



Behind the glitz, a purpose

by Andrea Earnest
News writer

Prom is an important day in any teenage girl's life. You spend months looking for the perfect dress, book the hair, nail, and make-up appointments and prepare for a great night. Some girls don't get that chance. The LHS Prom Fashion Show aims to fix this problem.

Coordinator of the event, Helen Dickson said, "We're asking teens to donate any formal dresses so that we can model them in the show." LHS and the Hope and Friendship Ministries charity are teaming together to make this event possible.

"A new twist this year is the dress drive, we really wanted to help out [the] cause," Dickson said. Back in December, LHS hosted a "Dress Drive" where students donated dresses to be worn for the Prom Fashion Show.

After the show, the dresses will be donated to the Hope and Friendship Ministries. This charity's purpose is to help people in need, whether they need food, money, or in this case, prom dresses. Junior, Tessa Spinelli said, "I think this is a great opportunity. Anyone can help out and make prom happen for someone out there!"

This event is a great chance to do your part and help out. Make a small difference in someone's life and give girls the prom they dreamed of.

The Prom Fashion Show is Feb. 19 at 7PM. Tickets are 5 dollars and the event will be held in the PAC. There is a masquerade theme and a mystery guest performance! So stop by the Prom Fashion Show, you'll have a ball!

In this Issue...

Haiti pg.2

Under Paid pg.7

Acts of Kindness pg.9

'Mo Money pg.11

Photo courtesy of Google



Last November, LHS French classes collected money for the charity Yéle Haiti. Little did they know how soon their donations would be needed.

On Jan. 12, an earthquake that was 7.0 in magnitude, the worst in 200 years, hit near Port-au-Prince, Haiti. On Jan. 20, another hit the city with 6.1 magnitude. Already the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere, Haiti was devastated by earthquakes destroying many buildings and homes. The earthquakes also managed to take the lives of nearly 200,000 Haitian people.

Just as surprising is the recent scandal surrounding Yéle Haiti. Wyclef Jean, who started the charity after Hurricane Jeanne, has been accused of using the money from his charity for personal use.

“It is impossible for me to even comprehend the recent attacks on my character and the integrity of my foundation,” said Jean at a press conference held last Mon. “Have we made mistakes? Yes. Did I ever use Yéle money for personal benefit? Absolutely not.”

So how is LHS going to help out?

“My French classes will do something, but I am not sure what yet, because so many other groups are doing something, and because I have to decide where to donate,” says French teacher Kelly Ercoli.

Molly Mazur, a junior and French student, is enthusiastic about raising money for Haiti again.

“Even before the tragic earthquake occurred in Haiti, all of us French students had decided that Yéle Haiti was a great fundraiser. Because it is a foundation that raises money for schooling in Haiti, it felt really good knowing that we were helping get kids the same ages as us into a classroom for their very first time.”



An e-mail from Vice Principal Dave Clark stated that many student organizations are planning to collect money.

“The freshmen class is collecting money for ‘Change for Haiti’ during wrestling on Jan. 23 and during lunches the following week.”

The e-mail adds, “NHS and NEHS will be doing a similar collection.” Family Consumer classes are also scheduled to do a bake sale. The Winter Spirit Week will now be supporting relief efforts as well.



TOM-TOM News



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TOM-TOM

Editorials



FAKING
~~KICKING~~

the Habit

by Emily Hartl
Head Editor

This past Saturday during my typical shift at work, an incredibly cute guy approached the café counter. Tall, slender, not much older than myself, and relatively well-dressed, this guy was a rare find inside a bookstore. Cute Guy ordered a venti white chocolate mocha with caramel and whipped cream, flashed an adorable smile, and left to find a table while I prepared his beverage.

This guy, aside from being inordinately attractive, seemed perfectly normal to me. However, I happened to glance in his direction a few minutes after giving his drink to him. He looked as though he was holding a black pen cap in his mouth while he changed the song on his iPod. The “pen cap” had a blue LED light on the end of it. Enter the unusual aspect of his behavior.

