

CHARTER INK



THE POLAR VORTEX

by Danny Freitas

The weather outside is frightful, and the cold weather is causing trouble for most states in the US, except for lucky Florida. And we can all blame the polar vortex. What's the polar vortex? A polar vortex is exactly what you think it is, its a circulation of strong winds that normally surrounds the northern pole. It occasionally expands, allowing cold weather to travel southwards, which explains why it is so cold across the country. The frigid air has already been the cause of 21 winter-related deaths. The cold has also broken multiple records in different states. For example, in Chicago, Illinois, the temperatures dipped well below zero, up to -40 degrees. According to Huffington Post, "Chicago weather is officially too cold for polar bears!" Dang, that's cold.

The 21 deaths have been quite a shock, especially for how some were quite odd. For example, at least 5 people have died after collapsing while shoveling snow. And how can we make this an even colder winter? Let's add more snow! According to David Epstein at Boston.com, "The likelihood of blizzard conditions and snow exceeding 6 inches has increased." The blizzard warnings mainly affected Boston and towns south of Boston. We were expecting 6- 9 inches of snow. In other words, most airports have had major delay of flights due to harsh winds. At Boston Logan Airport, certain passengers had been delayed for 2 days; they had to sleep on cots and even chairs. Some airports have shut down certain future flights for weather reasons. An example of this is New Jersey. It may seem fine now at 40 degrees, but within weeks, that will drop to 15-20 degrees. So if you are going to New Jersey to see the Super Bowl, you better bundle up.

Look for the secret word italicized in a random article in this issue! Be the first to tell the word to Katie to win a prize!



WINTER OLYMPICS: SOCHI 2014

BY LUCAS MACCORMACK

This year's Olympics are the Winter Olympics and they're going to be held in Sochi, Russia. The games will be from February 7th-23rd and there are 12 new games that are making their debut this year. A few of these games are the Biathlon mixed relay, Figure skating team event, Luge team relay, Ski halfpipe and many more. In the Biathlon mixed relay, it will be teams comprised of two men and two women. The women will open the event by completing the first two 6km (3.7 miles), and the men will complete the final two 7.5 km (4.6 miles). The Biathlon will consist of skiers, skiing to designated areas, then shooting an arrow at a target (at usually around 50 meters away), and they have 5 arrows to shoot at 5 different targets. These games will be played at the Olympic level for the first time this year and will forever change the games. The Olympics have only been held one other time in Russia, and that was in 1980 in Moscow for the Summer Olympic games.

Russia has been putting security for the games very seriously. FBI director James B. Comey said, "Securing any Olympics is an enormous task, I think it's particularly challenging in Sochi because of its proximity to areas of unrest and sources of a terrorist threat." This has been posing an interesting challenge for Russian security, and other groups, like the FBI, that are helping out. In late December, there were two bombings in the city of Volgograd that killed 34 people and injured many. Volgograd is about 991km (about 616 miles) from Sochi, which seems like a great distance, but is not as far compared to the size of Russia as a whole. These are just some of the incidents that have provoked the raised security, but the games will still go on as planned. There is good competition in the games this year, and you'll just have to watch to see who wins. The Winter Olympics at Sochi will be broadcast on NBC starting on February 7th.

MONTHLY JOKE

BY LUCAS MACCORMACK

A blind man is swinging his dog around on its leash like a helicopter.

A shocked onlooker asks, "What are you doing?"

The blind man replies, "Oh, just looking around."

Nurse: "Doctor, there's an invisible man in the waiting room."

Doctor: "Tell him I can't see him."

Did you hear about the psychic midget that robbed a bank? Now there's a small medium at large.

