

# THE PRIDE

WHO WE ARE



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## THE PRIDE

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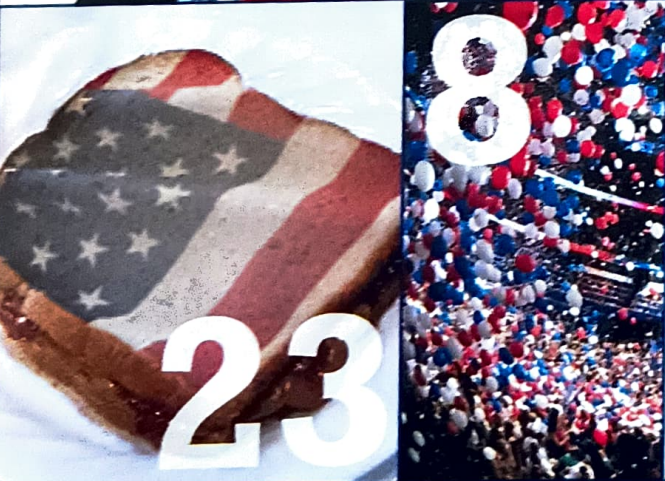
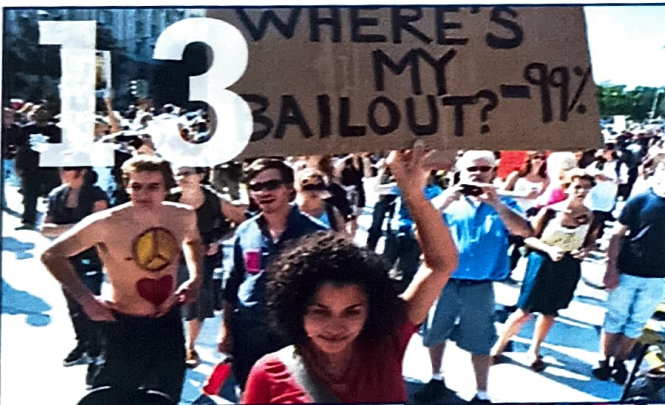
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# Editor's Note

Collegiate Academy has not been immune to the financial crisis of the Erie School District. In late 2011, I distinctly remember our adviser informing the staff that the school district had cut the funding for Collegiate Academy's former newspaper, *The Rhetorical Question*.

At that moment, not only were we without funding, but we had also just become part of a global trend. *The Rhetorical Question* joined the thousands of other newspapers throughout the world as an obsolete form of print journalism.

It was evident that we had to do something to fundamentally change our publication. Our staff established Collegiate Academy's newest form of print journalism through a series of many uncertainty-filled discussions about the future.

I am honored to introduce you to *The Pride*.

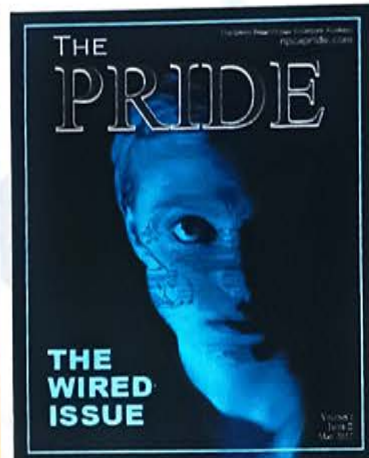
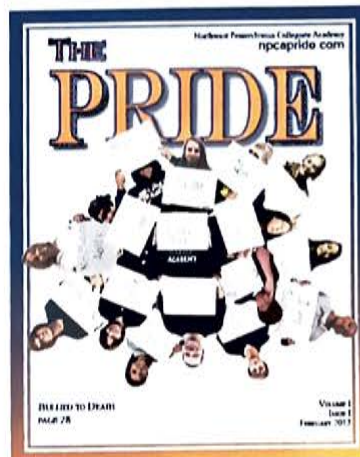
*The Pride* is a big step forward and an innovative change for the Collegiate Academy's journalism program. Not only does *The Pride* feature a magazine format but it represents more versatility in opinion and feature writing and creative layout designs.

Last year, the absence of our publication was rightly noted by many members of the student body. Although we produced two issues, print copies were not distributed to students. Last year, being the first year of our new format, was defined as a trial run in which we learned all about the new, imaginative things we can do to engage you all. If you are interested in viewing last year's issues you may on our website: [npcapride.com](http://npcapride.com)

**Why *The Pride*?** The staff did not take the task of choosing a new name lightly. Finding a name that defines Collegiate Academy in all aspects is easier said than done.

Now, I know what you are all thinking. *Pride, Honor, Respect*: the endlessly repeated motto was the greatest influence on the name. Well yes, the motto was one attribute of the name. However, *The Pride* draws from many other influences.

First, being the term "pride." The literal definition of pride is applicable to Collegiate Academy in countless ways. In the midst of all the stress of our daily workload, it can be easy to forget the end result. Collegiate Academy is one of the best high schools, not only in Pennsylvania, but in the country. In a time where America's schools are failing to compete abroad, we set the standard each and every



day of what America's schools can be like. Our academic success is a source of pride for many and a primary influence on our publication.

As embodied by the cover, the term pride has a certain connotation to the animal kingdom. A group of lions, or more commonly known as a pride, is one of the most famous animal groups in the world. Prides are noted for not only their ferocity but their loyalty and close-knit relationships. Much like the Collegiate Academy family, we are a supportive group and a strong community. Also, it is no coincidence that the Collegiate Academy mascot happens to be a lion.

Lastly, this publication will be a showcase of Collegiate Academy's best. This magazine is something we plan on distributing to not only you, but to the community. Every page of this publication is something I am extremely proud of. I would like to thank the staff of *The Pride*, my co-editor-in-chief Maggie, our adviser, Ms. Parthenakis, and all of our business advertisers for working tirelessly to bring print journalism back to Collegiate Academy.

The theme of this issue is *Who We Are*. This issue takes a spotlight on the things that define Collegiate Academy. I urge all of you to become engaged in this issue and look forward to being the first ever subscribers to the newest addition to Collegiate Academy.

Sincerely,

  
Michael Sorensen  
Editor-in-Chief





# WHO







# WE ARE





# Tuition:

*"Always Reaching Higher"*

*As 2012-2013 out-of-district tuition rates increase, the Class of 2016 enrollment drops*

BY ELLIE HARTLEB,  
LAYOUT BY CHRIS LILLY

This year, freshmen enrollment at Collegiate Academy is down compared to previous years. Typically, of the hundreds of applicants only the top 225 students are accepted. However, the Class of 2016 consists of only 195 students.

There are a number of reasons for the decline. First, the Erie School District Board of Directors raised tuition for students who attend Collegiate Academy from outside the school district. Tuition can cost a student's family anywhere from \$3,400 to \$5,000 depending on the student's year in school.

According to Associate Dean Mr. Vieira, the School Board decided to make the tuition rate dependent on a student's year so that they gradually had to pay more instead of immediately paying \$5,000 a year.

Additionally, county school districts no longer provide transportation or tuition assistance for their students who attend Collegiate Academy. Mr. Vieira explains that these school districts, understandably, "want to keep their good kids in their district."

However, the lack of transportation is a real obstacle for some students. Administrators have tried to compensate for said obstacles by opening the school earlier and keeping it open later so that parents have a more flexible amount of time for drop-

**["Once people realize we are not going anywhere, we are not changing, everything will settle down."]**



ping off and picking up students.

Freshmen Uma Rajiyah and Maria Zcerwinski are both from the Millcreek Township School District and have about a 20 minute commute to school. Rajiyah's father takes both of them to school every morning.

When making their high school decision, Rajiyah was considering McDowell High School and Collegiate Academy, while Zcerwinski was considering Villa Maria Academy, McDowell High School and

Collegiate Academy.

Rajiyah says she ultimately decided to come to Collegiate because, "the working environment. There is much more of a challenge."

Zcerwinski agrees, "I like the smaller class siz-



es [compared to McDowell], and I definitely like the challenge.”

A more publicly noticed factor that may have contributed to the enrollment decline is a false statement that came from the Millcreek Township School District that says Collegiate Academy students are unable to participate in sports for McDowell. This created a lot of uncertainty among students and parents.

Another publicized factor is the rumor that Collegiate Academy would merge with Central Tech. Mr. Vieira says this gossip is completely untrue and that, if anything, Collegiate and Central may eventually be on the same property since Central owns about 20 acres of land.

Finally a factor that has always and will always effect the enrollment at any school is competition.

Competition from the parochial high schools, Mercyhurst Preparatory School, Cathedral Preparatory School and Villa Maria Academy, has always been especially threatening because of the scholarship opportunities that these schools offer to provide some relief from the pricey tuition ranging from \$7,300 to \$7,700 per year.

Freshman Ben Hartleb was offered a scholarship from Cathedral Prep.

“I received a \$500 scholarship for placing sixth on the entrance exam,” he said. “I turned this scholarship down because Collegiate is more affordable and it is a good academic school.”

