

The Clarion

December 2006

Memorial Honors Fallen Student

By Jasmine Liu
Staff Writer

Under a bed of orange, magenta and yellow flowers, before A-Hall's entrance towards the counseling office, lies a plaque dedicated to Angela Russo. Every day, students pass by the plaque without knowing of its existence, or the tragic story behind it.

It was 1976 when Angela Russo was a senior attending Chatsworth. She was the youngest and had two brothers, Jack Russo and Joe Russo. Thirty years ago like this year, she was probably looking forward to graduation like all the seniors. Unfortunately, she never had the chance to walk across the stage.

"A couple months before she graduated she was murdered by her ex-boyfriend," said Debbie Rizzotti, the 'budget lady' at Chatsworth as well as a relative of Angela Russo. Russo was murdered on March 25, 1976.

Russo apparently tried to break off the relationship with her boyfriend, but in the end it ended horrendously.

"He sent her a message [and said] if she didn't get back together he was going to kill himself," said Mrs. MacArthur. Apparently, Russo went to see her boyfriend and tried to help him, but "...he kidnapped her and killed her" said Mrs. MacArthur.

"Everybody was so sad. People knew what kind of a sweet person she was," said



A plaque was placed near A and B halls a few years after Angela Russo's death.

Mrs. MacArthur.

Angela was a smart and popular student.

"She didn't deserve that," said Mrs. MacArthur.

Angela could have had a career in business, because she was good with shorthand and business machines, MacArthur said.

In memory of Angela and
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Should The 'N word' Be Banned?

By Brenda Fuentes
Staff Writer

The "n word" is in the spotlight again.

The most recent incident occurred at the Laugh Factory nightclub in West Hollywood, when Michael Richards, who played Kramer on "Seinfeld," insulted many African Americans, using the "n" word during a tirade against audience members.

This incident induced some members of the Los Angeles City Council to try to band the "n word". The Rev. Jesse Jackson, a civil rights leader, and others said that they would get together with TV networks, film companies and musicians to discuss the topic and try to get them to ban the word.

Also, after this incident, the owner of the Laugh Factory, Jaime Masada, said he is going to fine comedians for the use of the word and all other hateful words. Richards presented his apologies and said that he was really sorry and that he would never use the word again and that he was going to help so that no one else would use it again. Even after his apologies, Jackson encouraged people not to buy the 7th season of the Seinfeld show.

CHS students expressed a range of views on use of the word. Many people argue that the "n word" is only allowed in the African-American community. For example, Brandon Wilson an African American senior, believes that "You could use it in the house but not in any public place, and not in rap videos or TV, because it's showing the kids that it is okay for them to use it."

But others disagree and say that if it is okay for African Americans to use it, "it is ok for everyone else to use it. It does not bother me 'cause to me it is not an insult," said senior Levar Robinson.

Alexandra Thomas, a
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Remodeled Mall Is A Bit Too Much

By Huong Nguyen
Staff Writer

The much-anticipated renovations made to the Topanga Westfield mall were finally completed to bring luxury shopping closer to our homes. If it seems too good to be true, it probably is to the typical high school student.

The \$350 million Australian company Westfield put into redeveloping the mall has ex-

panded the shopping center by about 300,000 square feet of new shops, making the mega mall a whopping 1.6 million square feet in total.

The mall now features 240 stores and restaurants, including a gigantic Target, a relocated and more luxurious Nordstrom, The Farm in Beverly Hills Restaurant, and a bigger food court, just to name the most notable. Although renovations have not been made in the older wings,

there have been several stores such as Fredericks of Hollywood that have relocated into the newer section as well.

"Bigger is not always better," junior Pratima Bhamidi said about the size of the new mall.

Although high-fashion stores such as Zara, Burberry, Armani Exchange, Bebe Sport, and Gucci all feature merchandise that are beyond the typical high school student's budget,

more affordable stores such as Zumies, MAC makeup, Aeropostale, Abercrombie, Sephora, and the soon to come H&M may be a little more attractive. It seems the ratio of high end vs. affordable stores is pretty even. However, the distance between two stores that you may want to shop at may just be a mile away.

"I've gotten lost there. I seriously have, it was so funny because everything starts look

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Five Simple Steps For Shopping Success

By Maggie Ghahri-Saremi
Staff Writer

Holiday shopping is a joyous occasion, but your wallet may not think so. You'll pull that sucker out, store after store this shopping season and before you know it your wallet (and you) will be crying for more cash. Do your wallet and yourself a favor this time of year by following these five simple steps for holiday shopping success.