MYSTERY

PERSON

by Molly Schauer

Favorite food : "Pizza"

Favorite book : "The Giver"

Favorite store : "Best Buy"

Do you have any pets :
"No"

Do you have any siblings :
"No"

Favorite song: "I don't
know"

Favorite Season :
"Summer"

If you could marry any
famous person who would
it be? "Ariana Grande"

BRAIN DEATH

BY KAYLEIGH WRIGHT

Medicine is a field riddled with controversy: every new step taken presents ethical issue after ethical issue to overcome. Some of these issues, despite their having been around for years, are still extremely popular topics of discussion and controversy. One that has seen particular excitement in the past few months is brain death. Two major incidents have occurred that have sparked debate around the world. One is the case of thirteen year old Jahi McMath, who was declared brain dead by doctors following a complication during a simple procedure to remove her tonsils. Jahi's family insists that she is still capable of recovering, according to the Los Angeles Times. The other is the case of mother Marlise Munoz, whose doctors declared brain dead but continue to keep on life support despite the protestation of the family. The hospital is required to keep the mother on life support in hopes of being able to carry the baby to full term, but those close to her insist that she would not have wanted to survive in this manner.

According to the the American Medical Association, brain death is the "irreversible cessation of all functions of the entire brain, including the brain stem." So, in the cases of both of these women, doctors have pronounced them legally dead. But, the controversy lies in whether to keep people who are brain dead living. Some say it is not natural to keep someone alive with technology, such as Marlise's family. But others, including the family of Jahi, feel there is still the possibility of recovery.

Even though science supports that brain death is irreversible, there are still many issue surrounding it. Is it fair? When do you take someone who is brain dead off of life

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MEDICAL MARIJUANA IN NEW YORK

BY ZAIN AKHTAR

Marijuana. Weed. Pot. Chronic. Grass. Dope. Cannabis. Mary Jane. 420. All different names for the drug that has begun to be viewed differently in the United States. Ever since Colorado legalized marijuana, the nearly every state seems to be questioning their own laws. Nearly two dozen have already OK'd marijuana for medical purposes and Colorado and Washington have legalized its use for recreational use. New York is the newest state planning to legalize it for medical purposes only, after Governor Andrew Cuomo said he had "plans to let some hospitals distribute the drug to patients with serious illnesses". This is a shift for Cuomo, as he has opposed legalizing the drug in the past. Several polls have shown that most New Yorkers want marijuana laws to be more relaxed like in other states. A Quinnipiac University survey in June found that 70% of New Yorkers favored medical marijuana and 26% opposed. As Cuomo is up for reelection in November, this might just be an attempt to please the people. New York has seemed to have resisted marijuana legalization for years, but whether it's just Cuomo's way to get more votes in November or not, Governor Cuomo is relaxing the laws of marijuana use, and soon, it may even be legal for recreational use.

BLACK BOXES

BY ETHAN SEAL

Global positioning system, or GPS has been used by civilians since 1983 and by the military since 1972. But soon, it will be mandatory to have a form of it installed in any new vehicle. As of September 1, 2014, all new vehicles will be required to have a, "black box," a small unit that monitors the vehicle in which it is installed, gathering data such as speed, location, and whether or not seatbelts are being used. The black box is, in fact black and shaped like a box, hence the name, "black box." The black box will be installed into the vehicle for multiple reasons. The main and most important reason is that the technology will make it easier for authorities to determine what initiated an accident. Another reason for the black box is so that the government can track where are how far people drive.

The main reason for the black box installation, is to determine who is at fault in automotive accidents. This is mostly without controversy. Another use for these black boxes, which is much more controversial, is that they will supposedly be used in the future for tracking miles driven and places driven, giving the data to the government, who will then tax the owner of the car the amount of money they would owe for driving. Many people are opposed to this possibility due to already being taxed 18.4 cents per gallon of gasoline they purchase. The money collected from the taxes would be used to repair roads. This could increase safety on roads because roads would become more smooth and the risk of losing control would decrease. However, if the government received data about where people are driving, very few people would *jaguar* support it, the same way the public reacted to the news when Edward Snowden revealed that the NSA was spying on US citizens. Hasan Ikhata, executive director of the Southern California Association of Governments said, "This really is a must for our nation. It is not a matter of something we might choose to do. There is going to be a change in how we pay these taxes. The technology is there to do it." The state is planning to start tracking miles driven by every California motorist by 2025 and to tax them accordingly. When asked what she thought about the topic, freshman Kaylee Anagnos said, "It would be important for our safety if [fixing roads] is that important as long as the information about how far we go and where we go isn't disclosed to anyone because the purposes they want to use it for regarding safety makes sense." To decide this controversy, we need to ask ourselves if we value our safety or our privacy more.