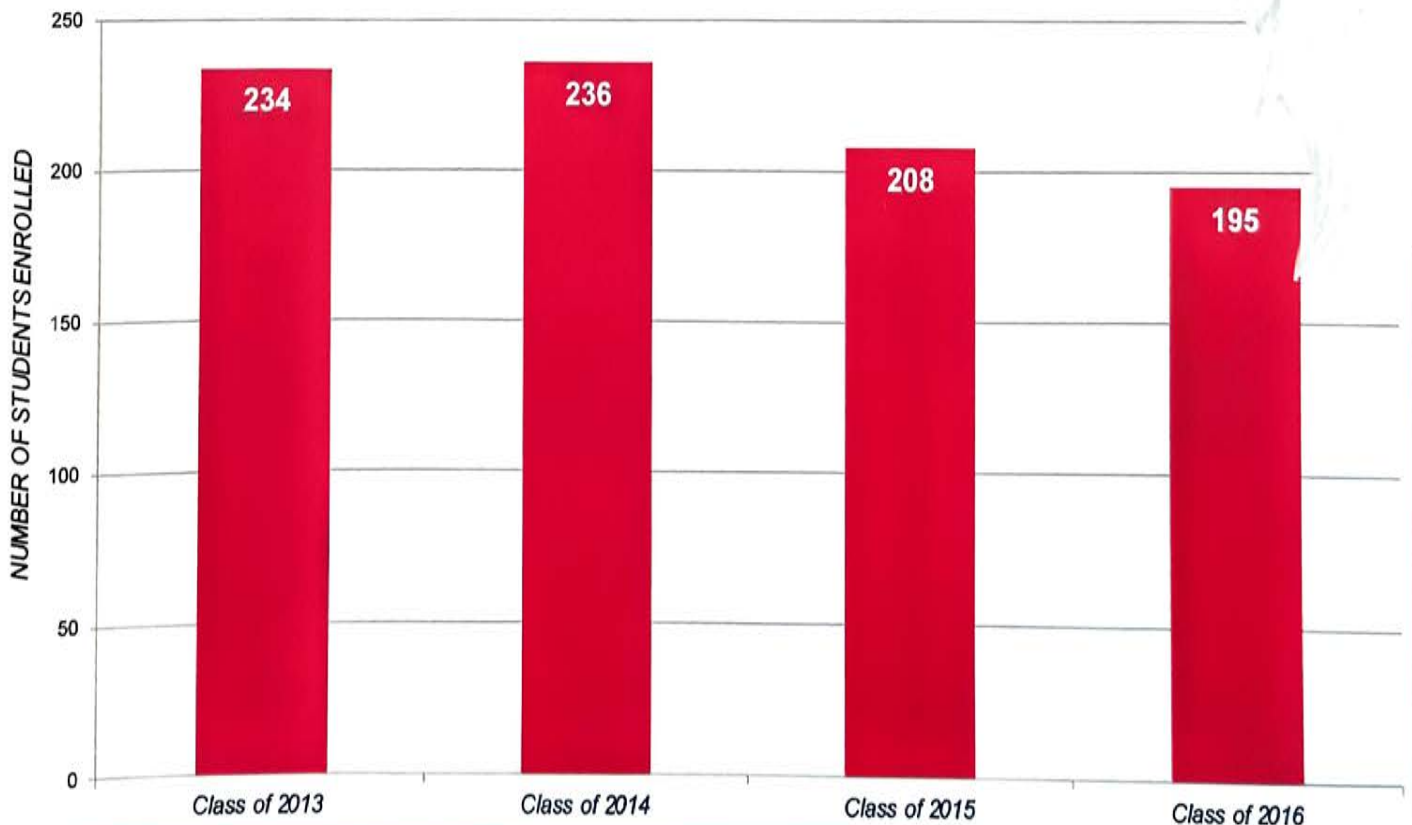
Mr. Vieira remains optimistic about the future of enrollment at Collegiate. He hopes people will be attracted to the new tuition

payment plan options (either pay in full, in half, or over a 10 month period) and the fact that Collegiate will not change just because the district is making some adjustments. He says that once all the uncertainty subsides and “once people realize we are not going anywhere, we are not changing, every-thing

will settle down.”



## FRESHMEN ENROLLMENT





# Welcome to the Party

BY ALEX MERRYMAN  
LAYOUT BY MICHAEL SORESENSEN

Every four years, America's leading political parties – the Democratic Party and the Republican Party – gather in a major city for four day long gathering of party faithful called a convention. At these conventions, party leaders compose a platform of beliefs that reflect opinions of the elite, rank and file and registered members of any given party.

The following chart is a summation of the planks of both the Democratic and Republican Party regarding the greatest political issues of today.

Those who side with the opinions on the left side of the chart the majority of the time typically find themselves members of the Democratic Party. Those who side with the views on the right side of the chart typically identify with the Republican Party.

However, few Americans identify with each and every belief of a given party. Polling suggests that a majority of Americans consider themselves moderate and hold a combination of views.



## ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

It was established to protect, provide for its citizens, and is also a fundamental right for government to assist its citizens.

It should defend its citizens, but people should provide for themselves and make their own decisions with little government involvement.

## ABORTION

Women should have the right to abortion as an option and make the decision themselves.

Life begins at conception, therefore abortion is murder; it should only be allowed under a few strict circumstances, if any.

## SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

Gays and lesbians should be allowed to get married and have the same civil rights as heterosexual couples.

Marriage is an institution that should only be between a man and woman.

## DEFENSE

America spends too much on defense; a smaller military would greatly reduce our debt. America's foreign policy is far too aggressive and intrusive.

Our military is what keeps us and our allies safe from enemies and terrorism. We must ensure it stays a top priority, and the dominant force in the world.

## SOCIAL PROGRAM SPENDING

These programs are a necessity and a right that all Americans should be entitled to. Government should protect these programs investments.

These programs are the primary source of the unsustainable national spending and debt. They should be reformed and guaranteed for the next generation.

## WELFARE

Welfare is a valuable social safety net that is a necessity for the thousands of Americans in poverty. They should be protected from any budgetary cuts.

These programs are grossly abused and a hindrance on the initiative of the American workforce. Work for welfare must be a requirement to receive benefits. Welfare is a hand up not a hand out.

## ENERGY

Renewable energy is the way of the future, and the best way to reduce our carbon-footprint and preserve the Earth.

We have abundant non-renewable resources that are cheap to produce, power our country, and provide jobs for many Americans.

## TAXES

The lower and middle class struggle to make ends meet while the wealthy live luxuriously, taxes should be raised on the rich to pay for programs for the poor.

The wealthy worked hard for the lives they enjoy today, do not take away what they earned and punish their success.

## GUN-CONTROL

The laws are too loose and shootings have become more and more frequent because of it. Guns must be made harder to obtain.

Defend 2nd Amendment rights. Owning a gun and protecting yourself is a right every law-abiding citizen should have.

## THE DEATH PENALTY


It is inhumane, impractical, and should be abolished in today's society.

Only those who have committed the most disgusting and senseless crimes are on death row, these people deserve what's coming to them after what they've committed.



# Poll: Seniors Want Four More

But, Students Who Are

 Registered to Vote Disagree

WRITTEN & DESIGNED BY MICHAEL SORENSEN

In late September, *The Pride* conducted a survey of the senior class regarding the upcoming Presidential Election between Democrat, President Barack Obama and Republican, Mitt Romney. *The Pride* chose to survey exclusively the class of 2013 considering that a portion of the class is of voting age.

The result of the poll sponsored by *The Pride* indicates some good news for Obama's re-election effort. Of all results tallied, Obama is the preferred candidate of 67 percent of the senior class. Obama's Republican challenger, Mitt Romney, is the preferred candidate of only 19 percent of class of 2013.

*The Pride* poll also found that 14 percent of Collegiate Academy seniors indicated that they do not care who the next president is.

The senior class' indifferent reaction to this year's election is representative of a nation-wide trend. *PBS News* reports that, on

average, less than 25 percent of voters, age's 18 - 24 vote in presidential elections. Pollsters attribute the lack of participation to voter apathy, which runs in high numbers with younger Americans.

The results of the poll, when broken down to un-registered voters and registered voters, show strong support for President Obama and some good news for Mitt Romney.

Of un-registered voters, Obama wins handily with the support of 70 percent of seniors. Romney tied for second place with the 'I do not care' option - both receiving the backing of 15 percent of the senior class.

However, not all poll results for Romney are dire. *The Pride* poll indicates that among Collegiate Academy seniors, who are actually registered to vote and plan on voting on Nov. 6, 68 percent will vote for Romney, whereas only 32 percent will be casting their vote for Obama.

Interestingly enough, of the seniors who claimed that they are of voting age but not registered, indicated support for Obama.

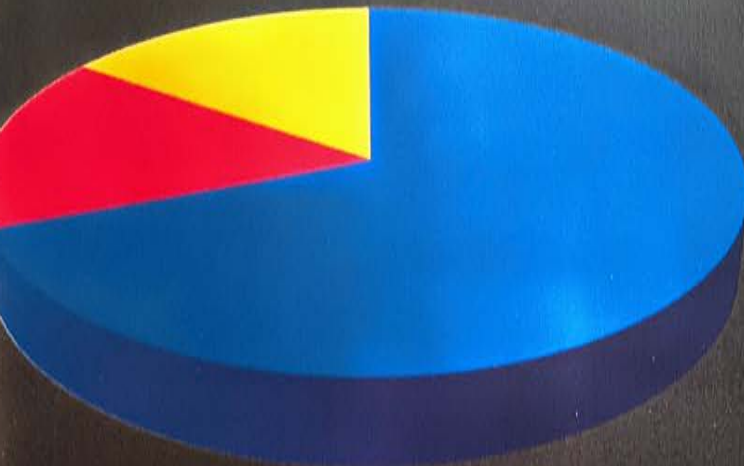
This result highlights yet another nation-wide trend. The so-called intensity gap between Republicans and Democrats will be a key factor in November's election.

