

# Peace Love TOM-TOM NEWS at a Glance

by Andrea Earnest  
News Editor

✓ The Writing Center recently held a six-word memoir contest. The faculty winners were Sara Armbrecht, Doran Blakeslee and Brett Nelson. The student winners were Senior Arlene Bozich, Senior Robert Gialessas and Sophomore Matt Cummings.

✓ The February Students of the Month are Freshman Paige Gawrys (Art), Sophomore Tim Nommensen (Special Education), Junior Zymante Petruseviciute (Industrial Technology) and Senior Melissa Rudolph (Mathematics).

✓ Relief funds for Haiti, sponsored by three of the school's organizations, the freshman class, the Foods classes and the Drama Club, have combined to raise more than \$1,500.

✓ Two seniors from LHS, Alexis Brown and Robert Gialessas, have been designated Prairie State Scholars. LHS also had a record 71 students with "Beat The Spread" honors, which is an honor given to students who exceeded the average test scores.

✓ The LHS Speech Team finished second in Regional competition. Nine competitors will advance to IHSA Sectionals including Seniors Lauren Dohse, Arlene Bozich, Raegan Larberg, Alexis Brown, David Timm, Katie Padilla, Juniors Danny Banas, Enrika Grigojevaite and Sophomore Cara Dohse.

## In this issue...

**Haiti: LHS responds...Part 2**

**pg. 2-3**

**"But I listened to them Before  
anyone else!"**

**pg. 4**

**iPod, iPhone...iPad!**

**pg. 13**

**Varsity poms off to state again**

**pg. 16**

# News

## Haiti: LHS responds

### Part 2



by Kristen Peterson  
*News writer*

In only a month's time, LHS has held many fundraisers to raise money for relief in Haiti. From baking cupcakes to collecting change in buckets, so far we have raised a total of \$1,500 to send to various charities that correspond with helping the most publicized country this year.

The first group to collect for Haiti awareness was the freshman class, who set up a coin collection during lunch called "Change for Haiti." By simply going from table to table and setting up a small booth in the lunchroom, they were able to raise \$1,028 to donate to the American Red Cross. According to freshman Sam Moffet, they were able to raise about \$15 per lunch period.

On Feb 4, Food Prep I, Advanced Baking and Culinary Arts classes hosted a bake sale. Selling cupcakes, brownies and other small treats at 50 cents or one dollar, or four dollars a dozen, helped LHS raise \$315 to go towards Haiti.



*Photo Courtesy of Google Images*

"The money will go to Red Cross," explains Kathleen Nollinger, one of the Family and Consumer Science teachers, "but we will request that the money be used for Haiti relief."

That same day, the Drama Club collected money for the dress rehearsal of their winter play, "Auntie Mame." Their efforts allowed a gracious \$200 to be donated to Doctors Without Borders.

In the near future, there is even more help for Haiti coming from LHS: especially from the Family and Consumer Science department.

"Helping Haiti Orphans" is the idea of Sophomore Jenna Stutz, whose Child Development class gave her the idea to collect money for the orphans in Haiti. Getting in

contact with an independent adoption organization has been time-consuming, so Stutz thought of a new way to collect while they wait.

During the week of Feb 16-19, she hopes to sell Airheads and other candy for 50 cents apiece. This money will be collected for the charity "Chances for Children," says Jenna Stevenson, an LHS Family and Consumer

*Continued onto page 3*

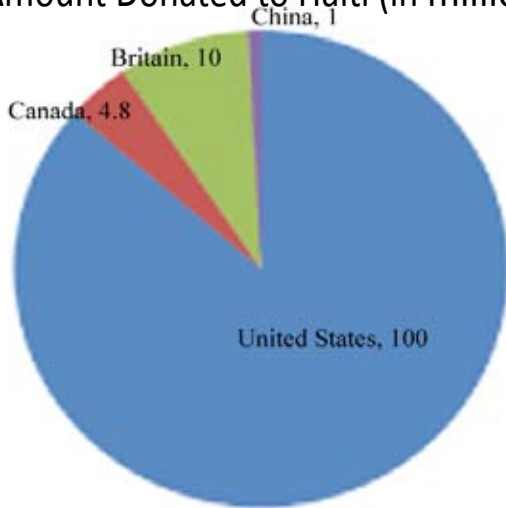


# News



## Haiti: United States Responds

Amount Donated to Haiti (in millions)



