

ZEITGEIST

The Spirit of the Times – February 2012



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About the Club

In a matter of years, our generation will be the status quo. We will be running the businesses and casting the votes and contributing to the culture that will serve to identify our country for decades to come. As such, it is our duty to cultivate a devotion to political curiosity and vigilance so that we can shape this future in the most well-informed manner we possibly can. The Political Awareness Club is a part of that cultivation, providing an environment for students to discuss and debate what is going on in the world and develop their own unique perspective they can carry with them into the adult world. We meet on Thursday afternoons in Mr. Szabs's room (B407). All are welcome to attend.

NOTE: The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the contributors and are in no way intended to reflect those of Fairfield Prep as an institution.

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Perry Drops Bid; Endorses Gingrich

Chris Auray, '13



Last Thursday, Texas governor and former Presidential hopeful Rick Perry suspended his campaign for the Republican nomination. Next to his wife Anita, Perry thanked his supporters and endorsed Newt Gingrich, who has gained a massive amount of momentum after a disappointing finish in both Iowa and New Hampshire. “I know when it’s time to make a strategic retreat,” Perry said at his South Carolina headquarters in North Charleston, where he mentioned that Gingrich, a “true conservative visionary,” has the ideas and principles needed to defeat President Barack Obama.

Perry’s exit serves as no surprise to voters. He finished last in New Hampshire and third to last in Iowa, coming in ahead of only Michele Bachmann and Jon Huntsman. His fall from grace serves as a sad story for his supporters, as he was leading the GOP field just this last August. Viewed as the populist candidate, Perry appealed to mostly to Southerners, even gaining the hotly contested endorsement of

Maricopa County, AZ, Sheriff Joe Arpaio in November.

Throughout his short lived campaign, Perry has identified himself as a bare-bones conservative, who places values on traditional American values and freedom. His “Strong” campaigned ad, lampooned and ridiculed by liberals and moderates alike, showed his devotion to Christianity and his willingness to fight President Obama’s “war on religion.” He also slammed gays serving openly in the military and called the political leaders of Turkey “Islamic terrorists,” enough to offend even the staunchest Republican.

In 2011, Perry thought the voting age was 21, miscounted the number of Supreme Court justices, and forgot the third cabinet position he would eliminate if elected. “Oops.” He even supported bringing troops back to Iraq. In addition, he failed to get the influential evangelical support, which accounts for nearly 25% of votes, as it was

given in the most part to former Pennsylvania Senator Rick Santorum.

Perry's dropout serves as a major boost to the Gingrich, who, fresh after a key victory in South Carolina, is nearly tied with ex-Governor Mitt Romney in national polls. While Perry's suspension and endorsement

has helped Gingrich, it is turning to be disastrous for the Santorum campaign, which is grappling with Ron Paul for third place. While the Republican GOP candidates are left trying to win the hearts of the American people in their struggle to defeat President Obama, Perry returns home to the job and state he loves.

The GOP Candidates Rundown

Newt Gingrich

Nick Shuermann '14

After his victory in New Hampshire, Mitt Romney seemed to be the clear front runner in the bid for Republican Presidential candidacy. But then Newt Gingrich regained his momentum after a large come-from-behind win in South Carolina. Newt first shot into the lead in December, holding 35% of the vote and a 13 point lead over Mitt Romney. This lead was short lived. In Iowa, he only got 13% of the vote, landing him in fourth place. This was followed by another fourth place performance at New Hampshire, in which he received less than 10% of the vote. Newt seemed like he'd had his five minutes of fame, something most of the other candidates had also enjoyed. And then, just when his campaign seemed lost, he won big time in South Carolina. He wound up



getting 40% of the votes, 13 points ahead of Mitt Romney. He has reestablished himself as the front runner at 29%, one point ahead of Mitt. With his reemergence as the front runner and the narrowing field of candidates, the race for

the nomination is spicing up.

Prior to the South Carolina primary Rick Perry and Jon Huntsman both dropped

out of the race, leaving just four

remaining candidates. Perry endorsed Gingrich while Huntsman endorsed Romney. This shone a great deal of light on the history of the candidates, with an especially bright beam directed at Newt's several scandals. He has faced questions of morality after his many affairs and abandonment of his ailing second wife. There has also been a lot of controversy

over some of his recent comments involving the unemployment of African Americans. This along with other scandals, has raised questions among republicans about how electable he is and whether he has too much “baggage.” With many doubting that Ron Paul or Rick Santorum can get elected, it is expected for the race to end up between Newt and Mitt. And with Florida less

than one week away, the two are currently neck and neck in the race; Mitt has a small lead currently holding 36% support to Newt’s 34%. At the moment his history hasn’t appeared to have caught up with him, but with a wildly inconsistent campaign so far it is impossible to foresee what’s next for Newt.