1. Make a list

Avoid buying gifts without first determining the recipients. If you fail to make a list, you'll be

prone to making more impulse buys either when you're standing in line or when you're at your wits' end. Make a list of all the people you want to purchase gifts for.

2. Set a limit

How much are you willing to spend on your friends? Family? Teachers? Co-workers? How much do you actually have to spend? Set a spending limit for each person on your gift list and try not to go over.

3. Use cash, not the card

If the hustle and bustle of shopping centers around this time of year gives you an urge to spend more than you anticipate, leave

your debit and/or credit cards at home. Take a specific amount of money (\$100-\$300) with you each shopping trip and spend no more than what you have.

4. Resist the temptation After hunting endlessly for those perfect gifts you may feel a bit jealous of those on your list. After all, you think you've done a nice job buying them what they'll like. Try not to give into the temptation of buying something for yourself. It's difficult, I know, but do you really owe it to yourself to buy that new game system or sweater? Not really. You do, however, owe it to yourself to save money. Wait

for the presents you'll be receiving later on from those on your list. Someone is bound to give you money or get you a gift card...that's when you can finally splurge on something nice.

5. Save on wrapping If you buy most of your presents in department stores or specialty stores, more often than not they offer to put smaller items such as books, clothing, and toys in a gift box. If they don't, don't be shy to ask for one. And while you're at it, ask if they do free gift-wrapping, that way you can save money and time on wrapping those armfuls of gifts you've purchased.

In This Issue

How do you make a **relationship** last? See page 3

See what a **Harvard homeboy** has to say about being successful on page 3.

It's standing room only when renowned author **Isabel Allende** pops into a local bookstore. See page 2.

You want lists? We've got your **holiday lists** right here on page 4.

Finding Success with Salsa

By Brenda Fuentes
Staff Writer

Success is what everyone wishes to accomplish some day. Many seek it for years or their whole lives, but there are those that start and reach it at a young age.

Jesse Griego, a senior at CHS, is one of those that are already on the road to success. He is only 17 years old; he wants to graduate and go in to CSUN's business program.

With the help of his family and Ms. Youngblood, his job training coach, he has managed to start his own business, True Salsa.

"True Salsa is true ingredients," as the way Griego describes it. He said that he started this business with the help of Ms. Youngblood and his family. "I doesn't see myself working at a low paying job, I want to be my own boss," said Griego. This salsa has been in his family for years, but it never occurred to him to make it into a business, until he was given the

idea and support that he needed.

In Ms. Youngblood's class he had to come up with a type of business, so he mention the idea of selling the salsa, and with her help he took of.

With only a few weeks in the business he had already sold a little more than 300 salsas. He sells them in two different sizes, small and large, and it comes in mild, medium, and hot. His goal is "to create something that people can't say no to."

He presented his ideas and product to parents during back to school night. "They were impressed by my little promo," and people loved it. He even ran out of salsa to sell. "It's homemade salsa and it's good, everyone that eats it likes it" said Griego.

"Through this program he has gone from really shy and quiet to productive and sales orientated," said Ms. Youngblood, who admits that one of Griego's weaknesses was standing in front of large crowds. Now it is one of his major strengths.

"I was nervous of course at first, but after a while I got comfortable talking to crowds," added Griego.

Griego was the president of Project Ecko, which is a branch of Ms. Youngblood's program. She thinks that he has a lot of potential and that he has the ability to run a business.

The process of making this salsa takes about two hours. First, Jesse uses a small food processor while his mother supervises him through the process to make sure that everything goes well. "I want everything to be clean," he said.

He is also saving up to by a bigger food processor "to make more in less time." His goal is to start small and then grow big enough to have his product sold in all the groceries stores and malls, or as he said "start small and just grow and grow."

Like many teens, Jesse does not want to be a simple employee, but instead his own boss. Unlike many he's doing something about it.

Everything '90s Is Back Again, At Least On TV

By Stephanny Landaverde
Staff Writer

Although there are several shows that are enjoyed by many teens today, some students prefer the shows they grew up with in the 90's. That is because some TV shows today lack creativity, and often tell the same story using violence, sex appeal, and profanity.