Collegiate Academy seniors, who will be voting for Mitt Romney, indicate much more conviction and enthusiasm in casting their vote this year, when compared to students supporting Obama.

Some members of the class of 2013 are not very pleased with this cycle's field of candidates. A few independent students have turned to the Collegiate Academy faculty to put America back on the path to prosperity. Mr. Lasher received the backing of three percent of seniors. Also, Mrs. Petri is the preference of two percent of the senior class.



**SENIORS, WHO ARE NOT REGISTERED TO VOTE:**  
**IF YOU COULD VOTE IN THE UPCOMING ELECTION, WHO WOULD YOU VOTE FOR?**



**70%**  
BARACK OBAMA (D)



**15%**  
MITT ROMNEY (R)



**15%**  
I DO NOT CARE

**SENIORS, WHO ARE REGISTERED TO VOTE:**  
**WHO DO YOU PLAN ON VOTING FOR IN THE UPCOMING ELECTION?**



**68%**  
MITT ROMNEY (R)



**32%**  
BARACK OBAMA (D)





WE CAN'T AFFORD  
FOUR  
MORE  
YEARS



PAID FOR OR AUTHORIZED BY EITHER CANDIDATE'S COMMITTEE

#CANTAFFORD4MORE

#ROMNEYRYAN2012

#OBAMA2012 #FORWARD2012

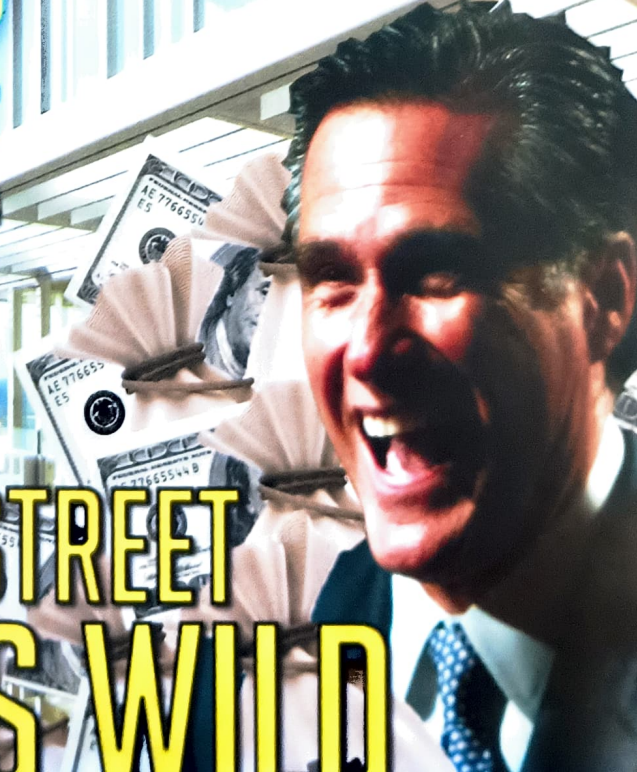
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**MITT ROMNEY:**

TOUGH ON SESAME  
STREET



WHILE  
WALL STREET  
RUNS WILD





# SMELLS LIKE GREEN SPIRIT

BY ALEX MERRYMAN  
LAYOUT BY ISABELLE VIEIRA

Every year, Green Team, one of Collegiate Academy's many clubs, contributes to saving the world from environmental devastation, and is one of the most influential student groups in the school and district.

In past years, Green Team encouraged Collegiate Academy to make small changes in its daily routine making a large impact on cutting down energy consumption. Last year, Senior Haley Monahan made big contributions to the schools recycling program.

"I was a part of the re-awakening of recycling in the school district," says Monahan. For years, the recycling bins were available, however they were not being used properly.

This year will be no different; advanced placement environmental science teacher and Green Team adviser Mrs. Petri is very excited: "This school season we have about 30 members, well more than ever before."

This year, Green Team will be working on a school garden, creating a water usage project, purchasing green-cleaning products, and once again raising recycling-awareness.

Mrs. Petri says, "I think I am most excited for this year's school garden because it is a project I have never done before." The school garden is located next to the school stadium, outside the door next to the girls' locker room.

"We are bringing a designer in from Pittsburgh to help us utilize our space and make it look as nice as possible. It will be a wonderful blend of science, architecture, and art," says Petri.

On Sept. 26, Collegiate Academy hosted the kickoff of the Green Ribbon Schools program. Green Ribbon Schools Program is a national program that recognizes high-performing schools in not just energy-efficiency, but also the health of the building and students. The program also measures environmental literacy, to see if classes outside of the science department are incorporating environmental awareness into their programs.

"It was an honor to have the Pennsylvania campaign kick-off at Collegiate Academy. It gives the Erie School District a great connection with the Department of Education," Petri says.

United States Green Building Council Center for Green Schools Fellow Bob Kobet is very impressed with the Green Team's enthusiasm for environmental awareness.

"It may sound cliché, but it truly gives me hope to see students take an initiative upon themselves and take time out of their schedules to do something purely because they want to be there, and they want to make a difference," Kobet announced to the crowd at the Green Ribbon Schools Program kick-off.

The road to environmental sustainability in the world has become one of the most pressing issues of the Twenty-first Century, and Green Team members declare that it does not take an environmental scientist to solve these issues. Green Team urges everyday citizens who only need to make a few green adjustments in their everyday habits to aid in their efforts.



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# NPCA Volunteers Are All About Heart

BY ALYSSA NARRING,  
LAYOUT BY ISABELLE VIEIRA

As the school year progresses students hear more about upcoming football games, academic competitions and class ranks. Though, what students hear less about is the impact Collegiate students make on the community. According to The Corporation of National Community Service, an estimated 15.5 million students volunteer each year.

The CNCS says that students who volunteer on a regular basis are more likely to perform better in school because they are better at organizing their schedule and keeping their priorities straight.

Junior Hope Blackford says, "I love volunteering. There is so much that we can learn from the experiences. The most rewarding part of volunteering is the fact that I know what it's for, it's not for my own self-gain it is for the interests of others and they are usually so loving and thankful."

The CNCS reports, the typical student who volunteers regularly contributes around 29 hours per year, whether it may be at school, a religious organization

or a non-profit organization.

Ms. Wiley says the average student who volunteers will normally log over 40 hours per year. Over 150 students acquire a half a credit, requiring 60 hours of volunteering service, or a full credit.

The National Honors Society plays a large role in offering members many volunteer opportunities. NHS is an organization of junior and senior students who meets monthly and maintains community service project work throughout the year.

Senior and Vice President of NHS Nikitha Menon says, "What I love about NHS is its overall ambition. The four pillars of NHS, scholarship, leadership, service and character, are qualities that motivated students, like ourselves, should be striving to acquire every day. NHS also opens doors for students in terms of volunteering and networking in their community."

During the 2011-2012 school year, Ms. Holmes says that NHS inducted about 70 juniors into the organization.

In addition to those who volunteer on their own and through NHS, Collegiate has its own Community of Caring Club, which organizes events like the annual blood drive and food collections.

Because Collegiate Academy is a college preparatory school, students are aware that they need to have variety to make their applications stand out against the rest. Volunteer hours add diversity to an application so it is noticed.

Junior Samantha Pytlarz says, "I know a lot of students who volunteer hoping that their commitment will look good on college applications."

According to dosomething.org, 70 percent of admission offices surveyed admitted when it comes to volunteering they are looking for consistency rather than traveling around the world to solve world hunger. They realize both are important but know that the consistent student makes more of an impact.

If students are looking for an organization to volunteer at, there are plenty of foundations looking for an extra hand. Ms. Holmes suggests trying the Erie Art Museum, The Barber Institute, Zoo Boo, nearby hospitals and St. Mary's Homes.

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# Collegiate Students attend Summer College Classes *Across the Country*

BY ABIGAIL HALLMARK,  
LAYOUT BY STEPHANIE PECK

Throughout the school year, most students' lives are centered on school and extracurricular activities. Whether teens are studying for an exam, working on homework or perfecting a project, the months of September through early June are crammed with stress.

When the last day of school arrives, it is time for summer relaxation and fun, right?

Not always.

To gain knowledge and earn college credits, more and more students in ninth through 12<sup>th</sup> grade are now utilizing their summers to take extra courses in pre-college summer programs. Brown University's web site, [Brown.edu](http://Brown.edu), states, "Pre-College Summer at Brown is about challenge, discovery and new friends. Each summer, talented high school students from around the world come to Brown to prepare for college success, and experience life as a student on an Ivy League campus."

Many Collegiate Academy students have attended universities during their summer vacation at local and nationwide colleges. Senior Class President Jay Rathinavelu attended a few summer programs throughout his high school years. During the summer before his junior year, he attended a pre-summer program at The University



of Pittsburgh.

Rathinavelu says, "I feel much more prepared for college now

**"I feel much more prepared for college now because my program forced me to be self reliant and independent. I lived in a dorm, ate the dining halls and went to lecture classes for about a month, just as a normal college student would, and it widened my perspective on what it is really like."**

because my program forced me to be self reliant and independent. I lived in a dorm, ate the dining halls and went to lecture classes for about a month, just as a normal college student would, and it widened my perspective on what it is really like."

Many programs are different in their course options, price ranges

**"I had a lot of fun during my time at Stanford. I met kids from across the globe, including Spain, Italy, Japan, Africa, El Salvador and all over the United States. I even took ballroom dancing lessons and went to a black out dance in my dorm."**

and locations. Subject areas at Georgetown University's summer program range from medicine, law, science, politics, business, and art and humanities. Yet, no matter the university or program, one variable remains the same: teens are voluntarily making the sacrifice to spend their time in a classroom rather than at the beach.