In only a month's time, LHS has held many fundraisers to raise money for relief in Haiti. From baking cupcakes to collecting change in buckets, so far we have raised a total of \$1,500 to send to various charities that correspond with helping the most publicized country this year.

The first group to collect for Haiti awareness was the freshman class, who set up a coin collection during lunch called "Change for Haiti." By simply going from table to table and setting up a small booth in the lunchroom, they were able to raise \$1,028 to donate to the American Red Cross. According to freshman Sam Moffet, they were able to raise about \$15 per lunch period.

On Feb 4, Food Prep I, Advanced Baking and Culinary Arts classes hosted a bake sale. Selling cupcakes, brownies and other small treats at 50 cents or one dollar, or four dollars a dozen, helped LHS raise \$315 to go towards Haiti.

"The money will go to Red Cross," explains Kathleen Nollinger, one of the Family and

by Andrea Earnest  
*News Editor*

To the people of Haiti, we say clearly, and with conviction, you will not be forsaken; you will not be forgotten. In this, your hour of greatest need, America stands with you," said President Barack Obama in a statement to the Haitian people.

On Jan. 12, a 7.0 magnitude earthquake hit Haiti. The country was demolished, especially the capital, Port-Au-Prince. The United States responded immediately, giving aid and relief to the devastated nation.

First Lady, Michelle Obama, was seen on commercials for the American Red Cross, asking for Americans to text in donations. The Red Cross has also sent thousands of volunteers to Haiti. Volunteers give medical help, pass out food and give counseling to any who need it.

The "Hope for Haiti" telethon aired on Jan. 22. It raised more than 58 million dollars, all of which went to relief efforts. The star-studded event, headed by George Clooney, Wyclef Jean and Anderson Cooper, was shown on almost every network. A soundtrack from many singers who participated is still available on iTunes. Profit from the soundtrack will also go to relief funds.

Wyclef Jean's charity, Yéle Haiti has been taking a similar approach. Volunteers dole out hot meals, as well as gallons of water for earthquake victims. Jean, who is Haitian, has caused more publicity for the struggling country. "I cannot stress enough what a human disaster this is, and idle hands will only make this tragedy worse," said Wyclef, on a recent blog.

Haiti is still struggling, even though a month has passed since the earthquake. Aid is still needed and as President Obama said, "[Haiti] has endured a history of slavery and struggle, of natural disaster and recovery. And through it all, your spirit has been unbroken and your faith has been unwavering. So today, you must know that help is arriving — much, much more help is on the way."



# **"But I listened to them before anyone else!"**

by Kelly Lyons  
*Editorials writer*

As a music lover who enjoys everything from old school Frank Sinatra to the indie crooning of Vampire Weekend and the electro-pop sound of Lady Gaga, I definitely don't discriminate against anyone's music preference.

To me, all music is timeless. If I really love an artist, chances are my taste won't change so drastically that I will suddenly snap and begin to hate that artist for no apparent reason. But many people out there, who I like to call music snobs, decide that they can no longer be a fan of their most beloved music groups once their songs become main-stream.

I understand this plea for originality, but true fans shouldn't care whether their favorite band is popular or not. Songs aren't going to change as soon as they're played on major radio stations; you'll just hear them more frequently. And if you love a band so much, that seems like a pretty good deal to me.

Another aggravating quality of music snobs is that some of them seem to be under the impression that they singlehandedly discovered their favorite, yet once unknown, artist.

"I listened to them before anyone else!" "No one liked them before I did!" It may seem inconceivable, but bands don't play their music for just a single fan. Their goal is typically for people all over the world to experience their music.