"They got more violent," said senior Nashly Quiñones about today's TV shows. She enjoys watching shows of the 90's to cheer her up after a bad day.

Many people enjoy watch-

ing old shows such as Full House, Boy Meets World, and The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air, which are funny and familiar. TV shows today have the same plotline from beginning to end in different ways such as the new show Ugly Betty, which originally comes from two other Hispanic soap operas about an unappealing woman working as a secretary in the fashion and modeling industry.

Senior Ana Gonzalez says that all TV has to offer today is nothing but reality TV, which is why she prefers watching 90's reruns. "They're very classic," said Gonzalez.

CHS Band And Drill Team Win Again

By Vinh Nguyen
Staff Writer

CHS' Drill and Band Team won its third LAUSD competition in a row last Saturday at East L.A. College. The band director, Mr. Williams said, "I wasn't shocked at the talent the band has. I was involved in a car accident last December, and the band couldn't practice all

summer." Yet, the band was still able to recover from their loss and win the competition. When Williams arrived here at Chatsworth four years ago, the band hadn't competed in over 27 years; however, they were able to seal the deal for the last three years, with Senior Drum Major Keith Cerrato leading the way.

Fans Flock To Borders To See Acclaimed Author Allende

By Candy Wong
Staff Writer

On Tuesday, November 28, author Isabel Allende appeared at the Northridge Borders Bookstore to greet fans, stir a literary hullabaloo, and read an excerpt from her latest novel, "Ines of My Soul."

By 7 p.m., fans had flocked to Borders in every age and shoe size, ethnicity and income: some standing on the carpeted staircase, others seated in the plastic chairs, still others rising on the tops of their tippy-toes—all present to meet the famous author whose writing style welds vivid details and

imagery.

Although only thirty chairs were set up for the book signing, over 150 people showed up to see Allende. The book Allende read from, "Ines of My Soul," was her sixteenth book.

Allende, a novelist and niece of a former president of Chile—Salvador Allende, is somewhat of a historical and romantic storyteller. One of her books, "Aphrodite: A Memoir of the Senses," fuses food with love and contains pages of recipes for aphrodisiacs.

Though Allende turned 64 in August, she did not look a day past 40 in person.



"She looked so young, like she was in her late 30's or something," said Iris Nguyen, a senior who attended the book signing, bought one of Allende's books, and scored an autograph from the author.

According to an interview with womankindflp.org, she de-

votes much of her daily life to writing, dedicating long hours to her craft.

"She writes for 10 to 12 hours a day, locked in her office and not answering the phone or talking to anyone, and she starts all her books on January 8, in superstitious deference to the date in 1981 when she began the long letter to her grandfather that, in her late 30s, turned her into a novelist."

Additionally, Allende

"writes in Spanish, and consequently is not edited because there is no tradition of editing in Spanish publishing houses."

On writing, Allende said, "It took me 40 years to realize that I love to do this, and that I know how to do it."

At Borders, she commented on the brevity of life.

"I don't like watches and I don't like clocks because they remind me of how brief life is," said Allende.

Report: Engine Tests Caused Cancers

By Brenda Fuentes
Staff Writer

A nuclear accident at the Santa Susana Field Laboratory in the hills near Chatsworth more than forty years ago may be the cause of hundreds of cancer cases in the area, according to a recent study conducted by an independent panel.

"Researchers concluded that chemical contamination from about 30,000 rocket engine tests at the site remains a threat to the soil and groundwater surrounding the facility," reported the Los Angeles Times. They also stated that without weather data to gauge wind directions and speed to determine how far radioactive gases may have trav-

eled from the site, they could not state whether this had an effect on health or not.

Many people have filed lawsuits against the owners of the laboratory, believing them responsible for the cause of their illness. These accusations led environmentalists, lawmakers, and activists to conduct research on this topic and to prove if this was true.

"We don't know the effects that that's going to have... Chatsworth is right around the corner of Simi Valley," said Mr. C. Dunbar, a history teacher concerned about the effects that it may have on not Simi Valley but also in Chatsworth. He also commented, "If they know it's true, they should pay for the

treatment that these people have to take because of their cancer...because medical insurance is expensive."

The cleanup is being conducted by the Department of Energy, which ran the nuclear research program at the lab until it was shut down in the late 1980s.

The nuclear meltdown happened in 1959, but it wasn't until 20 years later that it was made public, when a UCLA student discovered a film of the 1959 accident that showed how more than a dozen uranium fuel rods in the reactor ruptured and partly melted, according to the Times. It was then when research started to go further into what happened.