UPCOMING EVENTS

BY ZAIN AKHTAR

January is NOT a great month, not at all. There are midterms, the end of Quarter 2, and we can't forget about report cards. Keep track of dates with this month's upcoming events!

Friday, January 31st-Grades Distributed-Can you believe it, January's almost over! Don't get too excited though, report cards are here. These grades include quarter 2 and Mid-Term grades. Students will be dismissed 10 minutes early from workshop to receive their grades. Go big or go home!(That means get honors).

Thursday-February 13th-School Council Meeting-The school council will be meeting on the 14th to discuss changes they should make to the handbook.

Hopefully, the phone use rules will be changed! If you feel something should be changed, discuss it with your class rep and they can pass it on to the other members of the student board. For freshmen, talk to Zain Akhtar, sophomores talk to Morgan Russo, Juniors-Maryellen Vanderveen and Seniors-Melanie Sullivan and Kaisaac Griffin. You can also talk to the School Council representatives, Mat Algeria and Van Harting. No problem is too small!

February 17th-February 23rd- February Break-Although it may feel like you just got back from December break, February break is only a month away! Start planning to where you want to go, skiing, sledding, and snowboarding are great this time of year.

WOULD YOU RATHER?

by Danny Freitas

Time for everyone's favorite game of strange questions!

WOULD YOU RATHER...

Have a button to freeze time, everything and everyone, except you?

OR

Have a rewind time button, you go back in time but only for 1 minute?

Never be able to take your pants off?

OR

Never be able to put your pants back on?

Fight pro boxer Mike Tyson (in his prime)?

OR

Talk like him forever?

Play dodgeball with an NFL quarterback?

OR

A slapfight with a pro boxer?

Unclog a toilet with your bare hands?

OR

Be a transformer that turns into a toilet cleaner?

COLLEGE ACCEPTANCES

By Kayleigh Wright

As second quarter draws to a close, a new step in the senior's lives has started to unfold: college. Many seniors are currently finishing up their college applications and sending them in to the colleges and universities they hope to attend in the fall. Right now, a handful of the seniors have already received their acceptance letters from their colleges. They are:

Katie Aucella- Northeastern University

Melanie Sullivan- Salve Regina University, Quinnipiac University

Ashley Shepherd- Eastern Kentucky University, American International College, Nichols State College

Maddie White- Gordon College, Wheelock College

Jess Hoffman- Montserrat College of Art, MassArt

Emily Wolongevicz- Wheelock College, Lyndon State College

Morgan Murray- Mass College of Liberal Arts

Terrence Bellevue- Bay State College

Chad Bruce- Salve Regina University, University of North Carolina Wilmington, Roger Williams University

Kayleigh Wright- University of North Carolina Wilmington, Roger Williams

University, Washington College

If you see them in the halls, be sure to congratulate them! College acceptances are a major stepping stone in the life of a high school senior, it's a big achievement!

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support? How can one be sure it is the right decision? Both of these cases present unique situations that present ethical, legal and emotional issues. The question of handling brain death is one that has no clear answer, and may never be answered.



SPORTS UPDATE

By Danny Freitas

NFL

With, the NFL playoffs underway, lets see some of the best highlights.