Of course it's pounded into our minds from a very young age that we're supposed to be unique, so it's somewhat understandable that people try to make themselves seem as diverse as possible.

But some people claim they can quickly change their music taste with good reason.

Junior Liz Alvey was once a hardcore Taylor Swift fan, "way before her music was so main-stream." In fact, she's been to four of Swift's concerts and even met her three times. However, Alvey isn't much of a Swift fan anymore.

"I haven't liked her music nearly as much since she got so popular. I think fame changed her, which took away the honesty of her songs. I listen to more relatable music now, like Mayday Parade, [they] aren't trying so hard to get a single," she said.

However, if you really love a band, the reason you should listen to them is your love of their music and nothing more. People who immediately stop listening to music groups once they reach fame shows that all these people wanted was to appear more unique.

Music isn't about what makes you seem more worldly and interesting; it's about finding happiness and an escape in a sound that you can relate to, no matter what the circumstance. In fact, I still love a little Backstreet Boys every now and then and I'm proud of it.



# Editorials



## I gotta Feelin' all the Single Ladies could Use Somebody *Award Season 2010*

by Alyssa Busse  
*Guest editorialist*

And the winner for best female country vocal performance, best country song, best country album and album of the year is... Taylor Swift! That is shocking news...who knew that she was so popular?

Some people would argue that award shows are over extravagant and don't serve a great purpose in comparison to issues surrounding. I am one of these people.

Watching this year's Grammys and People's Choice Awards proved that celebrities just don't get enough recognition and appreciation on a regular basis. We need to dedicate a night to tell them how wonderful they are, because someone has to do it.

Celebrities are so underappreciated these days, it's a crime. Millions of dollars are spent to create a night of luxury and publicity for these super stars, things that they are seriously lacking in their daily lives.

Congratulations, celebrities! You have accomplished the American dream and made millions of dollars for making music and acting your way to fame. You are my idol! Please walk on this red carpet so that we can all take endless pictures and sulk in our envy over your mind blowing talent and beauty. Isn't she gorgeous? He's so hot! What more could they want out of life than to be indulged with attention and congratulated just for being themselves?

Everything that music celebrities ever dream of happens all in one night: winning a statue. That moment that they live each day for, waiting to see if they have succeeded their competitors of pop culture, finally comes one night each year.

Some spend their lives helping others who are in need. Then there are those who dedicate their lives to helping one person: themselves. Not to say that current celebrities don't help people around them or care about issues occurring in our world, but how much attention can you pay to other people when your job is to broadcast yourself?

Don't get me wrong: I love Taylor Swift, and I can in all honesty say I don't know what I would do without music and movies. But the idea should be proposed. We are obsessed. Our minds are capable of understanding and learning about so many things.

Does the entertainment industry distract its consumers so much they ignore the importance of international issues? I want to believe there is an equal balance between rock stars and reality.

# Get started on college



Enroll in Joliet Junior College's dual credit program and earn college credit while still in high school!

***Benefits of JJC's dual credit program:***

- Grades appear on your transcript as a college course
- Credit is transferrable to most state colleges
- Tuition and fees are waived by JJC
- Classes are taught at your high school by teachers you know
- Classes are part of your regular high school schedule
- No extra fees or costs are involved



**JOLIET**  
JUNIOR COLLEGE  
— 1901 —

**Talk to your high school counselor or visit  
[www.jjc.edu/info/dual-credit](http://www.jjc.edu/info/dual-credit) to learn more.**





Blue Day  
Staff!

Head Editor:

Emily Hartl  
Design Editor:  
Taylor Thanos  
Assistant Design Editors:  
Brittany Madsen  
Emma Cunningham  
News Editor:  
Andrea Earnest  
Editorials Editor:  
Emily Hartl  
Features Editor:  
Hannah Johnson

Sports Editor:

Danny McKeivitt  
Staff Photographers:  
Danny McKeivitt  
Annie Fox  
News:  
Kristen Peterson  
Editorials:  
Kelly Lyons  
Features:  
Annie Fox  
Alyssa Busse

Sports:

Nick Celis  
Bryan Clark  
Danny McKeivitt  
Business Manager:  
Nick Celis  
The LHS Tom-Tom does  
not discriminate on the basis  
of race, gender, religion,  
or orientation.

