead was now 23-20 Cardinals.

As they say, a game is never over until it's over. In this game, that certainly was the case.

The Steelers' Ben Roethlisberger led an incredible Super Bowl winning drive that ended with an amazing six yard touchdown catch to receiver Santonio Holmes. The Steelers pulled off an amazing 27-23 victory and will be celebrating a Super Bowl victory for the record 6th time. The game was history for both teams. It was the Cardinals first Super Bowl appearance and the Steelers 6th Super bowl win. Santonio Holmes earned Super Bowl MVP with nine catches for 131 yards and a touchdown. Ben Roethlisberger finished completing 21 of his 30 passes for 256 yards and a touchdown. The NFL has come to an end to yet another season. Let's hope next year's season is as good as this season.

Naruto Shippuden: A New Generation

By Savanna Paul

Some of you may know the TV show Naruto, which is aired on Cartoon Network on Saturday nights. It's been four years since its US debut in September, 2005, and with only about 11 episodes left to air, the series is approaching its end. You may think that the story will be all over after those 11 episodes have aired, but you're wrong. There is still Naruto Shippuden left to watch.

Naruto Shippuden is the sequel to the ultra-popular Naruto. Viz Media is now streaming English-subtitled episodes on the official Naruto website, and the English dub is due to premiere on television any-time soon.

BLACK HOLE

Continued from Pg 1

This could have been how the first stars and galaxies even came into existence.

"Undoubtedly the most spectacular aspect of our 16-year study, is that it has delivered what is now considered to be the best empirical evidence that super-massive black holes do really exist," said Professor Reinhard Genzel, head of the research team.

The team used a 3.5m New Technology Telescope and the 8.2m Very Large Telescope (VLT). The observing took place in Chile, and both telescopes were operated by the European Southern Observatory.

Riddle Answer from page 2

A candle

Music Reviews

By James Mauer

NEW MUSIC

Chinese Democracy by Guns N' Roses: The latest album by the rock band Guns N' Roses is a defining symbol of rock and roll. It overflows with great instrumentation and hard rock. Even though it took Axl Rose thirteen years to produce the new album, it still gained popularity amongst new and experienced Guns N' Roses fans. There are fourteen different recording studios listed in the credits, and Axl Rose is the only member of Guns N' Roses. All fourteen tracks completely define heavy rock.

Top Tracks: "Better," "Chinese Democracy," and "There Was a Time".

CLASSICS

The White Album by The Beatles: The White Album is a great classic rock and roll album that every Beatles fan should own. It includes thirty of the Beatles' greatest hits including; "Back in the USSR", "Helter Skelter", "Revolution 1", and "While My Guitar Gently Weeps". The album is a Beatles essential for any die-hard fan of the 1960's rock group. The album was made mainly because every member of the group had their own styles and talents. For example, John Lennon may not have wanted to produce a song that George Harrison wanted to produce. Most of the songs included on the album were solo tracks. Sometimes three of the members would be recording at the same time at Apple Studios. Even though it was not always a group effort, the album amazed and stunned fans almost as much as when the group released the Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band album. The name, The White Album, suits the album nicely, as the group decided on a plain white cover. This is one of the greatest Beatles albums ever.

Top Tracks: "Back in the USSR," "Helter Skelter," and "Blackbird".

Please Donate for the Homeless

Girl Scout troop #137 is collecting travel sized toiletries for the Grayside Homeless shelter in Springfield Mass. Please put your donations in the labeled boxes near the main doors outside of the office. What to donate? Deodorant, conditioner, shampoo, toothpaste, q-tips, soap, and body lotion are just some of the toiletries.

AXBL and Why It's Cool

By Mike Farnham and Griffin Shults

Some people might know the sport of paintball, but what people might not know is that paintball is world wide. The most popular paintball league is the AXBL division. AXBL is a faster paced type of paintball. What's different to many other paintball games is that they allow a faster shooting style, and teams have coaches. This division is more organized too. The audience is allowed to coach too, but it can be confusing for the players on the field, because the sport itself can be a very straining sport.