He proceeded to remove the black tube of plastic from his mouth and blow out a puff of smoke...or so it seemed. He actually exhaled vapor produced by an electronic cigarette.

My immediate reaction was to call him out for smoking indoors, but instead I kept to myself. I recalled seeing a kiosk at the Orland Mall advertising electronic cigarettes that didn’t produce real smoke, therefore having immunity to “no smoking” bans.

Apparently, an e-cigarette uses heated liquid nicotine, among other chemicals and ingredients, to replicate the feeling of smoking a cigarette, but doesn’t produce the harmful effects of second-hand smoke. Technically, the user inhales vapor, not smoke.

E-cigs do not produce odors, stain teeth or induce accidental fires. Their batteries are rechargeable, and they’re good for 200 to 300 puffs before the battery dies. E-cig companies market nicotine liquid refills, so an e-cig is virtually useable for life.

But are you still killing yourself slowly by smoking an e-cigarette?

Electronic Cigarettes Inc. says in their Q&A section of their website that e-cigs are “simply an alternative to smoking cigarettes... They should not be used by non-smokers.”

Continue on page 5



Photo courtesy of Google



If anything, *do it for the kids.*

The FDA has no control over these products, but has studied e-cigs to approximate the damage they can cause. They claimed to find harmful chemicals, especially anti-freeze and multiple carcinogens.

Later, the FDA released statistics showing that less than one percent of an electronic cigarette contains harmful chemicals in a certain brand, and did not publish a margin of error. Supposedly, the e-cig company filed a lawsuit against the FDA for downplaying their numbers.

So maybe Cute Guy wasn't reducing his life by seven minutes every time he took a puff of his e-cig. I have to wonder, however, what other bystanders thought of him upon seeing him smoking inside a retail store.

Worst of all, I have to wonder what questions came up between small children and their parents at the sight of a "fake cigarette."

How does one go about explaining to a first grader that "the man over there isn't really smoking...well, sort of..."



The negative image is still apparent with an e-cig, just as it is with an actual cigarette. Decades ago, smoking was portrayed as elegant and classy. Is that the goal of new e-cigarette companies? By adding technology to an otherwise deadly habit, will the glamour of cigarette smoking be reintroduced?

When did we give up on campaigns to quit smoking altogether? Clearly, society prefers to replace its addictions rather than amend them. What kind of example are we setting for youth by faking our habits instead of fixing them?

Quit while you're ahead, society. Stop justifying vaporized nicotine as an "eco-friendly" substitution and cease to make excuses for fatal compulsions.

If anything, do it for the kids.



Photos courtesy of Google



6

TOM-TOM

Editorials



Let's All Do Our Part!

by Kelly Lyons
Editorials writer

... as long as it's the popular thing to do

On Tues, Jan. 12, a 7.0 magnitude earthquake hit Haiti, devastating thousands of people. Just eight days later, a 6.1 magnitude earthquake struck, raising the death toll even more.

According to usmagazine.com, 200,000 people are dead; 250,000 are injured; and 1.5 million are homeless.

But before the recent wreckage of the already troubled country, how many people knew how impoverished the inhabitants really were? Worse yet, who even cared?

Most people were content sitting on their couches, flipping through the channels of entertainment news, or anticipating upcoming Hollywood award shows. Sure, many people were shocked when they heard about the terrible news. However, not many people did anything about it.

But wait! Is that Michelle Obama on TV promoting donations to the earthquake victims? There's going to be a "Hope for Haiti Now" celebrity telethon to raise money? And George Clooney is hosting?! Count America in.

Until world problems are sensationalized by celebrities and the media, most Americans don't give a second thought about helping out. They are too engrossed in other important matters, such as where Brangelina was last spotted, or who wore what to the Golden Globes.

When being a humanitarian is the popular thing to do, everyone wants to do their part. But being a good person isn't something to compare to the latest trends. So why does it go in and out of style like your favorite pair of Uggs or the latest celebrity "it" bag?