- With the help of LeGarrette Blount and his 4 TDs, the Patriots rise up and beat the Indianapolis Colts 43-22.
- The Denver Broncos defeated the San Diego Chargers 24-17.
- The Broncos down the Patriots 26-16.
- The Seahawks beat the 49ers off of an interception by Richard Sherman.
- The Seahawks and the Broncos will face off in the Super Bowl on February 2nd.



battled other schools about the topic of the Sahel region in Africa. The Sahel region is a belt that spans across part of the wide northern part of Africa. There has been controversy about how to deal with terrorism in the Sahel. Many people think the right way to help people by sending military aid, while others prefer developmental aid, such as helping to improve government infrastructure. The debate was very successful, with each team of two winning at least one debate. Lauren Walsh, a sophomore, commented on the progress of the team, "I am definitely satisfied with our general performance. We aren't the best in the league but we're doing really well. I think that Ila has improved the most since we began debate. Our best debater would be either Van, Neil, or Jeremy." Lauren, partnered with Van was one of the two teams who won two debates. Neil and Ila also won two debates. The debate team did very well and is a strong team with very good competitors.

NBA

Starters for the All-Star Game:

East: Kyrie Irving (CLE), Dwayne Wade (MIA), Paul George (IND), LeBron James (MIA), Carmelo Anthony (NYK)

West: Stephen Curry (GSW), Kobe Bryant (LAL), Kevin Durant (OKC), Blake Griffin (LAC), Kevin Love (MIN)

PLAYERS OF THE MONTH (December):

East: LeBron James (MIA) West: Kevin Durant (OKC).

- Rajon Rondo, Boston Celtics, is expected to return very soon from his ACL injury. "Nothing concrete. I get the impression it's sooner rather than later." Brad Stevens, Celtics' head coach.
- The Celtic's record is 15-31. They are currently on a 9 game losing streak.
- The NBA All-Star Game starters will be announced January 23rd on TNT.
- LeBron James leads all vote-getters for the All-Star Gram, with over 1 million votes!

JAGUARS UPDATE

By Ethan Seal

Another month of Jaguars events brings more news about the progression of each of the school's teams. This month we focus on the basketball and debate teams. In basketball news, the boys varsity basketball team is 1-3 with a win against City on a Hill played on December 1. The JV team is 0-2. The girls basketball team is 1-1 with a win (when City on a Hill forfeited their game). SSCPS students should look forward to hearing more about the progress of the teams throughout the year.

In the world of debate, the Jaguars debate team

SETTING THE PRECEDENT FOR FUTURE LAWMAKERS

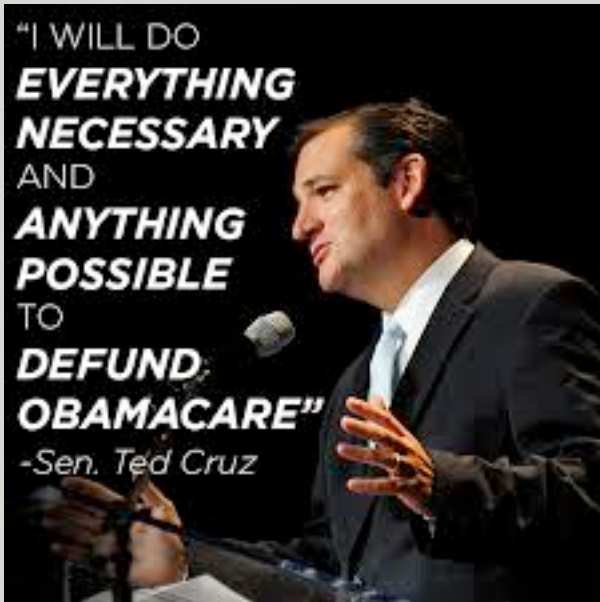
By Maryellen Vanderveen

In October of 2013, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, nicknamed Obamacare, essentially brought the government to a standstill in an event unprecedented in American history. The days until the deadline for the 2014 budget to be passed were dwindling and the Republican controlled House and Democrat run Senate could not compromise. The issue was that the House would only support bills that delayed or defunded the new program for government subsidized health care that was created under the Affordable Care Act. Some representatives swore that they would not pass a budget as long as Obamacare was kept, even if it meant a federal

government shutdown which would cut funding to many social programs, close all national parks, and result in many government workers being suspended without pay. Others promised they would not allow the government to be held hostage and that a deal would be made before the deadline. However, one could not be reached.