# Driving School

**A  
BETTER  
CHOICE**

**DRIVING SCHOOL**

## “A Better Road to Success”

- Get your driver's license quickly and conveniently
  - Sign up for classes now
  - Lowest rates available in the area
  - Illinois State Licensed Instructors
- Over 37 + years of safe driving experience
  - Free home pick-up
  - Register and Pay online
  - New classes start frequently

(630) 963 5075

# Features



## A well-kept secret:

## Timberline Residential Treatment Center

by Emily Hartl  
*Head Editor*

Whether you've walked near, driven past, or sled down the hill leading to Timberline Knolls, you've undoubtedly wondered what type of facility was hiding behind the "Personal Property/No Trespassing" signs.

Try as you might to peek through the forest of foliage surrounding the property, it's nearly impossible to distinguish what lies inside the clearing that has been a part of Lemont for years.

All it took was an email to Carrie Finazzo, the Timberline Knolls Academy principal, and suddenly I found myself meeting with the CEO of the facility, James Gresham, to investigate one of Lemont's best-kept secrets.

### **The beauty of healing**

Upon my arrival at Timberline Knolls (TK), I immediately noticed the incredible beauty and vastness of the property—43 acres of vastness, to be exact. Charming pale-yellow buildings and snow-covered trees embellished the intimacy of the woodland area.

Upon my entrance into the Administrative Building, I took note of the warm-and-cozy aura of the lobby. It resembled the waiting room of a spa: comfortable furniture, soft lighting, beautiful pictures decorating the walls, earthy tones and a smiling secretary.

I first met with Finazzo, who led me to the upper level of the building. She introduced me to multiple staff members and explained the reason for my visit; everyone was friendly and excited to meet me. All the staff members expressed what a passion they have for their work and their purpose.

Also, they couldn't say enough positive things about Gresham, their boss. They said they loved working for him and that he was great at what he does. Naturally I was very excited to meet such an admired man.

### **What's it all about?**

TK treats women ages 12 and older with many types of disorders, including eating disorders, substance abuse and addiction, mood disorders, and trauma/anxiety, specializing in co-occurring disorders. The staff takes care to treat each resident personally and on an individual basis.

"We serve people from all over the country," Gresham says. The facility is "convenient for families to get to"

*Continued onto page 9*



# Features



## Way back when: Rock Creek Center

Rock Creek Center, the clinic previously inhabiting what is now Timberline Knolls, shut down in 2002 due to financial scandal. Prior to its closing, however, the RCC was a hospital for patients with chronic mental illness.

According to the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), the 133-bed facility was operating at approximately 63% occupancy. The patients residing there were sent to various area hospitals after the closing.

Post-close, the center was investigated for “overcharging the federal health insurance program for people 65 and older or for people with chronic disabilities,” according to a Chicago Tribune article from Oct. 2, 2002.

At the time, employees of RCC refrained from divulging any details regarding the circumstances of the center’s demise. Suspicions arose when a patient at RCC died in 2001; the IDPH attributed the death to a lack of adequate patient monitoring.

The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services later conducted a survey of four deaths occurring at RCC, the details of which were not publically issued. An owner of the facility claimed that their operations were flawed due to Medicare’s failure to properly reimburse their costs.

Meanwhile, RCC was losing nearly \$10,000 per day, and still investing about \$1 million to expand the facility.

Needless to say, after the discovery of kickback payoffs to area doctors for referring their patients to RCC, the facility shut down.

Rock Creek Center is an entirely separate and unrelated entity to Timberline Knolls. They have no connection aside from occupying similar property.

with its proximity to the Chicago airports. TK staff places great importance on family therapy.

“We try to meet the patients where they’re at,” he says. “We are in this incredibly serene place to facilitate healing for women.”