Many players far and wide come to this amazing, and fun event. When seeing this sport in action one might think, "Why am I not playing this?" Firebolts student, Griffin Shults, just happens to be on a local paintball team in Chicopee. This year, the AXBL will bring more than just amateur players, there will be pros too. AXBL is getting more and more popular by the years. What's concerning the officials is if it will be too hard for the newcomers. To stop that from happening, they will try to split up the teams. This will be a good year for paintball.

If you want to find out more about this fun sport go to CamelotPaintball.com or call (413)348-5878.



THE SUBWAY DOG, CONTINUED FROM PG 2

He visited the train station for 10 years, only appearing in the evening time, when his master's train was due to arrive at the station. Hachikō's attachment to the train station attracted the attention of commuters.

Many people who routinely went to the train station had seen the dog with his owner everyday (before his owner died). Realizing that the dog was waiting for his dead master, their hearts were touched. They would bring Hachikō treats and food to nourish him during his wait. In April, 1934, a bronze statue in his likeness was erected at Shibuya Station, and Hachikō himself was there to see it. On March 8, 1935, Hachikō died of a heartworm infection, but even today, Hachikō is not forgotten. After his death, the awareness of the Akita breed in Japan rose, raising its population, and every year on April 8th, Hachikō's devotion is honored with a solemn ceremony of remembrance at the Shibuya Station. Hundreds of dog lovers often turn out to honor his memory and loyalty. Hachikō is gone, but he will definitely not be forgotten!

Internet Voice Communication And Internet Safety

By Kyle Hatten

What are the dangers of meeting people online? What are the positive factors of the same experience? Internet safety is a big issue that is talked about in school commonly. Though not an internet expert, I have much experience interacting with other people over the internet. Over my years online, I have learned about safety related to interacting with people I do not know in real life. I have made errors, of course, but I have educated myself on how to avoid such mistakes in the future.

One of the main points of internet conversations at a young age is to not give out any personal information. Personal information includes first or last name or your location, but does not include gender, hobbies, or other information that would offer no links to finding you. But remember, it doesn't take a detective to figure out if you're going to a Falcons hockey game on a Friday night that you might live near Springfield, MA. And if a few months later you talk about playing on a baseball team, and you won't be online because you have a double header Saturday, you are slowly but surely giving a stalker enough information to narrow down your location: baseball diamonds, near Springfield, on Saturday. If you give out personal information, not only will you offer strangers information to possibly locate and harm you, but you can also open yourself up to being ridiculed for not knowing internet etiquette.

Another main point of internet conversations is parental guidance and permission. It is also a good idea to ask your parents if you are wondering whether some information is safe to share. If you consult your parents for help when you are unsure or if something doesn't feel right, it will make your internet experience safer and more enjoyable.

Voice communication is a more recent addition to internet communication, and has even been included in video game console systems. It makes communication faster and more personal for things such as large chat sessions or when playing video games. It's fun, but there are negatives to this new feature as well. If you're young and don't have a developed voice, then it is incredibly easy for other people to guess your age from hearing you speak. The fact that your voice sounds young may invite teasing and aggravation.

People can also easily detect when you are nervous through hesitation or stuttering, which can lead to people jumping to conclusions about you.

Yearbooks

By Elizabeth Nesbitt

Yearbooks in the past years have been great fun, but this year they're better than ever. In full color, the \$30 hardback books are coming out in June.

All sorts of school events are pictured in its glossy pages, even events from long ago in the year: Dickens Day, the students-vs.-staff soccer game, Spirit week—including Halloween snapshots—superlatives, and eighth-grade baby pictures. They will try to feature everyone in the school not just once, but three times!

All orders should be placed by April 1st, and can be ordered in school or online at jostenssyearbooks.com.

We hope your school photos turned out okay this year, because our yearbook is going to be a keeper!