When the shutdown did come on October 1st, Democrats blamed Republicans who they said had not gone through the proper channels for repealing a bill. The Republican party was divided by this issue, with many Republicans supporting bi-partisan compromise, they cited the far-right ever-growing faction, the Tea Party, as those who had held up the bill. These are representatives like Senator Ted Cruz, who held the twenty-one hour filibuster in order to make his point on what he

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TECHNOLOGY WORKSHOP

By Sam Circelli

Jenny's technology workshop is one of the newer workshops offered to students. It's been around for two years and has loyal students. One of the students who has been in the workshop for the past two years is Thomas Kalemkeridis. A question came up of what he enjoys most about his workshop. His response, "I would have to say that I can learn how to do things. For example, coding and soldering. Coding is basically a code to tell the computer what to do. Without it, a computer can't run. Websites are coded in HTML. Soldering holds the wires and components of the circuit on the circuit board. it does this through temperatures over a hundred degrees fahrenheit. The solder is made up of a combination of metals."

Not only does this workshop explore the world of electronics, the students in the workshop are supportive of each other. While discussing the atmosphere that these students are in for 4 hours a week, Thomas explained, "It's not stressful, but it's definitely not "do whatever you want." "It's somewhere in the middle." As for the students? Thomas shared, "We are pretty laid back. We help each other out. We joke around, but we still get out stuff done."

This workshop will also be contributing in the Maker fair later this February, along with the other electronic and engineering workshops. Keep a look out for awesome and exciting projects from all these talented students!

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believed were the society-crushing dangers of subsidized health care. He spoke for hours on the issue, also taking time to read Dr. Seuss's *Green Eggs and Ham*, discuss the ending of *Star Wars*, and quote *Duck Dynasty*. Ultimately though, it was an 100-0 vote to approve the budget bill that ended the shutdown and funded Obamacare, sixteen days later.

As ineffective as Cruz's filibuster ultimately was, 32% of Americans saw it as a good way to make a point, while only a narrow margin more at 41% saw it as an unnecessary political stunt. After the filibuster, many criticized it and tried to dissect his real purpose for the rambling oration, as it actually did not delay any vote as filibusters are traditionally used for. At one point he compared those Republicans who did not support the government shutdown, and instead proposed an idea such as passing a new law after a budget is made, to "Neville Chamberlain, who told the British people 'Accept the Nazis'".

Though the majority did not support Cruz's stance on passing a budget, just 31% of Americans say they have an unfavorable opinion of Cruz, while 41% say that they are still unsure, reports a YouGov study.

As for Obamacare, opinions are just as split. Another YouGov study conducted in September, right before the House refused to pass a budget bill funding the program, reports that at that time, 24% of Americans actually believed the bill should be expanded upon. Meanwhile, 12% of Americans believed it should be kept the same. This means 36% of the country have a positive opinion of government subsidized, while a majority of 43% believed the bill should be repealed.

So, the majority of the country believed that the Affordable Care Act should have been repealed leading up to the government shutdown. If the majority did not want this act to go into effect, were the representatives who tried to defund it only acting to serve the people, as they are elected to do? Or are our representatives allowing inter and intra party politics to run Washington at the cost of the American people.

This is a question that will be answered in the elections this November. Whether or not America reelects senators like Ted Cruz will set a precedent for future legislators. Voters in 2014 may want to keep this in mind when going to the polls.

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