The reason for having a facility for women only is to provide a safe environment, free from distraction or intimidation. “A lot of our residents have trauma,” Gresham explains. In fact, 90% of residents have experienced some type of trauma. The privacy is, according to Gresham, one of the key factors to successful treatment.

Therapy is initiated either by patients’ families, other medical professionals, or prospective residents themselves. Gresham says it isn’t rare for women to seek their own help and treatment.

“They have nowhere else to turn,” he says. “[Healing] requires their own initiative.”

Residents follow the 12-Step principles throughout their stay at TK, and long after they leave. The facility is not a Christian treatment center, but does offer spiritual guidance as an extension of the 12-Step Program.

In addition, TK offers many “Core Groups” or alternate therapies, including Art Therapy, Dance/Movement Therapy, Equine Therapy, and Recreational/Activity Therapy.

The art therapy “offers an opportunity to explore intense or painful thoughts and feelings in a supportive environment...using a wide variety of art materials...to create a visual representation of thought and feelings.”

The equine therapy at TK Ranch allows residents to work with and care for horses, so women can “regain their confidence by developing skills that can be applied to all aspects of life.”

Residents also have the opportunity to “participate in a wide-range of outings which includes

*Continued onto page 10*



# Features



museums, theaters, [and] horse back riding.”

Both adolescents and adults can take electives including nutrition, self-defense, cooking, fitness, and prayer groups.

“It’s a safe place to work on some things,” says Finazzo. “It’s very gently done.”

Melanie DeVries, the marketing coordinator at TK, emphasized the relationships among residents at the facility and how they “feed off each other in recovery.”

Finazzo added, “It’s amazing what friendship does.”

Both women were exceptionally enthusiastic about their jobs, constantly joking about how “there’s something in the water” there because they are always pleased with their jobs. They enjoy the satisfaction and rewarding feeling of helping women to heal and recover.

## **An inside look from the outside**

I was fortunate enough to interview an alumna of TK, who is currently an LHS student. She stayed at TK for just over a month, during 2007. She was 14 years old at the time.

She was treated for depression, brought on by traumatic events in her life that led to drug usage. Her parents originally brought her to TK for treatment but she was skeptical about staying in a residential treatment facility.

The things that helped her to heal, however, were the expressive therapy—particularly art therapy—and her fellow residents, as well as the compassionate staff members at TK.

The art therapy “keeps you honest about things and tries to make you feel accepted so you’re not keeping secrets anymore,” she said.

During a typical day, she woke up at 7am and hung out in the common rooms with other residents.

During this free time, girls were not allowed to be in their rooms, but they could socialize with other girls, or individually work on their own projects. “I collaged,” my interviewee said.

Breakfast followed this quiet time, and then the school day began at Timberline Knolls Academy (TKA), where she studied all the typical teenage subjects but in a smaller classroom. The school-age residents were only divided into two classes.

TKA is an Illinois State Board of Education-approved school, with individual education plans for each girl.

The schoolgirls ate lunch together as well, and after lunch “you talk with the group that you’re with...[for example] girls with eating disorders talk about how the meal was,” she explained.

In her group, the girls discussed drugs and their effects, among other things, using packets and professionals to help them.

The girls ate dinner and then met with a therapist or visited with their parents.

As a resident, “[you] want your parents to better understand why you’re doing the things that you’re doing [and] try to gain some of their trust back,” she said.

Each resident designates her own goals for the week. She explained, “You have your own assigned person on the staff that you’re supposed to talk to.”

Throughout each day, each girl “has a little card that you have to get filled out...a scoring card, kind of.”

The card she referred to is actually called a Recovery Card. The Recovery Card is a tool in place for residents to pull on their strengths and offer incentives for their hard work on a daily basis. This card is used as a

*Continued onto page 11*



# Features



reflection tool for both residents and staff to track progress and challenges. Residents have the opportunity to earn incentives as an acknowledgement of their hard work.

The residents are encouraged to maintain the friendships from TK. “I still talk to a lot of the girls I was there with. You don’t expect to find someone who’s been through the same things,” my interviewee said.

