

THE MUCKRAKER

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THE MUCKRAKER Speaks!

Knapp ein Zwölftel des neuen Jahres ist bereits verstrichen und die Dinge an der Schule scheinen ihren gewohnten Gang zu nehmen. Die Januarwochen sind – wie gewöhnlich – die Ruhe vor dem Sturm: das eine Halbjahr geht zu Ende, das neue beginnt und außer den Zeugnissen gibt es kaum Aufregendes zu vermelden. Möglicherweise lässt sich dieser Zustand bis zu den Winterferien ausdehnen, aber danach beginnt unvermeidlich die Zeit der Tests, Präsentationen, Klausuren und Hausaufgaben – der Alltag, wenn man so will.

Abseits der eigentlichen Ruhe scheinen jedoch zwei Dinge zumindest die Gemüter einiger erhitzt zu haben: das kommende „Spring Play“ und die Debatte über das Zentralabitur im Fach Englisch. Der Ärger um das Theaterstück, geschrieben von einem Lehrer und kritisiert teils aus moralischen Gründen, teils aufgrund der vermeintlich minderen Qualität, scheint sich erst einmal gelegt zu haben, aber das Zentralabitur lässt zumindest den Schülern der Oberstufe, sowie den betroffenen Englischlehrern keine Ruhe. Mittlerweile lässt sich auch der Eindruck nicht verwehren, dass es in der hitzigen und kontinuierlichen Auseinandersetzung nicht nur um die Frage geht, welche Art Englischklausur am Ende der Schullaufbahn an der JFKS geschrieben wird, sondern dass vor allem grundsätzliche Spannungen innerhalb des Lehrkörpers zum Vorschein treten. Wie in allen Konflikten hat sicherlich keine der beiden Seiten vollkommen Recht und ebenso ist es sinnvoll, Auseinandersetzungen offen auszutragen, aber sollte das wirklich auf dem Rücken der Schüler geschehen? Mehr dazu, sobald es mehr zu berichten gibt.

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Google

Google, originally a misspelling of the word “googol” meaning 10^{100} , is the most used Internet search engine of our time. It has gone so far that a life without “Google Search” seems impossible to many people. Its growing influence and expanding services, such as “Google Earth” or Google Mail (short Gmail), are continuously raising the users’ dependency on the search engine, but also spread unease in the public due to the vastness of information Google has about everyone who uses its products. If you use its email service, Google knows everything that is contained in your messages. If you



use Google Desktop Search, it knows about everything contained in your computer and your private files. As long as Google does not use this knowledge for blackmailing or the like, some people argue, it does not matter how much information they acquire, since it won’t harm anyone, but is our privacy really that trivial? No one at Google gets to read a Gmail user’s emails, only machines process and save the information for statistical purposes, argue the Google sympathizers. The controversy of whether Google’s principals are morally correct will probably stand to debate for quite a while, and everyone must decide for him or herself whether they accept Google’s growing power and potential control over them.

In 1996 Larry Page and Sergey Brin, two Stanford Ph.D. students, came up with the idea of a search engine that could examine the affiliation of websites in order to give the search results that are most likely desired. This search algorithm about which little detail is known is said to be the best of its kind, and yet unmatched by those of Yahoo or MSN. By 1998 Page and Brin established the company Google Inc. at a friend’s garage in Menlo Park. Today Google’s headquarters, the Googleplex,

is located in Mountain View, California (its name is a pun on the word googolplex, which is a 1 followed by a googol (10^{100}) zeros). Page and Brin are now extraordinarily rich and remain in charge as Products and Technology Presidents respectively.

Google’s recently appeared in the news after it bought the video-sharing website YouTube for 1.65 billion dollars. Many people have expressed the opinion that this was a mistake, and that Google will be sued over copyright issues. In many ways YouTube has stayed the same as before the takeover, only that there are advertisements on the website now, which used to be against the company’s policies.