Senior Daschinique Johnson enrolled in a sociology course at

Penn State Behrend last summer. Johnson felt she made the right decision because she received three college credits and a free first year admission to



Penn State Behrend. Johnson explains, "The only thing I really missed out on over the summer was not being able to sleep in for six weeks."

Pre-college programs are an excellent way to ease into the college and university atmosphere. Yet, the experience is not all about the schoolwork or earning college credits; students have the ability to make memories and friends that will last for the rest of their lives.

Senior Aaron Lobb traveled to California for his summer program at Stanford University. Lobb says, "I had a lot of fun during my time at Stanford. I met kids from across the globe, including Spain, Italy, Japan, Africa, El Salvador and all over the United States. I even took ballroom dancing lessons and went to a black out dance in my dorm."

Though summers in the past consisted of relaxation and having fun with friends, the current generation of students' summers are evolving into something much more meaningful. Lobb says, "Even though I was intimidated by taking classes with undergraduates... I would not have traded my summer for anything."



# PURA VIDA!



*Collegiate Travelers  
Explore the World*

BY MAGGIE TARASOVITCH,  
LAYOUT BY CHRIS LILLY



The view from the windshield of the bus is nothing but a clear black, nighttime sky. The bus stops and starts, stops and starts, lurching forward up the seemingly endless mountain, one little inch at a time. The tires whine and screech, shaking the entire bus as it dips into pot holes and jumps over hills.

The passenger's backs are glued to the seats by gravity, almost at a 90 degree angle to the ground. Hands clench tight around the arm rests. Eyes squeeze shut. Students and teachers whisper prayers as the tour guide simply smiles and enjoys the ride.

With one final push of the pedal, the bus driver thrusts the

bus to the top of the mountain.

Finally opening their eyes, passengers look out the window to see the lights of San Jose illuminating the darkness. A chorus of gasps is followed quickly by students cheering, jumping, laughing, and whooping, thanking the bus driver for his hard work. The near-death experience is over shadowed by an unimaginable and unforgettable view.

This is only one of the hundreds of stories that Collegiate Academy students had this year. Collegiate had its summer itinerary full with infinite places to visit and countless activities to experience.

While, sophomore Alex Zielinski cruised in Alaska, junior Elaine Khodzhan bungee jumped in Las Vegas and senior Morgane Lemire explored the Philippines.

At the same time, senior Aaron Lobb spent eight full weeks at Stanford University in California participating in a summer program. Lobb describes the time that he spent in California as unforgettable.

Lobb says that although he expected the program to be completely focused on academics. "It turned out to be a great experience beyond the classroom. Living in a dorm is an unforgettable experience ... It is ex-

tremely fun. My favorite part was probably meeting people and now having friends around the country and world."

Senior Jay Rathinavelu also did some traveling this summer. Visiting Chicago, Purdue University in Indiana and Michigan, Rathinavelu explored his many post-graduation options. Despite the pressure of college admissions, he also managed to have some relaxing time.

Rathinavelu says, "[Washington] D.C. was awesome. We visited all the main sites, like the White House and the International Spy Museum. It was all very cool."

Rathinavelu also made time for family. He, his parents, and sister went to Toronto, Canada for a family wedding.

He says, "Indian weddings are very, very elaborate, but this one was a little less boisterous."

While in the city, he noticed the diversity in the population and the different types of housing. The most noticeable difference, according to Rathinavelu, is the way people communicate. He says that Toronto and its people "have a very strong sense of community."

Senior Taylor Foster also spent some time visiting her family in New Orleans, which she thoroughly enjoyed, but she also



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had the opportunity to culture herself.

"We went on a ferry, walked through the French Quarter, went shopping, got Beignets, a traditional French dessert ... It was a really fun time. I loved experiencing a new place with a new culture."

While all of these students and many others had the opportunity to travel on their own, the Collegiate Academy Travel Club offered students the chance to travel as well. Six staff members and 37 students hiked around the entire country of Costa Rica.

Senior Mary Petro says, "We covered just about the entire country from visiting the capital to the Arenal Region and the mountains and the Pacific Ocean. Everything was absolutely amazing and surreal."

The group zip-lined, white water rafted, hiked, visited a waterfall, walked around

the capitol city, visited a local school, explored the forests,

swam in the ocean

and survived the bus rides up and down Costa Rican mountains.

Junior Danielle Lee says her favorite part was zip lining through a Costa Rican forest.

Petro says, "I honestly think I loved everything about the trip. I really loved all of the sightseeing because I know that everything we saw we will

probably never see again. Everything was just so beautiful."

Although experiencing the culture and exploring a different country was an unforgettable experience, students were also able to get closer to their fellow classmates.

Senior Zach Binder says, "I liked Costa Rica because I liked the people I was with. My favorite part was the night that we put a frog in Christina [Lachica]'s room... It was so funny."

Senior Erik Chernicky agrees that bonding was a great part of the trip: "Travel club is a wonderful opportunity for Collegiate Academy students to experience others cultures and environments while making new friends."

Mrs. Pohl, Spanish teacher, travel extraordinaire and chaperon of the Costa Rica trip, says that the country was gorgeous. She enjoyed walking

through the cloud forest and swimming by a waterfall.

"Costa Rica was a place where students and teachers were able to lose themselves," she says.

"So many things were dreams come true."

These great adventures left students with incom-

parable experiences.

Each and every person interviewed said that traveling has opened their mind to new experiences and different cultures. Each of them recommends to future travelers to keep an open mind while exploring the country or the world.

"International travel teaches us tolerance and humility," says Mrs. Pohl. "We realize that we are just a small part. We are just one country in a kaleidoscope of countries."

Rathinavelu explains that, as a student, traveling has opened his mind to different ideas.

"We are constantly worrying about grade point averages and class ranks and what people think of us, but [when we travel], we see things in a different light. It puts things into perspective. You learn so much," he says.

Learning is a major aspect of traveling. Mrs. Pohl explains that text books are very one dimensional. Traveling enables students to actually live the culture, language and history; it sparks a yearning to learn more within the student.

As Mrs. Pohl says, "You need to let go of being scared. You need to seize the moment. You need to Nike, Just Do It. You need to YOLO!"

1. Morgane Lemire
2. Alex Zielinski
3. Aaron Lobb
4. Elaine Khodzhaeva (left)

5. NPCA Tavel Club

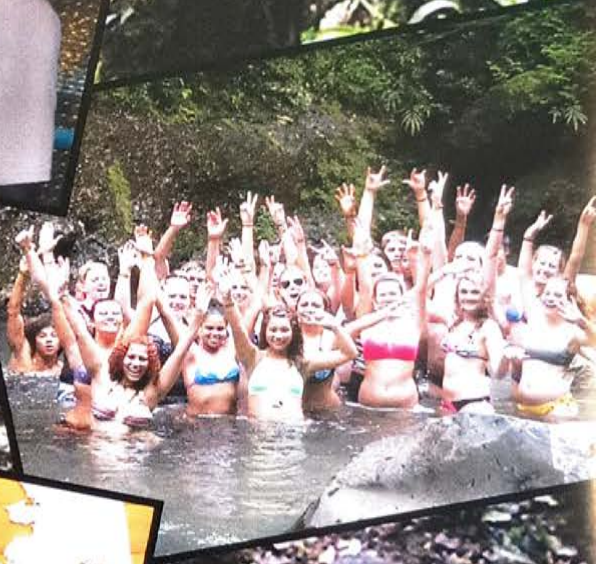
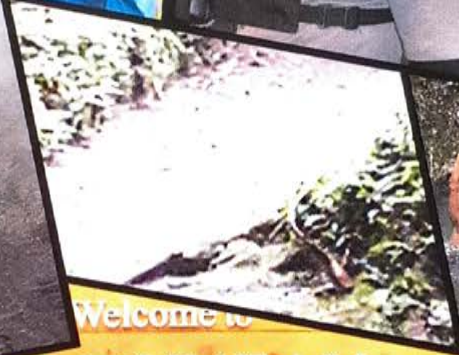
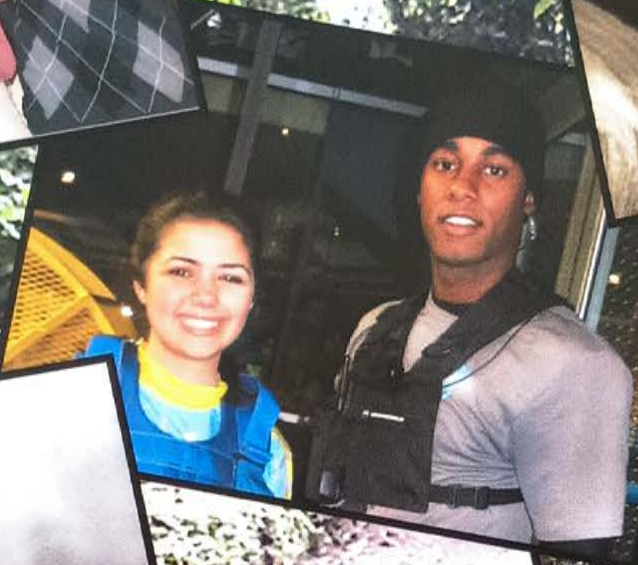
6. Taylor Foster

7. Jay Rathinavelu

**FEATURED STUDENT**











# Students Select the Over Selective

BY ANNE McMASTER,  
LAYOUT BY KATY HUFF

On average, Harvard College receives 34,950 applications per year. However, according to the College Board, Harvard only admits 6 percent of applicants. In fact, the College Board says that most universities with an acceptance

rate of 50 percent or lower are considered to be very selective.