Ron Paul

Tom Garzillo '14

One of the four remaining candidates for the 2012 Republican Party presidential nomination, Ron Paul is perhaps the most interesting and unique of the bunch. Born in August of 1935, he attended Gettysburg College and Duke University School of Medicine. A medical officer in the US Air Force for 5 years, Paul also worked as an OB/GYN before entering the world of politics in 1976.

In April of '76, Paul won his first election, becoming a congressman in Texas. He has served in Congress in 3 phases, first

from '76 to '77, later from '79 to '85, and lastly in '97. Paul made his first bid for President in 1988, scoring third in the popular vote. Re-elected to Congress in '96, Paul has remained in the House of Representatives ever since. As of 2009, Paul was one of only two members of US Congress who chose not to receive a government pension. Paul receives the majority of his campaign money from individual donors, not corporations or PACs (political action committees). In fact, in 2006, Paul was one of the lowest recipients of PAC money, and fourth highest in small donor donations. Out of



the 435 members of the House of Representatives, Paul was ranked 421st in amount of money from lobbyists accepted.

Paul ran for president in 2008, where strong grassroots support made him a major contender. Much like in the ongoing 2012 election, the mainstream media largely ignored Paul. However, Paul still generated much public interest: in 2007, Paul was the most web-searched candidate. Despite this, he consistently finished third among delegate counts; Paul withdrew from the campaign in June of 2008.

Paul is currently running once again for the Republican Party nomination for president. In the Iowa Republican caucus, the formal start of the delegate selection process, Paul finished 3rd place behind Mitt Romney and Rick Santorum, the winner by a very slim margin. In the New Hampshire primary held on January 10th, Paul placed 2nd, but far behind the victor, Mitt Romney. However, in the more recent South Carolina primary, Paul has been falling further behind the pack. Finishing in last (4th), Paul received only 13% of the votes. At the time of this article's writing, Paul is still actively campaigning in Florida.

Paul's political ideology tends to run on the side of libertarian and conservative, with some arguing he is the most

conservative of the remaining Republican candidates. However, sources such as the National Journal say Paul is one of the more moderate members of the House of Representatives. The real answer is undoubtedly somewhere in-between.

Paul is known for often going against the popular current, consistently voting against government spending and taxes. He encourages eliminating most federal government agencies, deeming most of them unnecessary wastes of money. Paul's foreign policy is one of nonintervention; he was the only 2008 Republican presidential candidate to vote against military action in Iraq, and is opposed to the Patriot Act. Paul also supports free trade, but is opposed to membership in NAFTA and the WTO. Like the rest of the Republican hopefuls, he is strongly pro-life. Paul is also known for his strong support of constitutional rights, such as the right to bear arms. He is anti-death penalty, anti-torture, anti-draft, and anti-War on Drugs. In fact, Paul has been known to be a supporter of legalizing marijuana use. Paul advocates for state's rights on many important social issues, such as health care, education, the death penalty, and gay marriage. Only time will tell the political future of Ron Paul, but his accomplishments and steadfastness in his views cannot be denied.

Rick Santorum

Christopher DuMont '14

Rick Santorum, a 53 year old Virginian Roman Catholic, is running for president as a Republican. He has an impressive



education, graduating from Pennsylvania State University with a bachelor's degree in political science in 1980, continuing on to earn his MBA at Pittsburg University the following year, and earning his law degree in 1986. Santorum also has an impressive political record: he won the 1990 election for the United States House of representatives, taking a 7-term democrat out of office; won the election for the United States Senate in 1994; was re-elected; and then became chairman of the Senate Republican Conference. One thing to note of about this candidate is that he is upfront on issues that matter to people of faith. Mr. Santorum includes his religion with politics, which means that it will color his decision-making on certain issues, most infamously his comparison of same-sex relationships to abusive "man on child, man on dog" sex.

A hot topic that has come up recently in the Republican debates is Iran's attempts to acquire nuclear weapon capabilities. Mr. Santorum is urging the United States to get even tougher with Iran. He believes that the United States should continue to

Mitt Romney

Owen Gibson '13

Born in 1947 to former Michigan Governor George Romney and wife, Lenore, Mitt Romney is currently one of the front-runners for the Republican nomination in the 2012 Presidential Election. Raised as a Mormon in Michigan, he graduated from Brigham Young University and went on to receive a joint degree in law and business administration from Harvard University. He



send aid to our largest Middle Eastern ally, Israel, enforce harsher sanctions on Iran, and encourage covert operations to take place in Iran to sabotage their nuclear facilities. Many people are supporting him because he also encourages air strikes on these facilities if their threat becomes too great.