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Clarion's Editorial Policy

The goal of The Clarion is to provide relevant and reliable news to the students and staff at Chatsworth High School. All stories are produced by students in the journalism and school newspaper classes unless otherwise stated. The paper is subject to review by school administrators before publication. The newspaper is funded by the school and private advertisers.

The opinions expressed in the editorials are those of the individual writers and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the staff as a whole.

We hold ourselves accountable for the accuracy and fairness of our work. If factual errors are brought to our attention we will correct them in the next edition.

Harvard's Homeboy Comes To Chatsworth

By Stephanny Landaverde
Staff Writer

Richard Santana (aka Chocolate) recently came to CHS to talk to all Latino students about the tragic moments in his life and how he dealt with violence, sex, and drugs and to show Latinos that they too can succeed in life. Our Latino students were introduced to a new program called Homeboy Goes to Harvard dedicated only them.

Santana didn't grow up with a mother or a father. His mother passed away when he was three months old and his father abandoned him before he was even born.

He was sent to group homes and foster homes without caring whether or not he wanted to.

"They made me feel like some kind of number," he said

When he grew up to be thirteen years old, his uncle introduced him and his cousins to drugs. His uncle made them drink vodka and when they refused to drink he would pin them to the wall and punch them with all his strength and the more they cried, the more he punched.

"He kept doing it over and over again until like the pain got so bad we couldn't cry anymore. He was like trying to teach us about how we're supposed to be men, how we're supposed to handle pain, how we ain't supposed to cry."

His uncle taught him that in order to be a man, he was supposed to handle alcohol, drugs, and disrespect women.

On the subject of sex, he told the young men that a real man does not disrespect women

and does not force them into intimacy because the ladies can suffer one major consequence.

"It's proven today... TODAY, the number one group dropping out of high school: Latinas. The reason is pregnancy."

He mentioned how young Latina women who get pregnant don't use their pregnancy as a way to succeed but as a free ticket to quitting.

With his life going into the wrong direction, one of his teachers helped him turn into the right direction.

"Somebody stepped in. Somebody reached out. Somebody took the chance to save my life." His teacher opened up his eyes and made him see that he was worth more than he thought he was. Sadly his 'friends' didn't think that way. His so-called

friends called him a sell out for getting one good grade. They thought it was 'cool' to get F's. With a low GPA, Santana graduated from high school and years later graduated from Harvard with a Masters Degree.

Did this serious yet humorous presentation inspire our Latino students?

"He inspired me because he taught me that you can go through life's obstacles and still succeed," said Junior Sandra Melgar.

However, one of the student's who was questioned was not inspired at all

Junior Gilbert Linares said, "Why would I change who I am when I am happy with who I am?"

Santana has definitely showed how to turn tragedy into triumph.

This Guy Has The Best Job

By Jackee Peavler
Staff Writer

Who has the best job in America? A survey was taken and the results of those jobs came out to be: a software engineer, college professor, financial advisor, human resources manager, physician assistant, market research analyst, computer IT analyst, real estate appraiser, a pharmacist, and psychologist.

Mark Dochtermann was picked for the best Job in America. Dochtermann, who is 34 years old, is the director of technology at Electronic arts. He said, "When I saw my first computer, it was love at first sight." He started out with writing his own programs and hacking into the computer. "You can learn an awful lot about programming doing that. I majored in computer engineering but never thought I could work in the game industry -- it was a dream job."

After college, he sent his own creation to a small gaming company. They liked it so much that he soon became their programmer. Ever since then, he's built his career in "first person shooter" games such as Duke Nukem 3D. He may have the best job in America, but he still has stress.

Today, he manages a team of 65 adults. "The hours still remain a challenge," he said, but he has an easier time working with people in a group.

Angela Russo

Continued from page 1

other deceased students, a plaque was placed at Chatsworth with her name. Russo's mother also established a scholarship, that ended two to three years ago.

It is hard to imagine it was 30 years ago that this horrendous event happened to a Chatsworth student.. Even today, scholarships like the Kim Sorrenson scholarship are given in memory of students who were taken away too early. Maybe now will the name Angela Russo ring a bell.

"She was a beautiful person inside and out." said McArthur and

"She was a real, sweet heart." said Rizzotti.