Junior Jess Kaminsky thinks that celebrities "helped [people] realize what is going on in Haiti." She also said, "I've heard more about people raising money for Haiti on the internet and through text."

Internet and text donations seem to be the most popular way to give back. "Donations continue to come in [for the "Hope for Haiti Now" telethon]- people can still contribute via phone, [internet] and text," said Lisa Paulsen, telethon supporter and president of the Entertainment Industry Foundation, to mtv.com.

However, celebrities still try to entice people to donate more. "You got about 130 to 140 actors, athletes, singers and television hosts, and they're all coming up," said actor George Clooney to mtv.com about his "Hope for Haiti Now" benefit telethon. Other celebrities to attend include, Brad Pitt, Leonardo DiCaprio, Robert Pattinson, Nicole Kidman and Will Smith.

Of course it's positive that celebrities inspire more people to help out. But it's sad to see that it isn't instinctual to do something out of the good of our own hearts unless it appears to be the popular thing to do.

Haiti, among many other places in the world, is in great need of help from more fortunate people. But they aren't going to get much help when those people would much rather sit around all day watching TV and wasting time on Facebook, are they?

Photo courtesy of Google



TOM-TOM Editorials



Over Worked and UNDER Paid

by Annie Fox
Guest Editorials writer

Photo courtesy of Google

You've seen them, the grubby faces of a deprived youth, they haunt the media. It's a commercial asking for a donation or a story on the evening news about the exploitation of children; yes these faces are far away.

Statistics from unicef.com say 190.7 million children work in hazardous conditions, which is 15.8 percent of the world. Along with the gruesome conditions of the factories or fields, these child workers often endure beatings, humiliation and sexual violence by their employers. In South Asia, another 44 million are engaged in child labor.

We shake our heads and the more saintly of us may donate a dollar a day, but for the most part we remain unaffected.

But what about the stories close to home? Lemont, Illinois...child labor? The two do not go hand in hand. I haven't met anyone working for 39 cents an hour, but I recently got hired making 50 cents under minimum wage. I was appalled. This is America! I want my minimum wage. I need that extra 50 cents an hour!

When I first realized minimum wage is now eight dollars, I was confused. I realized I may be "suffering" from exploitation myself. Potentially falling under the category of a child laborer, I looked for some insight.

I asked my American Problems teacher, Rick Prangen for some help. Prangen consulted with fellow social studies teacher, Robert Hammerschmidt. They were enraged, ready to picket. So I took to the internet to find the state's minimum wage in print. I was prepared to bleed red pen all over the page with a plethora of exclamation points to emphasize my hostility.

There it was; the law that states that children over the age of 16 and under the age of 18 may be paid 50 cents under the minimum wage.

Immediately my thoughts turned angry once again. I wanted answers. What is the point of the minimum wage if it isn't really the minimum wage? I wanted to write an angry letter! I wanted to quit my job! I wanted to ban together all of the over-worked-under-paid-16-to-18-year-olds and force them to give us our 50 cents!

When I regained my composure I thought this over, trying to digest the blasphemy on the webpage in front of me, at whom should I be angry? The government? My employer? Was I justified in being so worked up? Maybe.

Continue page 8



TOM-TOM

8 Editorials



I thought again. I like my job. I like my money (even though I'm not making as much), but should I give up this fight out of fear for losing it all? In the long run, what would I gain?


My mind raced with thoughts of ageism and discrimination. Am I not doing the same job as those that are only a year and half older than I? Am I putting forth as much effort? Am I doing a job that is as good as those older than me? I'd like to think so. So why am I undeserving of the minimum wage?

Ideally I would become an activist for the in-between workers missing out on the extra 50 cents, but how realistic were my dreams of petitions, headlines in the news, rallies and fighting the power? The government isn't going to protect the youth of our nation. That is evident now. It has become apparent that no one wants to step up and take on this battle.