This poses a serious question: why do students apply to schools that they know are selective and out of their reach?

When going through the college application process, many high school seniors apply to schools



["When it comes to applying to colleges, you will never know if you do not try."]

that they do not think they have even the slightest chance being accepted to. Since they are essentially setting themselves up for possible disappointment, doing this may seem pointless. However, for a lot of students, it is the challenge of applying to a selective college that makes it so compelling.

Although the outcome may not be what a perspective college student may want, applying to a selective school has positive effects regardless of the university's decision; if a student is denied from their reach school, they would most certainly be disappointed, but at least they would not be haunted by the idea of what might have happened if a selective college would have accepted them.

Collegiate senior Hannah Gilman says, "I think it is important to apply to a reach school because the challenge makes you want it more, especially if it's a school you love. It is scary, but you never know what the outcome may be, and I know I would hate to always wonder 'what if.'"

Nevertheless, applying to a reach school is something that should only be done in scarcity.

Applying to realistic colleges and universities is far more imperative. This is where students need to be able to recognize their own skills, limits and where they stand in the eye of universities. It is certainly important for students to apply themselves and go above and beyond, but it is also equally important to be realistic when it comes to matters this substantial.

Collegiate Spanish Teacher, Mrs. Pohl, says, "I do numerous college recommendations around this time of year and in the past, I have had some students apply to only reach schools and were denied from them all, leaving them with no place to go. I think it is important for students to set high goals for themselves and apply to few reach schools, but it is equally important to have security in matters so serious."

Extraordinarily selective colleges and universities are still in the realm of possibility

for many high school students. However, to most schools with an acceptance rate of 50 percent or lower are a far stretch when it comes to acceptance. Even if this is the case, applying to a selective school is a risk most certainly worth taking. It is more beneficial for a college to deny a hopeful student than for the student to always wonder what if.

Gilman says, "When it comes to applying to colleges, you will never know if you do not try."

## Selected Statements

- **"I believe that you should apply to a reach school because, if you don't, you would always wonder "Could I have gotten in?" and who needs to go through life thinking that?" –Ms. King**
- **Out of the eight Ivy League colleges and universities, the average acceptance rate is 9.75 percent of applicants admitted. –The College Board**
- **"...with a well rounded scholastic career which includes extracurricular, volunteer and work experiences it shows that you can handle the rigors of a highly selective school." – Ms. King**



# Peanut Butter & Jelly

## With a Scoop of Discrimination?

BY ALEXA SNARSKI

LAYOUT BY ISABELLE VIEIRA

Throughout its history, America has tried to attain the goal of total equality. Recently, the government has introduced new legislature to eliminate any remaining discrimination. However, as congress passes these new laws, many wonder how far is too far.

A recent law in Rhode Island prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation, HIV status, and gender identity or expression. Last week, Cranston High School in Rhode Island banned father-daughter dances and mother-son baseball games because they appear to violate this law.

The Associated Press reported that a single-mother called the school to complain after her daughter was unable to attend the dance because she had no father in her life. She said school dances should include everyone and that it was unfair to the girl. While this argument may sound justified, many wondered why the girl did not just take another father figure, such as an uncle, or why everyone should be affected by someone else's unfortunate circumstance.

Junior Katie Wehrer, who has both parents present in her life, says she understands why the girl was upset; school functions

should include everyone, but that tradition is important too. Wehrer says, "Tradition is important. While I think equality is also important, it does not have to go to such extreme measures."

Collegiate Associate Dean Mr. Vieira adds, "It is a person's choice to attend the dances. We are not trying to exclude anyone. We follow district and school policy, but sometimes it is the wording that you have to be careful of."

On the opposing side, junior Sandra Rabat says, "I think it is good that they are trying to include her. I understand how

and racist because students of other nationalities might not eat them.

Gutierrez brought up this point when giving an interview about the school's new equity program, "Courageous Conversation," which teaches educators about their "white privilege." Gutierrez says, "Another way would be to say: 'Americans eat peanut butter and jelly, do you have anything like that?' Let them tell you. Maybe they eat torta or pita. What about Somali or Hispanic students, who might not eat sandwiches?"

Issues such as these bring to question the sensitivity of American society, a society that author Ray Bradbury predicted could become even more sensitive in his book Fahrenheit 451. This book foretells drastic actions like book burning and censored television, which are meant to prevent any type of discrimination.

Mr. Sheldon, sociology teacher at Collegiate, says acts like these are petty. "There are people out there who will fight everything. While in some cases it is appropriate, in others people are just overly sensitive. It is whoever complains the loudest."

**"IT IS WHOEVER  
COMPLAINS THE  
LOUDEST"**

upsetting it may be to not be able to go because my own father passed away."

Harvey Scott School in Portland, Ore. is attempting to eliminate discrimination by banning peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. According to The Inquisitor, Principal of Harvey Scott, Verence Gutierrez, is calling peanut butter and jelly sandwiches an act of intolerance



# Congress Wants Calories to Talk, but Will We Listen?

A new federal law will soon require chain restaurants and vending machines with 20 or more locations to have nutritional labels prominently placed for customers to see. This new law is part of Section 4205 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act more commonly known as "Obamacare." President Barack Obama signed the bill into law on Mar. 23, 2010.

This part of the health care reform legislation mandates chain restaurants and vending machines, regardless of if they are franchised or held in separate subsidiaries, to have the calories of their foods on their menus and other nutritional values on display.

The overall goal of the reform is to educate people about the

nutrition facts, specifically calories, and assist them in making healthier food choices in order to combat obesity.

Wellness Fitness teacher Ms. Wiley believes that this will help people become more aware of what they put in their bodies; she says, "They may not stop eating at restaurants and fast food establishments such as McDonalds, but they will be more likely to go less often, eat smaller portions or make substitutions in their meals."

However, studies show, not all Americans will choose to change their eating habits with this new knowledge.

In 2008, New York City Council passed a similar provision that required fast food establishments to have their calories on display for their customers. The Division

of General Internal Medicine at the New York University School of Medicine conducted a study to test the effects of the new calorie display provisions, observing McDonalds, Burger King, Wendy's and Kentucky Fried Chicken.

The study measured the effect of adding calories to the menus verses not having the calories on the menu to see if children or adolescents and their parents would change their calorie consumption. The results showed that there was no statistically

BY IMARII ANDERSON  
LAYOUT BY MADELINE CIESIELSKI

significant change in calorie consumption among teens, nor did parents purchase their children lower calorie meals. For example 57 percent of teens in the study noticed the label, however only 9 percent considered the labeling when ordering.

Ms. Wiley does not believe the new laws will stop obesity, but that it is still beneficial for consumers to know, she says, "When it comes to obesity, you're talking about life-style choices. It's a choice to be active and live right."

As one might expect, students have differing views.

Freshmen Alva Ali says, "I will probably eat the same because I don't really care about calories."

In contrast, Sophomore Emily Mogel says she is less likely to eat high calorie foods, "It is shocking how many calories are in foods that I did not originally think were bad."

In the end, Ms. Wiley says it is all a matter of choice. People will either choose to become more educated and conscious about what they are putting in their bodies or eat the meals because of enjoyment and convenience.

*We can't hide what's in our heart.*

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# THERE AIN'T NO SUCH THING AS A FREE LUNCH

BY DAKOTA PALMER, LAYOUT BY MADELINE CIESIELSKI

Many upperclassmen remember the days when their lunches consisted of: a main entree, a dessert, milk or juice, and some form of potato, the most popular being tater tots. Due to high poverty levels in the City of Erie, the Erie School District qualifies for Provision II, an act that allows students to receive both breakfast and lunch at no

cost. But, of course, there is no such thing as a free lunch. As many of the students have noticed, there have been a lot of changes to the lunches this year. According to Cafeteria Manager Geneva Weber, the government guidelines require that cafeterias serve more vegetables, even though cold vegetables have always been a component of the Collegiate Academy lunch. Weber also says, "We now have to count components. A

piece of pizza is worth two items and a sandwich is also two items. This means the crust is one item on the pizza and the meat and cheese is also one." The same applies to deli sandwiches. However, the changes are not limited to considering a slice of pizza two items. Many of the students, as well as some teachers, are thoroughly disappointed by the exclusion of tater tots, soup and cake. Although tater tots occasionally make an appearance for 75 cents a serving, most students do not feel they are worth the money.

S o c i a l  
s t u d i e s

teacher Mr. Lasher says he used to buy lunch frequently at school, but has since gotten fewer school lunches because of the removal of soup.

Collegiate Academy Dean, Dr. Smith says, "Soup is no longer available because of the high fat content. Potatoes do not automatically come with food and that is because of the high fat content as well. I am disappointed. I loved the soup, but there are a lot of healthier, gourmet, fresh baked items available."

Senior Evan Lobaugh says, "The changes are honestly annoying. If they really wanted to change the school lunches

up, they should have gotten rid of pizza or they should not serve us chicken nuggets every day." Lobaugh also thinks lunches from previous years are better than the current ones served.

Sophomore Dan Liszka disagrees, saying this year's lunches are just as good, just with fewer choices.