Continued from left

It can also give them an advantage if they are trying to manipulate you. Cyber bullies come in all ages and sizes, but they are anonymous online.

In conclusion, it is always a good idea to talk with your parents about anything you are worried about related to internet conversations. Our school resource officer, our computer teacher, and other adults at WMS can answer questions for you as well. It is important to be wary of chatting, in text or via voice communication, with strangers. But, there are many benefits to the internet, and entertainment is definitely one big quality. If you are smart and don't take risks, the internet can be a really good time!

Black History Month

By Griffin Shults and Nick Gilfor

Black History Month is February. Many people are not fully aware of how Black History Month came to be. Its beginning roots were started 94 years ago, by Carter G. Woodson. Woodson thought of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, and over the years, that small idea grew into Negro History Week, which raised awareness of Negro achievements. This week was moved to February, the month of Abraham Lincoln's and Frederick Douglass' birthdays. In 1976, the entire month of February was turned into Black History Month, and is still celebrated now.

One of the most well known Civil Rights Activists is Martin Luther King, Jr. the son of a minister. Most remember Dr. King as the man who said "I Have a Dream" in an inspiration speech that would be revisited for years. But he is much more than a man of speeches. He led the marches against the bus companies where peaceful protesters would be hosed and beaten down. Even after periods of time in jail, he never fought or said an ugly word.

During Black History month, students across America celebrate and learn about people who have contributed to making America a more united country. Since Jackie Robinson became the first African American to play major league baseball in 1947, more and more athletes were able to cross color lines in sports. Consider recent sport superstars like Jackie Joyner-Kersey, Michael Jordan, David Ortiz, Paul Peirce, and Serena Williams, all of whom are African American. In movies, actors like Will Smith, Cuba Gooding, Jr., Eddie Murphy, and Oprah Winfrey top the charts. Think about government, too. Everyone knows names like Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice. And this fall, for the first time, an African American was elected to be the President of the United States. President Obama's election shows us how far America has come since the days of segregation.

Nora Neale Hurston, a writer during the Harlem Renaissance, wrote novels and folklore of black myths and legends. She created a glossary of Harlem slang from the 1930's.

Air out: to leave, flee or stroll

Beating up your gums: talking for no reason

Blowing your top: getting very angry

Dig: to understand

First thing smoking: a train

Now your cooking with gas: now your talking

Solid: perfect

The Harlem Renaissance

By Elizabeth Nesbitt

The Harlem Renaissance may not be as popularly taught in schools as Martin Luther King, Jr.'s story, but it was just as influential to the Civil Rights Movement. Beginning just after WWI, this explosion of arts and culture in Harlem, New York, raised all sorts of questions involving segregation, equal rights, and Constitutional law.

New York in the 1920's was unusual in that it banned segregated schools. This led to many new educational opportunities for African Americans, as they could get the same education as whites. Works were published that expressed in new light African American culture and heritage. Charles Spurgeon Johnson, editor of a major paper of the National Urban League, encouraged young writers to come to New York. Instead of participating in protests and peace marches as did some, African American artists and writers around the New York area used art and culture to work towards civil rights and equality.

A major factor that contributed to the Harlem Renaissance was the migration of many African Americans to northern cities as they chose to leave the south. For many reasons, musicians in general flocked to New York. Other artists followed. The mixing of southern and northern black cultures led to a rise of intellectuals determined to have an effect on their surroundings.

The music, poetry, and art that came out of the Harlem Renaissance exuded confidence, positivity, and progress. While authors like James Weldon Johnson had to publish his book anonymously in 1912, writers of the 1920's had more opportunities to publish their works without hiding their race. This generation of African American's pursued their creative endeavors regardless of racism, and this in itself created more opportunities for all Americans on the road to equality.

Here is a poem by Langston Hughes, a poet and writer of the Harlem Renaissance.

Dreams

Hold fast to dreams

For if dreams die

Life is a broken-winged bird

That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams

For when dreams go

Life is a barren field

Frozen with snow.