I guess I should just be grateful I can buy a gumball, but as a born-and-raised true blooded American I always want more, forever unsatisfied. I'm underpaid by American standards, but putting myself in the shoes of a young girl from Yemen or Bosnia, I have no right to be ungrateful.



Photo courtesy of Google



TOM-TOM Features

9 Random acts of kindness

by Hannah Johnson
Features Editor

*Last names were withheld for privacy.

Here's a simple scenario. If you were in a hurry to get to your next class, and saw someone you didn't know drop all their things, what would you do? A) Not even notice and get to your class. B) Assume that someone else will stop and help. C) Stop and help him with his things.

If you picked C then you're in good shape, but even if you picked C for that scenario would you think the same way for the next one?

If a friend told you a tragic story about a colleague with a terminal illness, how would you react? A) Say how sorry you were for her colleague and that you hope for the best in her last days. B) Say you were so sorry but never think about it again. C) Decide to start a fundraiser to help her family pay for all her medical bills.

If you chose C then you are in the exact same mindset as *Angie.

Angie runs a hair salon and has three kids. When one of her clients came in she told Angie about her colleague *Shannon. Shannon is a young mother with three young sons, and is terminally ill with what started as colon cancer. When Shannon was first diagnosed she was at stage 4 (farthest and worst stage of cancer). It has not spread to her arms and lungs. She has been battling it for three years now and has exhausted all treatments; she is now considering clinical trials that are just studies, so they aren't promising.

Angie's mom died of cancer and she said that when her mother was struggling people she didn't even know would step up and help. So she told herself that whenever she could she would step up and help. Once Angie's client told her that Shannon's husband's job was cut down to four days a week and they still didn't qualify for the food pantry, she decided to help.

Angie managed to raise \$200 in cash, \$150 in gift cards to places like Macy's, Target, and Walmart, two huge containers of food, and multiple rolls of toilet paper and paper towels.

This is a true story and Shannon is still battling to live to see as much of her kids' lives as she can. I'm not asking you to decide to collect money for every sad story you hear, but to next time help that person who dropped their things in the hall. You never know what people are going through and random acts of kindness can help anyone to get through the day.



Photo courtesy of Google



TOM-TOM 10 Features

Just get



by Alyssa Busse
Features writer

Picture your ideal job right now. Maybe you see yourself working at the mall, getting a discount on all your favorite clothes. Maybe you picture yourself relaxing at a desk, listening to music and occasionally answering a phone call.



Photo courtesy of Google

never have a job again, but it also has forced me to set my selfishness aside and serve people in my community that really need my help.

Working at a nursing home is not easy, I would argue. There are challenges we face every day in trying to please every single resident, and also not be there until 10pm.

The priceless moments and memories that I make with the residents and my co-workers are what make the frustration, and the low pay, all worth it. If you ask any of my friends and family, they will tell you I always have a new story about work to tell.

Situations, like serving in the dining room and having a resident yell, “Just get a job!” the entire two hours, or having a resident give me life advice, give me satisfaction and stories after every work day. I don’t regret working so much because I love what I do.

I would imagine most teens just want a job that pays them ten dollars an hour to do the easiest tasks humanly possible, and I can say I was the same way.

When I began my job hunt, I looked at places like Famous Footwear, Target, Kohls, and secretary jobs, hoping to find a job where I can get a discount on things I could actually use like everyone else. I eventually found myself discouraged when I didn’t hear from any of these places, and figured I didn’t need a job if I couldn’t find one.

That summer of 2008, my friend invited me to volunteer at the Franciscan Village nursing home for Friday night bingo. I honestly didn’t know what to expect.

To my surprise it was a lot of fun, even though the resident I was helping kept pushing me away because she didn’t want to accept the fact that she couldn’t move the bingo pieces.

As we were leaving we were offered a job in the dining room, and that’s when my work life began.