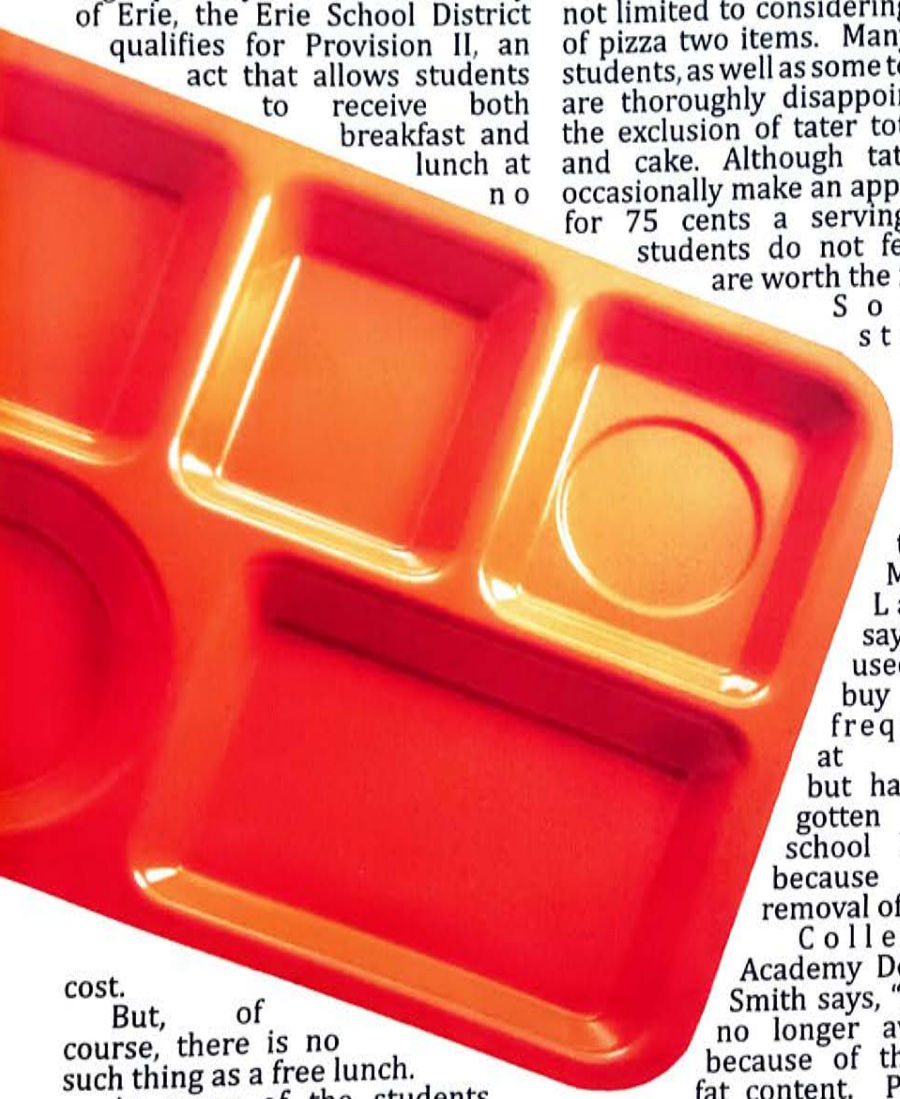
Junior Andrew Hagmaier also disagrees with Lobaugh, saying, "I enjoy the new choices at lunch. The buffalo chicken on flatbread and the Stromboli are good and I like them more than last year's choices; I just don't find them as filling as they used to be."

Larry Kocot, leader of the Partnership for a Healthier America says, "Since 1980, the number of obese children in our nation has tripled, and obesity now rivals smoking as the largest cause of preventable death and disease."

First Lady Michelle Obama is the Honorary Chair of the PHA, as well as a leading factor in why schools now serve healthier foods. The goal of the PHA is to help the nation's youth become healthier through changing their everyday food choices as well as encouraging them to engage in physical activity.

Mrs. Obama states, "We can make a commitment to promote vegetables and fruits and whole grains on every part of every menu. We can make portion sizes smaller and emphasize quality over quantity. And we can help create a culture--imagine this--where our kids ask for healthy options instead of resisting them."

Weber reminds us that a lot of the changes are "Mrs. Obama wanting change for a healthier lifestyle," and encourages all students to try some of the new entrees.





# Bookin' Through the Summer

BY COLLEEN CAMPBELL,  
LAYOUT BY KATY HUFF

Collegiate Academy, along with many other high schools, requires students to complete reading assignments over the summer. Although the work is familiar to upperclassmen, it might seem intimidating to incoming freshmen.

This year, language arts teachers required incoming freshmen to read *The Book Thief* by Mark Zusak, annotate as they read, answer questions about the book and write an essay. Many students completed the assignment sometime in the middle of August, while others waited until the day before the work was due on their first day of class.

According to language arts teacher Mrs. Ditrich, *The Book Thief* was chosen because of its perspectives. She says, "It had a different narrator. It was told from the view of death and it showed a young German girl's viewpoint during World War II." She also said it was a popular book, and it might be something that teens would read on their own.

Ms. Balsiger says the assignment was for incoming freshmen to "hopefully gain an understanding of the type of work at Collegiate." She says that her expectations were for the students to read the book and complete the assignment to the best of their ability.

In order to help her students complete the assignment accurately, Ms. Balsiger attended one of the two help sessions for students at Barnes and Nobles this past summer. She says at these sessions she recalls assisting about 20 students who came for help.

According to a Collegiate Academy freshman, Amera Rose, the assignment made her nervous about the workload at Collegiate.

Rose's classmate, Sydney Seabrooke says, "The assignment made me worry because it counted for a lot of my grade."

Summer reading assignments are counted as a significant portion of first quarter grades for Collegiate Academy students. Although none of the freshmen interviewed said the assignment was stressful, Audrey Schreckengost says, "It was too long." She admits that she feels the work was a waste of her summer free time.

However, all feedback was not negative. For instance, some students said that they enjoyed

reading the book. In fact, Susan Dunsworth said, "I loved the book. The assignment kept me busy." Dunsworth said the assignment did not make her anxious because she had witnessed the work load at Collegiate Academy from her older siblings senior Maria, Josh '12 and Anna '09.

Summer reading assignments allow incoming freshmen to become more aware of the demanding nature of Collegiate Academy. When compared to other local high schools' assignments, Collegiate Academy requires much more extensive work.

For example, at Mercyhurst Prep, incoming freshmen may choose three books to read from a list of twelve. There are no assignments to complete along with the reading. Students are only required to have a parent sign a paper confirming that their child completing the required reading.

A current Mercyhurst Prep freshman states, "I was okay with it. I was not really looking forward to it, but I knew ahead of time that it had to be done." Because this freshman knew ahead of time about the assignment, she did not regret applying to Mercyhurst Prep. She was still able to find time for fun over the summer.

Mrs. Ditrich says that Collegiate Academy freshmen are not permitted to choose which book they read "because they need to get acclimated with what is expected at the school."

Some local high school students were not required to balance summer work and free time. For Villa Maria Academy students, summer reading assignments are no longer a requirement for any language arts course work, with the exception of Advanced Placement courses.

Even though summer reading assignments are not exactly loved by everyone at Collegiate Academy, some teachers and students argue that they are a significant part of who we are. Anvar Bidzinov says, "Collegiate is not like any other school. Not many teens want to take precious time out of their summer to do school work; but at this school, you are trained to have that extra motivation."

As a word of advice for future Collegiate Academy freshmen, a current junior, Amber Matha, says, "Get the reading done somewhat early so that you have plenty of time to do the assignment."



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# Don't Judge This Article by It's Title

BY EMMA VERDECCHIA,  
LAYOUT BY KELSEY FATICA

Imagine it is the first day of school and there is a new student in class. Everyone sees the new person and their mind starts flying with thoughts about them that might include things about how the person looks, what they happen to be wearing or even how they sound.

Stereotyping, or judging someone, no matter how much some hate to admit it, usually comes naturally to people. There is always that first impression that people have of others which tends to affect how they treat them.

Sociology teacher Mr. Sheldon and Advanced Placement Psychology teacher Mr. Taylor both believe that everyone stereotypes people.

Mr. Taylor says, "I believe that most people judge others before they get to know them because of prior experience and prior knowledge. Generalizing and putting people into categories is what everyone does. Our brains are wired to categorize and we base things on certain attributes; we are born to stereotype."

Mr. Sheldon agrees with Mr. Taylor, but also believes that there are other factors as to why humans are judgmental.

Mr. Sheldon says, "People have usually been taught to do it [stereotyping people] and it is easier to criticize things you do not know about."

Stereotyping has many effects on the people involved. In children, bullying is a common result of stereotyping. Stereotyping often leads to hurt feelings from those being stereotyped, and feelings of superiority of the ones stereotyping.

Mr. Taylor says, "For someone who is doing the stereotyping I think it simplifies things for them. However, I think that it causes limitations for the ones being stereotyped. It puts lim-ita-





tions on their lives, and continuous stereotyping just reinforces the limitations."

When people think about it, they rarely see stereotyping as bad.

Mr. Sheldon says, "Everyone stereotypes so they think it is okay, but it is still criticizing individuals and predetermining judgment."

There are also behavioral consequences to stereotyping people.

Mr. Taylor says, "The behavioral consequence for someone who does the stereotyping is that it makes their decisions easier, and they do not have to think things through with people. The behavioral consequence for the person being judged is that it makes them fight harder against the stereotype to prove people wrong. It may even bring people together [the people being stereotyped will realize they are not alone]."