She explained that friendships in a residential treatment facility are stronger because there’s no judgment among residents; they empathize with each other and can better understand difficult situations or traumatic events.

The staff, similarly, formed strong relationships with her. “I feel like every staff member tried to develop a personal relationship. There’s someone who’s gonna be proud of you and push you further along in your recovery,” she said.



“They legitimately care about you and want you to get better, they work really hard, they always try to get you to engage in groups, and they don’t give up. They’re so patient with you,” she further explained.

Right before my interviewee left TK, the art teacher gave her a small stone inscribed with the word “Focus” and the other staff gave her a bracelet.

“You feel safe there; it’s a structured environment ... you’re surrounded by people you connect with,” she said. “I stopped being bitter about my situation ... I saw how many people care about me. I decided it was time for me to grow up. Six months later, I had completely changed as a

person and realized everything I learned [at TK] was beneficial to me.”

*For more information about Timberline Knolls, visit [www.timberlineknolls.com](http://www.timberlineknolls.com) or call (630) 257.9600*

# Features



by Hannah Johnson  
*Features Editor*

You can surf the web with its vibrant color and sharp text screen in portrait or landscape with just a turn of the screen. Store and share your photos with its exclusive software. You can even use your iPad as a digital photo frame while it's docked or charging.

The new invention from apple can do it all. The large, high-resolution screen makes all your movies come to life in the palm of your hands. From HD movies and TV shows to podcasts and music videos. With the iPod app, all your music is right at your fingertips. It runs almost 140,000 apps from the App Store.

There are also new apps designed specifically for iPad.

Apple has highlighted them on their website, so you can easily find the ones that take full advantage of the iPad's features. Like the new iBooks app. It's a new way to read and buy books. Download the free app from the App Store and buy everything from the built-in iBookstore.

No GPS needed. Tap to view maps from above with high-resolution satellite imagery or up close with street view, all using Google Services. Search for a nearby restaurant or landmark and you can get directions from your current location.

Apple has done it again. Everything you could possibly need all at your fingertips. The iPad starts at \$499 and runs up to \$829. Compared to their thousand dollar Mac Notebooks, that's an excellent price. Go to <http://www.apple.com/ipad/notify-me/> to have apple send you an e-mail when the iPad is available for purchasing.

iPod,  
**iPhone...**  
*iPad?*



Photos Courtesy of Google



# Features



## My Average Life That Gives ME Hope

by Annie Fox  
*Features writer*

As our means of communication change, websites like FML, MLIA and GMH have begun to take form. We laugh, we cringe, we are lucky it didn't happen to us.

Gives Me Hope is a more recent

and less popular website. GMH was designed to tell inspirational stories and spread the message that "Life is beautiful today." Their slogan reads "Like FML, for optimists!" These stories are perfect for your daily dosage of warm and fuzzy. Don't believe me? Take a look and shed a tear.

- Two years ago my wife was diagnosed with breast cancer.

When I took my marching band to a competition at my high school, the entire band showed up in the warm up arc with pink ribbons on their uniforms, and had an announcement read that their performance was in honor of my wife.

Those kids GMH.

- There's a friendly homeless man who always rides the same subway, selling trinkets for 25 cents each, usually to buy food.

- Last year, I was going to kill myself. I wrote a note and slipped it into my best friend's locker at school. That night, I was preparing to die, when she crawled through my window and kissed me. My first real kiss.

Kristain, I know you read GivesMeHope all the time. Will you marry me? [www.givesmehope.com](http://www.givesmehope.com)

FML, although the most popular, is also the most vulgar of these sites. It has been blocked on our school server and you can't search it on Google without encountering a slew of salty sites, take my word for it. So what's so alluring about FML?

Senior Karl Blasé said "I guess it's funny to read about other people's bad situations." With tales of embarrassing mishaps and unfortunate daily encounters, we embrace the sometimes unbearably awkward stories page by page.