I have worked at Franciscan Village for a year and a half now, and I can say in all honesty it has been quite an adventure. This adventure has made me want to quit and



TOM-TOM

Sports



'Mo Money No Problems

by Nick Celis
Sports writer

M...Mo...Modento? How do you say that new kids name? The guy those tribe punks sing “Mo money, Mo problems” for? The kid who couldn’t miss a shot to save his life? Well, his name is Modestas Masiulionis and he is changing the face of Lemont basketball.

Lemont’s newfound love, “Mo”, is a 6’4” senior who isn’t afraid to go against his guard counterparts. His presence has struck his peers and inspired a new wave of basketball lovers among the LHS students and faculty alike.

Mo’s story before he transferred to Lemont, however, is something that isn’t too well known of.

Prior to belief, he is NOT fresh off the S.S. Lithuania. In fact, he has been here since he was six years old. Like most immigrant families, the Masiulionis family was searching for the opportunities that America promises.

Living over 6,000 miles away from all of your friends and family is no easy transition. Mo explained that “it was really difficult at first; didn’t know the language, new environment, and new people. Even though I don’t remember a lot I can imagine how hard it was for me. But I was a really fast learner and within a short amount of time I had new friends and got used to the different culture and people.”

Mo picked up sports, and quickly found his calling. In fact, it was only luck that he chose basketball: he was an excellent football player. For five years he was an outstanding running back, defensive tackle, and even line backer. Basketball just sort of happened to Mo at age 8, “Not gonna lie my dad kind of forced me into it at a young age. But I don’t blame him cause I really can’t see myself doing anything else... I guess it’s a Lithuanian thing.”

At his years at St. Joe’s high school, Mo put up some impressive numbers to say the least. He had an astonishing 45% three point field goal percentage, with a total of 10 points per game. He was even given the honor of having been a candidate for the Lithuanian national 16U team.

As for the new LHS love he’s been getting recently? He simply can’t get enough. “I like it a lot. Never in all my years of high school ball have I been a part of something like this. It feels really good to see [The Tribe] coming to our games and cheering us on. They really do make a difference.”



Photo by Danny McKeivitt



by Danny McKevitt
Sports Editor

TOM-TOM

Sports

SPECIAL OLYMPICS



In America, it's all about being first. Our focus always seems to be on climbing up the ladder the quickest to buy the most things. Sports are no exception to this ideal. Winning always seems to be everything in all sporting events, except for one. This event is the Special Olympics.

Every four years, all of the athletes in the games stand together and say the Special Olympics Oath, "Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me brave in the attempt." In no other sporting event is losing even mentioned as a possible option. So what makes the Special Olympics, well... so special? Well, from day one the Olympics have been a humane act of kindness extended to our fellow human beings.

The first Special Olympics were held in Chicago in 1968. Over 1000 athletes from across the United States and Canada participated in the games. The games were made possible by a \$25,000 charitable donation from Eunice Kennedy Shriver, whose sister Rosemary Kennedy became the inspiration for the grant. The First International Winter Special Olympics were held in February of 1997 in Steamboat Springs, CO.

In 1991, the Special Olympics changed its name from the International Special Olympics Summer/ Winter Games to the Special Olympics World Summer/Winter Games. This competition is recognized as the large international competition. The next summer games will be held for the first time in Athens, Greece in 2011. Even though the international receive the largest turnout, it is not the only level of competition.

The Special Olympics headquarters for the Will Cook area is located in Chicago Heights Illinois. Each year, almost two thousand athletes participate in events in towns scattered throughout the Will Cook area. "It really gives me a great feeling whenever I help at the Special Olympics," says multiple year volunteer Freshman Anna Wood.

The Special Olympics gives everyone that is involved a feeling of self accomplishment and self-satisfaction; as every charitable event should give us. Even though we may live in a world of neglect, it should be our prerogative to extend charity to all people on this Earth.

If you are interested in volunteering or possibly competing in the Special Olympics, click on the following link for more information: <http://www.soill.org/area/index.php?area=7>



Photo Courtesy of Google