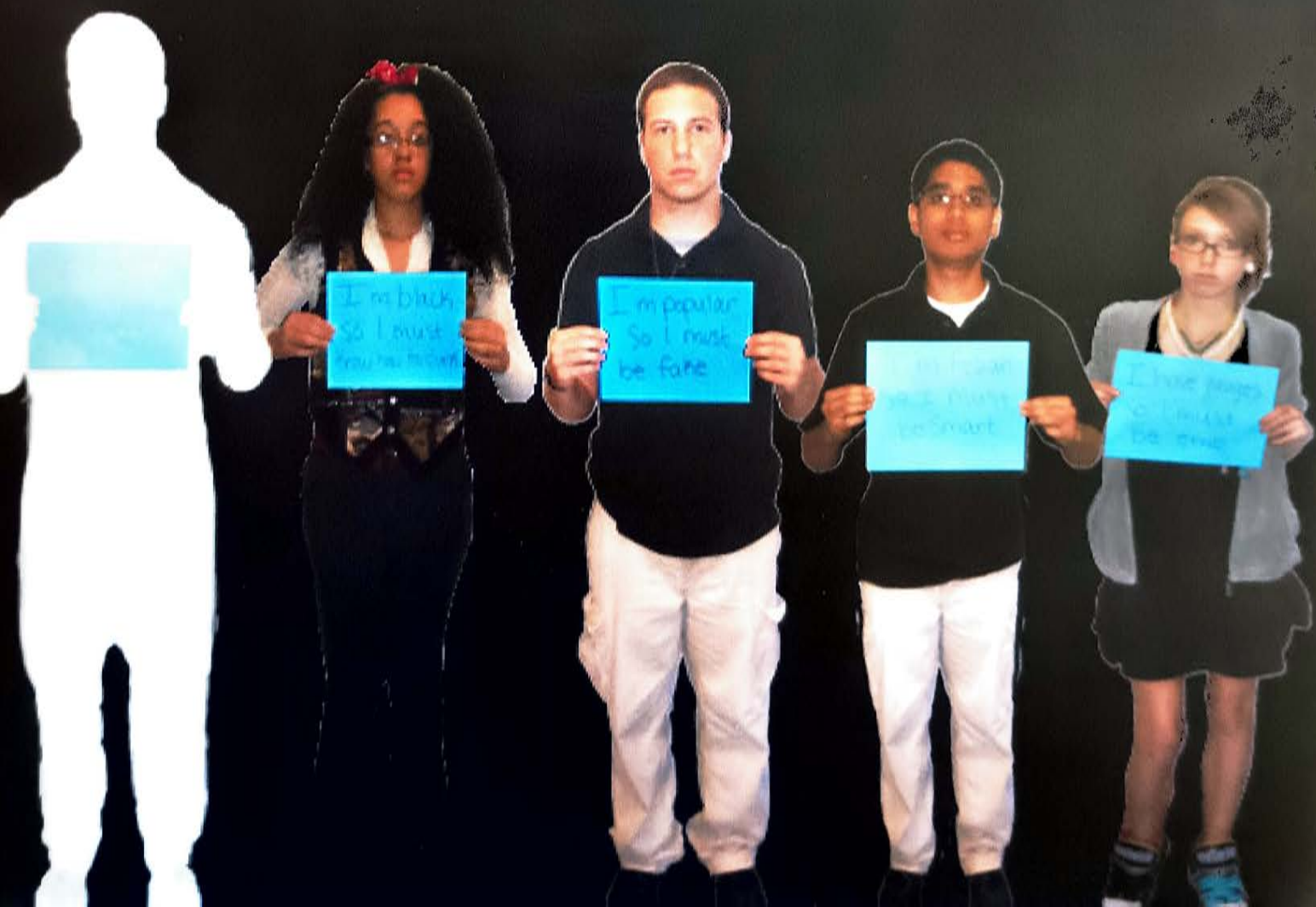
As Mr. Taylor said before, there is a part of our brain that causes people to stereotype others. He says, "There is a biological part of our brain that categorizes useful things to us for survival. For a complex society we begin to categorize dangers

and we start to apply them to people. This is part of our nature."

Stereotyping not only has behavioral consequences for humans, but it also affects the world culturally and socially.

Mr. Sheldon says, "Stereotyping affects us culturally because we use it to recognize shared experience, and we do need to recognize shared experiences to survive. We, as people who stereotype, are missing out on benefits because of a prior conception. I see it this way, there are two reasons we shouldn't stereotype; it's plain stupid because we are generalizing, and it is ignorant because we do not know any better. I think it is the same way socially too, we need it to recognize shared experiences, but people might be passed up for a job or neglected because of stereotyping. It is extremely harmful to everyone."

In the end, as part of human nature, it is hard to stop stereotyping and judging based on first impressions, however, people need to learn to think before they speak and realize that words hurt.





# Entitlements Drain Our Treasury & Morals

BY LEAH BABINS,  
LAYOUT BY KELSEY FATICA & ISABELLE VIEIRA

When Thomas Jefferson wrote the *Declaration of Independence* he wrote that the founding fathers' believed that every American deserves the freedoms of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. However, citizens are now questioning whether or not those freedoms include the right to health care and other government assistance.

As the United States' debt surpasses 16 trillion dollars, the government is pouring the majority of spending into entitlements. The Bureau of Economic Analysis noted that the government spent nearly 2.3 trillion dollars on social benefits in 2011. Legislators sort entitlement programs into three main groups – income maintenance and Medicaid for the poor, unemployment insurance for the unemployed, and Medicare and social security for the elderly.

Whether or not these are reasonable programs, the

government cannot maintain the entitlement programs' size.

According to the *Wall Street Journal*, the government allocated around two-thirds of federal spending to entitlement payments. That leaves less than a third of the federal budget to fund education, scientific research and the military, in addition to paying off the deficit.

With the unemployment rate over eight percent, and the poverty level reaching 16 percent, the government is trying to compensate

for the poor economy by giving money back through entitlements. However, spending more money is illogical and will not solve the problem. First, United States needs to pay off debt, and return to economic prosperity.

“The working poor deserve some benefits, however the unemployed who aren't even looking for employment don't deserve aid.”

On the issue of morality, Americans are split on whether or not an individual is actually entitled to government assistance. According to the *Washington Post-Kaiser Family Foundation* poll, 55 percent of the people preferred a smaller government with fewer programs. Yet, with nearly half of American households receiving some type of government benefit, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, it is hard to eliminate a large portion of assistance.

Collegiate Academy students are divided on what, or how many, entitlements a citizen deserves, as well. Juniors Jared Pashupathi and Elaine Khodzhayan agree that while everybody deserves health care, some citizens take advantage of welfare





Created By Yassar Al-fatlawi

programs.

Pashupathi says, "The working poor deserve some benefits, however the unemployed who aren't even looking for employment don't deserve aid. If they get aid, they will continue to skate by on the government's dollar."

While senior Zach Binder believes that it is the government's job to "create the right economic conditions for everyone to have the best opportunities," he does not necessarily believe that means handing out food stamps or welfare. He suggests, "It would be better if those individuals were given government jobs and earned assistance."

Additionally, there is a large movement for national health care. To ensure universal health care, 72 percent of voters preferred increasing taxes over cutting programs for health care, according to a First Focus national survey. One thing to keep in mind is that health care is expensive.

While hospitals and other medical practices should never deny a person health care, somebody must pay for the costs.

If health care is a right that should be ensured by the government, should the government pay for doctors to go through medical school as well?

There is also a personal responsibility when it comes to health. If a chain smoker develops lung cancer, or a teenager who is obsessed with going to tanning beds develops Melanoma, should the government pay for their treatment?

The American dream used to be the idea that a person could immigrate to the United States, get an education and create a successful, happy, middle-class family. It was the people's obligation to pay for their food, their house and their health. However, as America's education recedes and the economy plunders, people are taking advantage and cheating government assistance. The entitlement spending in the U.S. is irresponsible; it is depleting our treasury and our conscience.







*Prayers Above a  
New Made Grave*

BY JESSICA REED  
LAYOUT BY STEPHANIE PECK



# December 23, 1914

There were no birds in no man's land. There wasn't much of anything, really, but somehow it was the absence of the birds that weighed on Ray the most. He fixed his eyes just over the edge of the embankment and looked out on the stretch of barren nothingness that lay before him. It was an absolute wasteland. The blood of men had seeped into the ground and poisoned it, churning up a toxic, stinking sludge. Shells had pockmarked the land, gouging out filthy little ponds and filling them with the buzzing of diseased mosquitos. Corpses lay about in drifts like dirty snow, their sickly sweetness carrying through the air to the living and reminding them always of the death which they too would face. Nothing lived there, nothing grew, nothing was even left to die, apart from the men in the trenches.

Ray lived within a waking dream. It had been just under a month since he came to the front, but already the world had taken on an unreal appearance; his surroundings seemed distorted, muffled somehow, as though he were looking through deep water. He hadn't been able to sleep in days for the vivid nightmares that plagued him, and even in the day he experienced terrifying hallucinations. Fear was forever present, his senses were perpetually on edge, and it was because of this he was able to sense the shell before it fell.

A strange vibration picked up, a subtle change in the way the air felt against his skin. There was a sound like fingernails on slate, a high-pitched whine that pealed through the air and set alarms clanging through Ray's mind, jumbling his thoughts and leaving him dazed and shivering. He saw the other men dive back into the trench, and somehow he found the presence of mind to follow them, sliding back down through the seeping mud of the embankment. He buried his face into his elbow and instantly felt the impact.