Mall *Continued from page 1*

ing the same after you've walked yourself around in a small circle for a little while. I was like, "Where are the maps?" said junior Samantha Montgomery. "But it kind of almost is worth the walk and possibility of getting lost since there are so many more stores than the other malls around," she added.

Energy Drinks: The Latest Buzz

By Candy Wong
Staff Writer

Energy drinks such as Red Bull, AMP, Monster, and Rock Star have skyrocketed in popularity as supermarkets, gas stations, and drugstores continue to stock up on bottled fuel guaranteed to get buyers buzzed.

However, most CHS students surveyed appear to down energy drinks in moderation, citing curiosity, improved alertness, and enhanced athletic ability as primary reasons for experimentation. Additionally, when asked whether they imbibed energy drinks, a significant amount of seniors responded positively.

"I've been drinking Red Bull for about two to three years. I don't drink it too often—maybe a couple of times per month. I need it [Red Bull] when I stay up for long car trips to my cousin's house in San Francisco or Arizona or when I'm trying to cram for tests," said Sanjandeeep Singh, a senior.

Like Singh, senior Sasha Mejia also prefers Red Bull and admires its role in reversing sleepiness. "Red Bull tastes good. When I'm stressed and it's late, it helps me stay up to finish homework," said Mejia.

"When I used to have P.E., I downed a can of Red Bull before I did the mile. It worked—I still felt energetic after running," said Jennifer Maypheth, another senior.

Maypheth was introduced to energy drinks at the beginning of her freshman year. "Red Bull was my first. It tasted like tart soda. I felt really jittery and had a bad crash afterwards," said Maypheth.

However, students should not substitute dehydrating energy drinks for water or sports drinks.

"Even though they're labeled 'energy drinks,' they should not be consumed during exercise," said Liz Applegate, a sports nutritionist at the Univer-



sity of California at Davis. "They have caffeine, and they're too concentrated in sugar. That's going to slow the body's ability to absorb water."

Applegate discourages against being lured into the energy drink addiction.

"These cans of energy drinks have some enticing, very sexy-sounding claims—that they lift you up, that they give you more energy," Applegate said. "Frankly, they're nothing much more than caffeine in a can with a lot of sugar."

Sometimes caffeinated

energy drinks aren't for everyone. Another senior, Dexter Johnson, chooses to down uncaffeinated sports drinks instead after experimenting with an energy drink.

"I tried Full Throttle. Afterwards, I felt kinda nervous and anxious. One of my friends was addicted to them—she needed one to start every day," said Dexter Johnson, a senior. "It tastes like Cactus Cooler, or Mountain Dew. I usually drink vitamin water and Gatorade, though."

But seniors aren't the only ones drinking energy drinks...

"My older brother told me about Monster. I drink it maybe 2-3 times a week—just to wake up in the morning or keep awake at night," said Fernando Galvan, a freshman.

Overall, students should be aware that energy drinks are packed with caffeine and other not-so healthy ingredients the next time they pay over two dollars for a boost of energy.

What's Your Status - Single, Taken Or Cheating?

By Belen Espinoza
Staff Writer

The hardest part of keeping a relationship is staying loyal to your partner, according to a study by MSNBC.

Relationships in high school tend to be immature and short term. Those who have been in long-term relationships tend to know the most important qualities and factors a relationship should have.

According to senior Mandy Martinez, the most important thing in a relationship is "trust, because if you don't trust your partner you're always going to have doubts and fights." Many teens nowadays can't hold onto

relationships because they don't have this trust and cheat on their partners.

The cause of many break-ups is usually due to miscommunication, but why is there miscommunication and how can it be resolved? "Staying calm and talking it out," said junior Erica Garcia.

When a couple has fights, many times they don't even give each other the opportunity to discuss the situation and just call it quits. If you feel that you can't fix your problems with your partner even though you have tried talking to them, then maybe that relationship isn't worth holding on to.

Blood Drive Sets New Mark

By Vinh Nguyen
Staff Writer

This month's blood drive was the most successful ever, with over 200 people donating blood out of the 300 people who signed up.

That was a step up from the 160 (out of the 250 people that signed up) that gave blood last year. Over 230 units of blood were syphoned; each unit can save up to three lives.

Sylmar High School had challenged Chatsworth to a "blood duel." The school that receives the most donations wins bragging rights.