Not only has Mr. Santorum got his eye on foreign affairs, but he also is concerned with domestic issues. He has a plan for the economy that includes: reducing the size of the government to 18%; permanently extending the Bush tax cuts rates for Capital Gains and Dividing Tax rates; repealing Obama Care; putting aside "green jobs"; repealing the Death Tax; cutting the tax rate to zero for all manufacturers; repealing Dodd- Frank; passing a balanced budget amendment; utilizing natural gas, oil, coal, and nuclear energy; eliminating the Obama Administration's roadblocks to oil exploration in the Gulf of Mexico, along the Outer Continental Shelf, and onshore; repatriating taxable income outside the United States at a rate of 5%; reigning in the National Labor Relations Board; and ensuring that no new natural gas laws are enacted.

married Ann Davies on March 21, 1969, to whom he is still married and with whom he currently has five children.

Beginning as a management consultant, he worked his way up the ranks in Bain & Company and ultimately served as CEO, saving the company from crisis. Later, he was a co-founder of a spin-off

company, Bain Capital, which eventually came to be one of the largest private equity investment firms in the United States. He was later able to use his accumulated wealth to finance his various political campaigns.

He began his political career in 1994, losing the U.S. Senate election in Massachusetts to Ted Kennedy. Then in 2002, he was an organizer of the Winter



Olympics in Salt Lake City, Utah. His contribution steered the Olympics to become a financial success, contrary to widespread expectations. In that same year he was also elected Governor of Massachusetts, which it should be noted is one of the most liberal states in the country.

As governor, he was able to eliminate a projected \$3 billion budget deficit through a series of spending cuts and tax increases. He is well known for enacting "Romney-care," a near-universal health care system in Massachusetts, the first of its kind in the nation, which is reliant upon subsidies and state-level mandates. However, he did not pursue re-election in 2006.

Mitt Romney ran for the Republican nomination in the 2008 Presidential Election, boasting his success in the business world as well as his successful oversight of the 2002 Olympics. As a result, he was the most effective candidate

when it came to fundraising, though he did finance his campaign partly through his own personal fortune. Since he had always been a devout Mormon who was very active in his church, a significant amount of attacks were directed at his faith. In his response to this, Romney would reference both President Kennedy and President George H. W. Bush, saying that he would put his duties of office above any aspect of his faith.

One of the most significant challenges facing Romney was the apparent "flip-flop" in his political views toward a more conservative footing. For example, while Governor of Massachusetts, he began his term with a pro-choice stance. However, he gradually began to show a shift towards a pro-life policy, opposing *Roe v. Wade*, which he acknowledged during his campaign. He had also opposed same-sex marriages and civil unions, but when a Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court decision forced him to pick between the two, he backed an amendment that would ban same-sex marriages but allow for civil unions. As a result of this flip, he suffered from an appearance as being "inauthentic."

Romney ultimately won 11 primaries and caucuses, received about 4.7 million votes and gained the support of about 280 delegates, but ultimately endorsed John McCain for the Republican Presidential nomination. McCain also considered him as a possible running mate, but decided on Sarah Palin instead. Since his defeat for the nomination, Romney has traveled and made speeches in preparation for the 2012 Presidential Election. He also campaigned heavily for Republican candidates nationwide during the 2010 mid-term elections.

In campaigning for the Republican nomination in the 2012 Presidential Election, Romney has placed his focus on economic issues, claiming he can put America back on track given the significant experience he has in the private sector. His biggest hurdle to overcome is general

Republican opposition to “Romney-care,” which is claimed to be the basis of “Obama-care.” He has consistently been one of the front-running Republican candidates, competing primarily with Rick Perry, Herman Cain, Ron Paul, Rick Santorum, and Newt Gingrich, throughout various surges in their support. Romney came in second-place to Rick Santorum by a narrow margin of only eight votes in the Iowa caucuses, decidedly won the New Hampshire primary, and came in second-place to Newt Gingrich in the South Carolina primary. He is currently campaigning for the Florida primary, and is participating in the Republican debates.