The shell smashed into no man's land with a boom like the terrible voice of God. The air shivered, reverberating through the hollow places in Ray's chest with a crushing black terror that clutched at his heart. Though nothing had struck him, his eyes snapped open and he set off a loud, low moan which rose in pitch and volume even as

the thunder of the explosion died away. His body began to spasm as though possessed, and he curled forward and vomited clear phlegm into the soggy earth where his face was pressed. Another shell went off; Ray felt himself being dragged through the rotten mud, thrashing and moaning, and the edges of his consciousness faded slowly to black.

Dreams assaulted him, horrible distorted nightmares that burned like war through his mind. He dreamed that he stood in the middle of the wasteland, up to his ankles in dark mud that strove to suck him down. For once, all was silent, the trenches emanating a strange quiet. Then, without warning, shells began to fall from the heavens and gunfire poured from the blackened sky like rain. Bullets pierced Ray's skin and he began to bleed, blood that mixed into the already bloody earth and tethered him eternally to the wasteland.

Wings sprouted on his back, great black bird's wings, but they felt strange and loose and wrong on him. He beat them fiercely, but the ground had tasted his blood and it wouldn't give him up, and the more he struggled, the deeper the mud sucked him in. In the distance, he could see men rising from the trenches on both sides, their ghostly hands outstretched to pull him up and set him free. Before they could reach him, though, his wings shriveled and died, and the ground opened beneath him, swallowing him into a trench that became his grave. A ceiling of mud sucked closed over him, and water began to pour in from all sides, filling the grave until he was underwater, until he could hear and see nothing but muffled blackness.

Cold water washed over Ray and he spluttered. He opened his eyes and the bright medical lamplight and the kerosene sting of the field hospital flooded in. A man stood before him holding a basin, the contents of which, Ray judged by his sodden state, had been thrown upon him. He shook himself, sending droplets of water flying from his hair, which had plastered itself wetly to his forehead and neck.

"You awake?" the man - Ray guessed he was the doctor - ventured. Ray sat up shakily and nodded. "Think you can tell me your name, son?" The doctor asked, his voice taking on a gentle tone. "Ray, forty-second infantry unit," Ray answered. The doctor nodded approvingly and began to poke and prod his patient. He took out a small mallet



and hit Ray in the knee, seeming satisfied when it kicked up spasmodically. "Do you know what the date today is?" he continued. This one caught Ray a little off guard; in the wake of the war, things like dates seemed of little importance. He searched his memory a moment before answering, "The twenty-third, I think." Only five months into the war and already it had stretched on for ages.

Ray left the field hospital in a stupor, his nightmare still hanging over him like a mantle, charging the air around him with a subtle fear. He was quite surprised when he walked out into the trenches of the encampment and discovered that the day had gone. The sudden darkness within the trench engulfed him like a great wide mouth. Ray heard gunshots in the distance, heard the explosions of shells, and all around him he could see nothing but the crushing blackness of his dream.

Something was different, though; there was an echo of pale light above him, and as Ray turned his face up to the sky he saw the stars peppering the night's choking darkness with yellow light. The North Star shone the brightest, and he picked it out and fixed upon it. It seemed to lift him up, it made him wish for the wings of his dream so he might fly with it and let its light guide him away. He wondered briefly if this barest pinprick light truly had the force to guide Christmas pilgrims across entire deserts, with nothing but their feet to carry them. After all, Ray thought with some surprise and disbelief, in two days it would be Christmas. The day of peace would come and pass and the war would rage on. Somehow, though, Ray felt a faint hope stir within him that this star, with its subtle light, had the strength guide him, too.

## December 24, 1914

Kellermeyer sat in the mud and filth and looked up at the blood-streaked sky. It was sunset, and though the sun itself was out of view, blocked off by the walls of the trench, he could see the colors it threw against the sky, shades of inflamed pink and red against sallow yellows and oranges. Kellermeyer exhaled and leaned against the trench wall, coating his back with thick black slime and sending a damp shiver up his spine. The trench walls loomed above him, bounding the sky in a rectangle of glowing red that closed him in like

the lid of a coffin. It was a sad position to be in, he thought, when even the ground was higher than him.

Kellermeyer was going to die tomorrow. He was to be executed on Christmas day for cowardice. So long ago he could barely remember, it seemed, a battle had broken out on the wasteland and Kellermeyer had refused to leave the trenches. He had fled from the invading British soldiers and hid behind the sandbag wall, and from this vantage he saw an Englishman bayonet the German captain who had been reprimanding him. The decision to convict Kellermeyer on behalf of the late captain had been unanimous. Since no standard procedure for detaining cowards had yet emerged, though, the court had simply posted a man to guard him and sent Kellermeyer back to the front to fight for the good German cause.

Kellermeyer stood up, the mud making an unpleasant wet, sucking sound as it released him. He crossed to the outer trench wall and got a precarious foothold in the crumbling earth, carefully propping himself up over the lip of the trench just high enough to see, peering out into the bloody wasteland. After a moment the guard noticed. He gave an arrested shout, yanking Kellermeyer back by the collar and slamming him into the mud. There was a quick bang and a bullet screamed above them. It had missed Kellermeyer's head by inches. The guard cursed, shoving Kellermeyer into the ground, and ordered him to stay down.

The guard was supposed to keep him from dying or deserting before he could be brought to justice. He didn't see what it mattered whether it was a German or a British bullet that killed him, but they told him that it did matter, legally, and besides, it would be much more pleasant for him to receive a proper burial so he could decay underground and not in the cold, fetid air of the wasteland.

"We'll plant a garden for you," a man from his platoon, named Bleich, had consoled him. Bleich had lost his mind to the war while leading a small raiding party. He had gone out across the wasteland through a treacherous, moonless night to ambush a suspected British supply line. Bleich was the only person to return, alive or otherwise. The rest of the bodies lay scattered about the wasteland, sinking slowly in the pitch-dark mud.



Bleich had grinned at Kellermeyer, all teeth, and promised to plant a garden of marigolds over his unmarked grave, to memorialize him with the feverish yellow of death's own flowers. His decomposing body would provide the flowers with excellent nourishment, Bleich said; perhaps someone could even plant a little patch of vegetables for the men to eat, to ward off scurvy. The nutrients from Kellermeyer's dead body would nourish the soldiers so that they might die of bullet-wounds and blood loss rather than lack of vitamin C.

The sun bled into the sky and ran down the trench walls, dripping violent red light that slowly deepened into black like drying blood. The world gradually faded into the oblivion of a night with no moon. Murky blackness surrounded Kellermeyer, converging on him like the seething depths of the trenches, like the walls of the filthy grave Bleich had promised to dig for him.

But the dawn can come only after the night has reached its blackest. It was in this spirit, perhaps, that the stagnant air began to pick up into a slow, persistent breeze from the east, pushing clouds of heavy smoke and ash out of the sky and revealing the crisp light of the new moon, the pinprick stars which let the day through just a little to illuminate the choking blackness. The North Star shone like a beacon, and the soldiers who were hunkered in the trenches lifted their eyes to it and whistled, speaking amongst themselves of what a bright, beautiful night it was.

Nearby, a drunk began to sing. He picked up a traditional German Christmas song, *Es ist ein Ros entsprungen*, usually such a delicate song which he bellowed at the top of his inebriated voice. The men in the trenches recoiled from the noise, whispering sharply at him to shut his filthy mouth before he drew enemy fire. But the drunk didn't seem to hear them and continued his carol unperturbed. They closed in on him, covering his mouth and pulling him down into the putrid mud, but the drunk fought with surprising vigor, struggling valiantly to expel the song from his body. Over and over he sang,

*“Es ist ein Ros entsprungen,  
aus einer Wurzel zart,  
wie uns die Alten sungen,  
von Jesse war die Art  
Und hat ein Blümlein bracht*

*mitten im kalten Winter,  
wohl zu der halben Nacht.”*

After a time, the other soldiers stopped fighting him. It was clear enough he wasn't drawing any fire, at least. They released him from the mud and he stumbled to his feet, still singing just that first verse, over and over, like a rooster mindlessly crowing the hour. The others watched him, listened to him sing, and gradually they loosened up a bit, smiling and laughing at the outrageous spectacle before them. Warily, a few even lent their own voices to the song, until the platoon of fighting men had transformed into a church choir, singing over and over,

*“Es ist ein Ros entsprungen,  
aus einer Wurzel zart,  
wie uns die Alten sungen,  
von Jesse war die Art  
Und hat ein Blümlein bracht  
mitten im kalten Winter,  
wohl zu der halben Nacht.”*

The men sang until they had expended all of their breath and being into the song. When they finally stopped, the silence echoed hollowly around them, welling up out of the mud and pouring into the air, as thick and treacherous as quicksand. Then, abruptly, an answering echo floated across the wasteland. The British had struck up a carol of their own, a spirited rendition of *Come Buy My Nice Fresh Ivy*, which they shouted enthusiastically across to their enemies. The Germans hooted at this, reveling in the unexpected unity. The two sides exchanged carols back and forth, shouting greetings and playful insults to each other across the wasteland. Hours passed this way, but through the smiles and laughter, every man was dreading the time when it would stop, and the silence would come again, and they would have to go back to shooting each other.

The laughter died away. Silence fell. And then Kellermeyer climbed from the trench and stood out in the wasteland, straight and tall, and drew no fire.





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