Every year over 15 million Americans are in desperate need of blood. You can help slow this problem by donating blood. The American Red Cross came to Chatsworth High School once again on Wednesday, December 6 to receive donations from students and adults.

Before the actual donating of blood, people were given refreshments of juice, bagels, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, and cookies. Giving blood is "very safe-every donation," according to the Red Cross.

Blood is taken from a sterile needle, which is disposed of immediately after use. The withdrawal of one liter of blood is enough to save up to three lives.

'N word' *Continued from page 1*

senior, believes that "those who use it are ignorant, and they just make it okay for everyone else to use" it.

Chris Bray, a 12th grader, thinks that the use of the word is "degrading" and only shows that the people that use it "just don't have no values, don't respect themselves" and that they are "ignorant because that's what" the word means.

The Big Page of Holiday Lists

Holiday Movies to See When You Are Free

By Jannet Torres
Staff Writer

The holiday season is full of family gatherings, trips to the slopes, days where wallowing in food is greatly appreciated, and sometimes it just helps students catch up on schoolwork. For some, a winter vacation really means spending three weeks in a place anywhere but home; for others, it leaves one heck of a boring break. Luckily there's one place you can always go to for entertainment—the movie theaters.

So what's playing this holiday season? Check out the list of upcoming movie releases.

December 15th

Dreamgirls- Starring Beyonce Knowles, Jamie Foxx, Eddie Murphy, and Danny Glover, the movie follows three Chicago friends as

they try to make their dreams of becoming a famous singing group called the Dreamettes come true. When their first chance at fame fails, a manager works with the ladies to eventually make them international superstars.

The Pursuit of Happiness- Will Smith stars as Christopher Gardner in this true story about a salesman and his five-year-old son who have lost everything they've ever owned and end up homeless. Facing the hardships of life, Gardner rises above his struggles to become a successful stock broker.

Days of Glory- This movie takes place during the World War II era. At the point of the Allied victory, African soldiers take on the German occupiers in Africa, a story often referred to as the forgotten tale of "native soldiers."

December 20th

The Painted Veil- A 1920's love story about a doctor and a girl of society who betray each other and seek a second chance at redemption, starring Naomi Watts and Edward Norton.

December 22nd

Rocky Balboa- Sylvester Stallone steps back into the ring as the former heavyweight champion Rocky Balboa decades after his glory. After a computer-stimulated match declares Rocky the winner, his opponent declares a cyber-re-match, Rocky's mental stamina is challenged.

We Are Marshall-

Starring Matthew McConaughey and based on a true story, the movie takes place in West Virginia. It's about a college football team's tragic plane crash and a coach that is determined to help heal a uni-

versity and local community.

December 25th

Black Christmas- A remake of the 1970's classic about a psycho killer terrifying a sorority house during the holidays.

December 27th

Perfume- Based on a famous novel by Patrick Suskind, the movie is about a man whose sense of smell is so keen that he uses it to make some of the world's best perfumes. Unfortunately, he develops an obsession for the female scent that drives him into becoming a serial killer.

December 29th

The Dead Girl- The story about a young girl's death and how the discovery of her body starts a homicide case bringing unrelated people closer together.

All I Want for Christmas Is Everything On My List

By Stephanny Landaverde
Staff Writer

Many students are crossing their fingers and hoping that as they are unwrapping their gifts during the holidays they get exactly what they had wished for. Here's what some students wished for:

"I really want an iPod Nano—a black one—because I lost three iPods." —Samantha Garcia, junior.

"I would like money because my parents don't know how to choose my presents." —Virginia Ibarra, junior.

"I want a black iPod Nano because I have too much music on my computer." —Israel Garcia, junior.

"I want a dinosaur because I like [dinosaurs]." —Jeremy Archimbaud, sophomore.

"I want a plasma TV for Christmas." —Walter Tejada, senior.

"What I want for Christmas is anything [because] I'm already happy with everything that I have." —Betsy Ortis, junior.

"I want a car for Christmas so I can go anywhere I want." —Armando Villegas, junior.

"[I want] a Forever 21 gift card because I love Forever 21." —Karen Rivera, junior.

"I want a Coach bag because I've been wanting one for a long time." —Maria Velasquez, junior.

"I want the Playstation 3 because it has good graphics and gameplay." —Danny Koudoulian, junior.