My Life is Average is another site formed after FML, but with a different purpose. MLIA celebrates the monotony of each day. "Life is pretty normal today" is their slogan. The use of sarcasm, satire and dry humor will make you smile. The stories aren't outrageous, just humorous aspects of everyday life.

- Last night, I was really hot in bed, so I took one leg out of the covers. Then I got scared because it was too dark and my leg felt unprotected from something hiding under my bed. So I put it back under the blankets.

MLIA

- Today, I wore Axe body spray. I wasn't tackled by any women. MLIA.
- Today, I saw a commercial for the Snuggie. I thought it was stupid idea but I couldn't change the channel because I was under a blanket and I didn't want my arms to get cold. MLIA <http://mylifeisaverage.com/>

With apps for your iPhone or your iTouch, it's easy to stay connected or have a quick laugh on the go. Whether your day is good, bad, or average, thanks to the internet, you aren't alone.

# Sports



# 15

by Danny McKevitt  
*Sports Editor*

## Everything But The Game



Try to think back a few weeks to Super Bowl XLIV, A.K.A. “The Big Dance”. This year, 151.6 million people tuned in to watch some grown man toss around a leather ball as they tried to get their team to cross a line more than the other team. That’s almost as many blades of grass that are approximately on the field; 194 million.

Many people only remember the commercials and typically end up forgetting the final score. In fact, approximately 40% of all people that watch the Super Bowl aren’t fans of the game. Sophomore Kylie Abernathy said, “The only reason I watch the Super Bowl is to watch the commercials. I mean, the game really isn’t that interesting but the commercials are always good for a laugh.”

The commercials and the game aren’t the only thing that causes people to tune in. Some people tuned in to see a few condensed The Who concert into a few minutes. Even though the band has lost original drummer Keith Moon (1946-78) and original bassist John Entwistle (1944-2002), lead singer Roger Daltrey and lead guitarist Pete Townshend still sound just as good as they did in their tracks from 1971. Junior Mikey Hayes said, “I have heard a few of their songs before but I really wouldn’t have considered myself a fan of theirs. After watching this show, I am totally going to download their Greatest Hits.”

The Super Bowl has turned into more than just a game; it’s now what marketing major’s dream of doing when they leave college. “The Big Dance” is no longer just a big dance for players and their fans; it’s now a place where dreams are made for companies as well as allowing bands of yesterday to be rediscovered by a new generation.

Photo Courtesy of Google



# Sports



by Nick Celis  
*Sports writer*

## *Varsity Poms off to State Again*

The powerhouse referred to as the girl's varsity poms team has done it again. Now going on their third consecutive year qualifying for state, the girls are looking to bring back a trophy.

This past weekend, the girls clinched with two all star performances. Earning two first place awards were the Vegas themed poms routine, and the now infamous "Man Eater" performance in the open dance category.

Junior Aleks Saulys explains "I'm so happy we did it again this year, we've been working on these routines since July and it finally came together for us." An honor not easily achieved, they had some real competitors. "Maine East has always had an amazing squad, and Sandburg really brought it. Since a few years ago when we first qualified, we've really been topping off on everyone's hit list."

Senior and captain Abby Biernat is a veteran to the squad and no stranger to this spotlight. "It's great to be back here again, but at the same time we can't get too excited just yet." Biernat explained that since teams can only learn so many dances at once, they do more revising than learning this time of year. "Compared to last year we really need to up the annie. Not so much major changes in our dances, but more tweaks, facial cues, foot counts, stuff like that."

The stress that comes with this vigorous work ethic is at times unbearable, but the girls find creative ways to let off steam. Biernat continued "The Boy/Girl dance is really what all the girls look forward to most during the season. It's so much fun and the guys are so funny to work with. The best part is we can just make up whatever moves look the coolest, there are no judges and no pressure, plus everyone loves to see these bulky guys try and do some acrobatic poms moves."

The girls are heading down to state on March 7 to put their adjustments to good use. To see the latest on the girls upcoming performances click here: <http://www.ihsa.org/>



Photo Courtesy of Google