While no longer facing charges of “flip-flopping” political views, he has come

Editor’s Note: The results of the Florida Primary on January 31 are Romney (46.4%), Gingrich (31.9%), Santorum (13.3%), and Paul (7%).

under some criticism for possible job losses during his time at Bain Capital, though he claims that in reality over 100,000 jobs were created. His most recent issue in debates has been over his tax returns. All the other candidates have released their tax returns already, though he originally saw no need to release them so early in the race unless he was nominated as the Republican candidate. However, after losing to Newt Gingrich in South Carolina by a margin of 13 points, Romney quickly released his tax returns. The debates continue in anticipation of the Florida primary, and Romney currently holds the highest percentage of the popular vote, 30.35%, as well as the highest count of delegates, 32, out of all the other prospective Republican nominees.

The Burgeoning Power of China

Stephen Sappo ‘14

The People’s Republic of China is currently the world’s second largest economic power. Their economy has grown by an astounding 10% annually for the past 30 years and is expected to continue expanding by a slightly decreased percentage due to limiting factors caused by international trade. The level of poverty in China fell from 53% in 1981 to 2.5% in 2005. China’s current GDP is \$5.878 trillion and is growing by an annual rate of 10.3%. China is the second-largest trading nation in the world, and the largest exporter, while also being the second largest importer of goods. Buy how did China accumulate this much power?



Before the 1980’s, China was nowhere near its current status. China’s agricultural system was still organized in communes, work crews, and production teams. The profits were too low to cover even production costs, and limits were set on the amount of grain that producers could keep for personal usage. This entire establishment changed when political leader Deng Xiaoping expressed his opinions. Deng revolutionized the farming system by implementing a system in which the farmers could lease farming land and produce grain for themselves, while also meeting a fixed quota. This westernized method of farming introduced

the capitalist view to Chinese farmers. The reforms all started in the agricultural market and slowly crept into the industrial field. Enterprises and factories were allowed to keep profits and use incentives, which greatly boosted productivity. The agricultural reforms proved to be a success because production had risen by 30% and new products were being introduced.

All these small changes eventually lead to reductions in tariffs, which allowed for more production. However, the reforms didn't stop at agriculture. Deng continued his methods in the industrial sector where he would have similar results. In the mid-eighties, the "coastal strategy" was emphasized, which included modernized management, private business, price reforms, foreign investment, and trade. Deng started the reforms with the words: "only development makes sense." Gradually increasing profit and incorporating new ideas into the economy really contributed to the success of China's economy. Gradualism, successful integration into the world economy, high levels of growth and investment and a trial and error approach to policy have all contributed to China's growth and success. China opened its first stock market in Shanghai in 1990. In 1996 Chinese currency became convertible, which then lead to the involvement in the international realm. In just two decades China had turned itself into a highly profitable economic power that was expanding rapidly.

Unfortunately, China wanted to continue its progress perhaps too quickly. By the late 1990's, the owners of the majority of industries had grown greedy and started reducing the amount of incentives and started collecting those bonuses for themselves. This obviously then forced the

workers to work tirelessly for less pay. The work hours increased to 14 hours per day and included minimal pay. This scene is very much similar to the Industrial Revolution in the sense that it was terrible living conditions and work became a lifestyle. Apparently the Chinese knew something that other countries did not because all this "cheap labor" resulted in unwavering production and allowed for steady advancement.

China currently is the world's second largest economy with industries including mining and ore processing, machine



building, textiles and apparel, petroleum processing, consumer products, food processing, transportation equipment, and telecommunications equipment. Its agricultural production has also become eminent with crops such as rice, wheat, potatoes, corn, peanuts, tea, millet, barley, apples, cotton, pork, and fish. China has been a dominant power in the international field and continues to expand and create connections. China is predicted to keep growing and outsourcing to countries around the world as well as remaining a well regulated institution.

Israeli Airstrikes Target Palestinians in Gaza Strip

Kevin Culligan '13

The feud between Israel and Palestine continues to rage, as Israel has recently launched airstrikes at Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. On January 18th, the Israeli Air Force carried out an airstrike in the Gaza Strip, close to the border fence, killing two Palestinians and injuring three others. The Israeli Defense Force (IDF) claimed that a "terrorist squad" was planting explosive devices near the border with the intention of harming Israeli soldiers. "The IDF will not tolerate any attempt to harm Israeli civilians and IDF soldiers, and will operate against anyone who uses terror against the State of Israel," the IDF spokesperson said. Then, on January 24th, Israel executed another airstrike, this time targeting a suspected weapons manufacturing site as well as tunnels in the Gaza Strip. Although there were no casualties, Israel confirmed a direct hit. This attack was in response to

Palestine firing rockets from Gaza into Israel, with no casualties or damage.