Don't Be Greedy Feed The Needy

By Joe Carter
Staff Writer

As Christmas approaches, the constant solicitations from charities seeking money may overwhelm families trying just as hard to use money they've saved to buy presents for loved ones.

If you have a giving heart and want to help people in need, here is a list of the most requested charities, according to Yahoo! Search results:

The Salvation Army, which provides food, shelter, clothing, financial assistance to pay utilities, and other necessities based on need. (www.salvationarmyusa.org)

Toys for Tots, whose mission is to collect new, unwrapped toys from October to December each year, and distribute those toys as Christmas gifts to needy children in the community where

the campaign is conducted. (www.toysfortots.org)

Operation Christmas Child, which aids the world's poor, sick, and suffering. It is an effective means of reaching hurt people in countries around the world with food, medicine, and other assistance in the Name of Jesus Christ. (samaritanspurse.org)

Secret Santa, which connects individuals with local toy drives, helping drive much-needed support, gifts, and donations to children during the holiday season.

Christmas Seals, which are adhesive labels placed on envelopes during the Christmas season to raise funds and awareness for tuberculosis programs. (www.christmasseals.com)

Angel Tree, which delivers presents to kids with parents in prison. (www.angeltree.com)

Traveling Far And Near

By Stephanny Landaverde
Staff Writer

Winter break is just around the corner and everyone is counting down the days until our three-week freedom.

Some students are excited to go on trips and visit family rather than just sit at home with nothing to do but sleep, eat, and be bored.

Cynthia Bran, a junior, is looking forward to meeting her half brothers for the first time. "I'm going to Guatemala! Oh my God!" said Bran.

Science teacher Mr. Vallejo is looking forward to winter break. "I'm driving to Washington State. I'm visiting my family," he said.

Junior Steven Katz will "go to Mammoth and snowboard." Katz is even more excited to go motorcycle riding.

"I'm going to Big Bear," said Junior Kacey Funes, who is excited to go snowboarding for his third time.

Gift Or No Gift?

By Jordan Lynn Urquhart
Staff Writer

Most people spend hundreds of dollars getting everyone they know and love a Christmas gift. Some people only buy presents for their closest friends. But what makes someone present worthy?

Students said they give presents to their closest friends who have been with them all year long, not just during this wonderful season, but there is always going to be someone you're going to forget.

One junior, said, "I'm going to give gifts to my best friends and my brother, that's it."

Senior Brenda Rodriguez said, "Me and my friends, there are six of us, do a Secret Santa instead of exchanging presents."

In A Bind For Something To Do? Read These Books

By Maggie Ghahri-Saremi
Staff Writer

Winter break—a splendid occasion to catch up on sleep, schoolwork, family time, and my personal favorite...reading. If, like many students, you've been bogged down with excessive amounts of homework, extracurricular activities, college applications, or other high school happenings you deserve a much-needed break. It's time to curl up on the couch with a big cup of hot cocoa and one of

the following highly recommendable books.

First on the list is Betty Smith's "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn," which tells the remarkable tale of the Nolan family—11-year-old Francie, her younger brother Neeley, their mother Katie, and their father Johnny. The family's struggles with poverty, Johnny's alcoholism, and Katie's favoritism towards Neeley make this an eventful read.

Smith's prose and diction are what make the events in this

book as captivating as they are—not a single passage is tedious or excessively flowery. Smith's frankness will assuredly make you want to turn to the next page, so don't let the thickness of "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn" intimidate you.

Next, you should check out Frank McCourt's "Angela's Ashes" which, unlike many memoirs, captures a childhood of extreme poverty with complete truthfulness and wit. McCourt's lack of formality in describing past events will keep

you asking for more of his humorous anecdotes. If you have a tendency to include run-on sentences in your writing, you will be the first to appreciate McCourt's unconventional writing style. If you're looking for a relaxed heartfelt read this holiday season, "Angela's Ashes" is the book for you.

If you're not afraid to shed a tear or two, you should give sportswriter, Mitch Albom's "Tuesdays with Morrie" a chance. Through conversations with a former professor who is

on his deathbed, Albom discovers the many meanings of life... and death. Albom's genuine writing makes each sentence seem like a life lesson. This is a simple, fast read with an abundance of depth. "Tuesdays with Morrie" might dampen your holiday mood, but only for a little while—once you've finished reading it you will find yourself actually appreciating your relatives, even smelly, 80-year-old Aunt Edna who always pinches your cheeks when she comes for a holiday visit.