These attacks have been provoked by years of hostilities between Israel and Palestine, as they fight to seemingly no end over land, religion, borders, and a myriad of other issues. Israel conquered the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in 1967, leaving Palestinians living there under Israeli military occupation. There are a wide variety of views and opinions, with most believing that Israel should loosen their increasingly oppressive grip on Palestine and allow them to establish their own state. The United States has long supported Israel, with one estimate saying that American taxpayers give \$7 million to Israel every day. However, as the conflict continues and Israel's methods come under increasing fire, many have questioned whether this is the smart move for America.

Iran's Nuclear Power

Chandler Holcomb '12



When the nucleus of a radioactive atom releases its energy, total destruction ensues. Nuclear weapons were designed to bring about this end. Currently, there are over 7,000 operable nukes in the possession of various countries, and there are even more out of operation nukes that lie dormant in stockpiles. The US itself has a stockpile of 5,113 warheads. Understandably, countries such as the US have vested interest to see that this vicious power does not fall into the wrong hands. We have all seen the movies where the evil genius acquires a bomb and attempts to bring about the end of the world, but how worried should we really be about nuclear disaster?

Recent events in Iran bring up the question, who should have nukes? As it stands, only a select few countries have this capability, and these countries collectively take steps to make sure that they are the only ones who have this technology. But is it fair to deprive a country of nuclear bombs? The US and Russia (the two biggest nuclear stockpiles) both have enough nukes to destroy the world many times over. What gives them the right to hold the world in the palm of their hands? After what happened to Japan, it is clear the nuclear arms deter any country from taking aggression against the United States. Should other countries not have this protection? And what will the U.S. do should a nation like Iran attempt to acquire WMD's? Send in NATO airstrikes to hit their facilities? Are we going to be dragged into another war during fragile economic times? We have seen 3 assassinations since the start of Iran's nuclear program, as well as a cyber attack which destroyed numerous centrifuges Iran was using to purify uranium. How much blood will we shed to delay the inevitable? Meanwhile we have Russia developing "Codename: Satan", a 100-ton warhead. It seems hypocritical to

slap Iran on the wrist but leave Russia alone after talks about deactivating warheads fell through.

On the other hand, what we have is a standoff, countries flexing their muscles in the form of nuclear weapons, and more and more countries want in to the exclusive club. The U.S. brought nuclear technology into this world, and we remain the only country to ever use it in combat. The U.S. stood by as Russia developed these bombs and now we have even more countries vying for this power. The reality is that the U.S. now has a responsibility to see that nuclear capabilities do not fall into the wrong hands. Iran has made it known to the world that it wants to wipe Israel off the map and the tensions are mounting between the two nations as Iran comes closer to developing warheads. Israel has made it clear that they will not allow Iran to develop these bombs. We simply cannot allow these countries to butt heads like this because the outcome will be catastrophic. If research like this continues to go unchecked, who knows where the bombs can end up next? The United Nations agrees that Iran should not develop warheads, but Iran continues to ignore sanctions. We have imposed embargos on Iran and they threatened to close waterways that give us access to oil from the Middle East. No good can come of these weapons and we must see their production stopped. It is unfortunate that this situation may end in violence, but for the protection not just of our country but the world, it seems that Iran program must be stopped.

I hope that the devastating power of the nuclear bomb is never used again and that we can seek peaceful resolution to conflicts. However, I realize that violence is sometimes unavoidable. Only time will tell what will become of the situation in Iran and the future of the nuke.

State of the Union

Charlie Mastoloni '13

On January 25, 2011 President Obama gave his latest State of the Union Address and for the first time in months we got to see something like the fiery leader we elected in 2008. For the past year really he's seen attacks, mounted by everyone from Mitt Romney to Matt Damon. The most prominent jabs have, of course, been from the GOP Presidential hopefuls in the various

debates and speeches they have been giving in prep for the 2012 elections.

Obama, for the most part, has remained quiet. In this speech, however, he talked extensively about the economy as well as addressing the questions people had regarding immigration reform, tax code reforms, and education. Economic fairness, however, seemed to be the prominent issue he really nailed on.

After talking about his success in foreign policy in terms of killing Osama bin Laden and touting his achievements of restructuring General Motors, Obama moved to the economy. In a speech with themes very reminiscent of Teddy Roosevelt's famous speech at Osawatimie, Kansas, Obama called for every American to, "get a fair shot, do their fair share, and play by the same set of rules." To me that

is a clear shot at all of the GOP candidates who have been coddling the rich for too long. This is an issue of great importance, seeing as in a time when there is still rampant unemployment the Republican Congress still wants to support tax breaks for those making millions upon millions of dollars a year. This needs to stop because President Obama is absolutely right when



he says that everyone needs to play by the same set of rules.

There should be no way on Earth that Warren Buffet should be paying fewer taxes than his secretary (also mentioned

in his speech). At a time like this it is necessary to hike up taxes on the richest few Americans to ensure that we have a balanced budget as well as money to inject into something worthwhile that could create thousands of jobs and make our nation better: infrastructure. Instead of cutting welfare programs that help people live reasonable lives, we should cut the tax breaks for these wealthy people and make them pay their fair share of taxes. President Obama touches on this in his speech: "We can either settle for a country where a shrinking number of people do really well while a growing number of Americans barely get by," he said, "or we

can restore an economy where everyone gets a fair shot and everyone does their fair share and everyone plays by the same set of rules. What's at stake are not Democratic values or Republican values, but American values. We have to reclaim them." Obama also called for an end to government subsidies and tax deductions for Americans making \$1 million annually, while renewing his pledge not to raise taxes on families making less than \$250,000. "Send me these tax reforms and I will sign them right away," he said. That doesn't seem like the socialist values that GOP candidates keep labeling him under. It sounds like common sense.

Besides that proposal, he introduced incentives aimed at stimulating domestic manufacturing including ending tax deductions for companies that outsource jobs and create new tax credits for companies that shift jobs to U.S. soil as opposed to overseas. He also proposed a global minimum tax which would tax American companies at a consistent rate on profits earned overseas. All of these reforms make sense to me, the main reason being that over the past decade millions of factories have decided to take their business to China or other foreign countries on the claim that it is more equitable. As a result, we are no longer making the profit off those companies but the foreign governments are. We cannot afford to let what once was the model of manufacturing success pack its bags for another country. We already have lost millions of jobs and if you had an ounce of patriotism in you, you would agree that we shouldn't let China take our jobs and factories when we can do the job just as well. We need to make it inequitable for companies to move overseas by instituting such a tax to protect our industries here. In fact we need to make it more beneficial for companies to stay here and I think an excellent way of doing so is instituting this tax credit system. That being said, I believe a major thing that would also stimulate growth that President Obama did not touch on was reducing corporate tax rate.



In addition to the proposals above, we should limit what is, in fact, the largest corporate tax rate in the world.

Another point touched upon by the President was his call for Wall Street to rein itself in. This was followed by the official creation of a new Mortgage Crisis Unit which will be headed by New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman. The unit will investigate mortgage misconduct and illegal activities. In addition to that new unit, he announced the creation of the Financial Crimes Unit that will let attorneys in the States pursue large-scale financial fraud. He ended that portion of his speech with a call for Congress to approve tougher penalties for fraud to ensure that companies no longer see fines as just a part of doing business. The implementation of the two ideas above is a brilliant idea. With us suffering the consequences today of toxic lending, distribution of bad loans and mortgages, influxes of Sub Prime mortgages, and various other disastrous financial moves we need better regulation. The best way to hinder these practices is to have a unit that is looking for people who break such laws and practice such unfair actions 24/7. It is high time that we keep these bankers and lenders in check.

After addressing the whole banking industry, he went on to propose a ban on insider trading by members of Congress, an up or down vote on presidential



nominations within 90 days and other efforts to lower the amount of tensions between the two parties. Those all seem like reasonable reforms to me and there's no reason not to pass them. Unfortunately however, the day after the State of the Union a bill proposed to stop insider trading among Congress was delayed indefinitely by House Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-VA), despite the fact that it had bipartisan support. To me, it is truly despicable that Rep. Cantor wants to halt the political process and passage of a bill supported by both parties (88 Republican votes in addition to the majority of all Democrats) in an attempt to play party politics, the exact thing that is halting progress in this nation. People like Mr. Cantor are ruining this country and are part of the reason we are in so much trouble and Washington can't pass anything.

Besides that, an issue that is very close to Fairfield Prep is his interest in calling for Congress to keep interest rates on student loans from doubling and extending tax credit for middle class families paying to put their children through college. While Obama has tried to expand federal financial aid programs, he asked colleges

and universities themselves to also keep the costs down. Obama demanded, "Let me put colleges and universities on notice: If you can't stop tuition from going up, the funding you get from taxpayers will go down. Higher education can't be a luxury — it's an economic imperative that every family in America should be able to afford." College costs so much these days and it is not fair that those who do well in school can't afford to go to college. In terms of education, Obama called on all states to make sure that kids stay in high school until the age of 18. I personally think that is a good idea, but can't work. It's nice to think that all kids will graduate but it is just not a reality. Some people, regardless of how much attention the teacher pays them and how much help is offered, genuinely don't want to learn. I think for cases like that they should be able to leave as to not bring down kids who actually want to learn. Also, another issue Mr. Obama addressed was a proposal for a bill very similar to what Gov. Cuomo in New York proposed to benefit teachers who teach well and fire teachers that do not perform, regardless of tenure. As President Obama pointed out, however, standardized testing is not the way to go about it. Congress needs to propose another way that is fairer and more informative such as perhaps establishing a committee to oversee such affairs.

In terms of immigration, Obama touched upon how he avidly supports creating a path to citizenship for young people bought into the country without documentation but who have either completed college or military service, essentially the basis of the DREAM Act. That is a no-brainer; if you have people who are willing to make great contributions to society and help make this country a better place they should not be forced to leave because they were bought here at an early age of no fault of their own.

The issue of energy and alternative energy choice was also touched upon in his speech to the nation: "Though they are at



their highest in the last 16 years, U.S. energy production levels must rise so that the country is less dependent on foreign sources of oil," Obama said. "This country needs an all-out, all-of-the-above strategy that develops every available source of American energy — a strategy that's cleaner, cheaper and full of new jobs." While some people in the crowd booed at his justified rejection of the Keystone XL pipeline because of the drastic environmental issues that it would evoke, for the most part he received a positive reaction. This is an issue that needed to be addressed because I think that the environment is increasingly going to become a bigger issue, and at a time when no one has really invested into the whole alternative energy business it would be both equitable and beneficial to make advances in wind and solar technology instead of things that still burn CO2. Regardless of the fact that many Republicans deny global warming, it is there. To think otherwise is simply ignorant.

Foreign policy was another issue that the GOP has derided Obama for over the past year. Obama rebutted in his speech, "Let there be no doubt: America is determined to prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon, and I will take no options off the table to achieve that goal," adding that his preference is still to find a peaceful resolution to a conflict that is quickly heating up. This is a very obvious and necessary approach to Iran in my opinion. We need to treat Iran in a peaceful way to avoid another ridiculously expensive war that could spell doom for our nation being the state of the current economy.

In conclusion, I feel that President Barack Obama made a very strong speech and once again reminded us why we should keep him in for another 4 years. His view for the nation and road to success is the road we need to take if we are to fix our nation. Hopefully the fiery president that appeared at this speech will remain instead of the more laid back Obama we have become accustomed to seeing in the past.

The Cold Stare of Indifference

Michael Whelan, '12

In a recent editorial, *The Connecticut Post* lambasted the Bridgeport Police Department for leaving a homicide victim lying on the sidewalk for five hours after he was slain. The *Post* argued that the body's presence caused undue trauma for many passerby, and that the need to properly examine the crime scene should have been balanced against the good of the public. "Hearing about such violence on the city streets is hard enough", wrote the *Post*. "That a corpse should stay in plain view for hours is an affront".

It is indeed an affront, but that does not mean that this dead man should have been hidden from view, as the newspaper suggests. The body was an affront to passerby's decency, but "decency" really means innocence, complacency, and sense of security. There is no wakeup call louder than a silent corpse. Apparently, *The Connecticut Post* was enjoying its sleep.

Kenneth Console, the corpse to which all this refers, was Bridgeport's fifth homicide victim in four weeks. It is not surprising that the *Post* is squeamish when it comes to this kind of killing – anyone should be. But to advocate for the covering-up of death only exacerbates the situation. When violence is swept under the rug, it is allowed to continue. Likewise, when its results are

available for all to see, it is impossible to remain complacent.

The fact that the *Post* wrote an editorial at all is a direct result of the prolonged exposure of this crime to the public. I certainly would not know about it if not for the surrounding controversy. The crime would have gone down in the police blotter – not the op-ed page. It would be another number on the long lists that divorce us from the trauma of a culture of violence.

Everyone talks about how we have become so indifferent to killing, whether fictional (video games) or real (inner-city gangs). I suspect that this complacency stems directly from our mass innocence when it comes to death. Most of us, including myself, have never witnessed death. Homicide victims are normally shielded from the public. Executions happen deep within prisons. Abortion is presented as an antiseptic procedure. Graphic photos from Afghanistan are not printed by newspapers. As a society, we have chosen to place a veil over our eyes. Violence is outside our comfort zone, so we choose not to face it.

The situation is exacerbated by our electronic playthings. By creating so much fictional violence we are able to mentally assign things like murder, rape,



and war into the same mental category as political debates, historical documentaries, and cooking instruction: “That just happens on T.V.”, becomes the prevalent, if quietly unmentioned, attitude.

The recent murder on Bond Street is not the first crack in this veneer. Several months ago, *Newsweek* published a full page photo of Muammar Gaddafi’s dead body. Weeks before that, *The New York Times* had a front page picture of an emaciated Congolese child – a victim of war-induced famine.

Yet incidents like these are exceptions to the rule. And in many cases, like the killing in Bridgeport, the exposure to reality is attacked as “indecent” and “traumatic”. These people seem to forget that death should always be traumatic, and that treating it casually is deeply disconcerting.

The *Post* titled their editorial “Crime Scene Not for Public”. They may as well say “Reality Not for Public”. I understand the reluctance to face the horror that happens around us, but it is only in facing reality that we can begin to confront it.

The Dangers of Idolatry

Anonymous

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. did some fantastic things for our country. He

countered violence and prejudice with peace and forgiveness, greatly improved



the status of African-Americans in society, and set an example for how to lead a movement which challenged the social norms plaguing our country since its founding. However, along with many other "Great American Heroes," Dr. King has become an idol in American history, someone that we look up to and, unfortunately, tend to see as super-human, which is not the case. While he had an incredibly positive impact on our society, it is important to remember his humanity and the mistakes that he made, such as having multiple extramarital affairs (including one the night before he was shot).

You might ask why I am writing this. Well, the reason is this: when we begin to idolize a historical figure, we make it easy to distort their message. Thomas Jefferson, for example, wrote the Declaration of Independence and doubled the size of the United States during his Presidency. He also fathered children with one of his slaves when she was only fifteen years old. To cite a more contemporary example, neo-conservatives have used Reagan as a symbol of lowering taxes, despite the fact that he actually raised them a total of eleven times.

I am constantly reminded of this exact distortion of history when we have our annual MLK Assembly. While certain parts of the event are very productive and impactful (the lecture given by Rev. Choi, the speech given by Mr. Bramble about oppressed peoples come to mind), other aspects seem to not be related to Dr. King's message and are, in some cases, even contradictory. Take the singing of the Negro National Anthem for example. I'm all for the singing of another country's national anthem, but when one sings the Negro National Anthem (a song that was written over one hundred years ago as a rallying cry for equal rights for African Americans), it

reinforces the cultural differences between the African-American members of the student body and the non-African American members. In his famous "I Have a Dream" speech, Dr. King said that in this dream it would come to pass that, "one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit together at the table of brotherhood." The only way that this can happen is if the racial divide is broken down between blacks and whites and we accept the fact that we are one people. If the Negro National Anthem is sung every year to commemorate Dr. King, this divide will not be broken down, but rather strengthened. Dr. King wanted us to come together as one, not to live separately as two.

The other aspect of the MLK Assembly that feels a little hypocritical is how the different minorities in the school are not really included. While we are more than happy to talk about racial diversity and how we should treat people of other ethnicities fairly, what about the other types of diversity? In my experience at Prep, gender diversity and religious diversity are much more important issues than racial diversity. We go to an all-male, Roman Catholic-dominated school and it is easy to forget that this isn't an accurate representation of the world at large. As a result, when I hear anti-Semitic comments or jokes or obscene comments made about female faculty members, I fear that Prep has accidentally created an environment where one can openly show a lack of respect for different faiths or genders. In addition to recognizing gender and religious diversity, Prep seriously needs to address how its students treat each other when it comes to sexuality. Homosexual slurs are by far and away the most frequently heard insults around the school, and it's incredibly

disappointing that the administration doesn't choose to address this issue in particular at the assembly. Dr. King's fight for equal rights did not end with the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964, the Voting Rights Act in 1965, or the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990. No, Dr. King's fight for equal rights will continue until everyone, regardless of race, creed, gender, sexual orientation, or even political opinion, is entitled to the same rights as everyone else.

As I said at the beginning of this piece, Dr. King has had a profound cultural impact on this country. However, we cannot afford to turn him into something that he wasn't. He was a man. He advocated the integration of African

Americans into society and equal rights for all. Towards the end of his life he was in the process of organizing an event similar to the current "Occupy Congress," and he challenged the political establishment of the time with this statement: "Call it democracy, or call it democratic socialism, but there must be a better distribution of wealth within this country for all God's children." He was also an unfaithful husband and a sinner like all of us. Remember Dr. King for who he was, and what he did. Don't change his message to suit your agenda, but instead take it for what it is. And if you truly look at Dr. King from a historical and objective point of view, you'll be even more impressed by him.