Google makes its money through advertising other websites based on how often a link is clicked on, and by the order in which search results are displayed; the more money a com-

pany pays Google the further to the top the link result will be in a search, thus increasing its relevance. This business strategy is endangered through the principle of “click fraud”, which falsifies the results of ads visited by human customers through computers programmed to open links. They will have to find some method to fight this impending danger; otherwise Google’s core business model is threatened.

Google’s influence on our increasingly Internet dependant world grows continuously, and a life without it becomes less and less imaginable. Whether we do research for school, a random picture search for fun, or a search for entertainment, the Internet has become so vast that it is impossible to know the exact URL of the website you are looking for, especially if you do not yet know what you are trying to find. For our generation it has become difficult to imagine how a world without technology, Internet, and Google Search would be like, since it is part of our daily lives, even though the domain Google.com is yet merely eight years old.

Farsane Tabataba-Vakili

Seife oder nicht Seife – Das ist hier die Frage

Die meisten von Euch haben es wohl schon bemerkt. Manche vielleicht aber auch nicht. Unabhängig davon, ob Ihr es bemerkt habt oder nicht, es gibt sie: neue Papierhandtuch- und Seifenapparate in den Toilettenräumen unserer Schule.

Sie sind schwer zu übersehen, doch trotzdem haben einige von Euch sie noch nicht bewundern können. Warum? Weil viele die schuleigenen Toiletten systematisch umgehen. Sie warten lieber, bis sie zuhause sind, um ihren natürlichen Bedürfnissen nachzugehen. Eine Einstellung, die man dieser Minderheit, angesichts des desolaten Zustandes der sanitären Einrichtungen der Schule, kaum übel nehmen kann. Was haben wir nicht schon alles gesehen . . . Toilettentüren, die in zwei und nicht nur in eine Richtung aufgehen, Wasserhähne, aus denen nichts rauskommt, gähnende Leere an Wänden, wo sich eigentlich Spiegel befinden sollten.

Aber genug von diesem unangenehmen Thema, zurück zu den Fortschritten der modernen Technik. Unsere wunderschöne Schule besitzt jetzt neben hochqualifiziertem Personal und einem halben Dutzend Snack Machines auch noch hochmoderne Seifen- und Papierhandtuchspender. Bald können wir sogar dem Flughafen Tegel Konkurrenz machen.

Die neuen Appartate in den Toiletten sind ja nicht die erste Innovation dieses Jahres. Erst trägt die Schule dazu bei, die Arbeitslosenquote zu senken, dann tauchte der neue Info-Kasten draußen auf, jetzt haben wir neue Seifenapparate in den Toiletten. Eigentlich ist diese Innovationsfreudigkeit ja lobenswert,

aber man muss sich nach wie vor fragen, welchen Nutzen diese Dinge haben und wer von diesen Neuerungen überhaupt profitiert.

Sicherlich sehen die neuen Handtuch- und Seifenspender schön aus, doch wie jeder weiß, kommt wahre Schönheit von innen. Und da wären wir auch schon beim Hauptproblem. Innen sind sie nämlich meistens leer. Das Problem mit den alten Papierhandtuchkästen war, dass sie 2/3 der Zeit leer waren und mit den alten Seifenbehältern sah es ähnlich aus. Zugegeben, die waren auch hässlich, aber darum geht es in erster Linie nicht.

Wenn in den neuen Papierhandtuchkästen auch regelmäßig das drin wäre, was rein gehört (also Papier) und in den Seifenapparaten Seife, dann hätte die Schule das Problem gelöst. Doch so wie es im Moment aussieht, haben wir immernoch das gleiche Problem – nur anders verpackt.

Eine positive Schlussfolgerung kann man jedoch aus diesem Wandel ziehen: die Schule denkt an uns Schüler und will uns das Leben erleichtern. Es ist ja letztendlich der Gedanke, nicht die Durchführung, der zählt.

Vielleicht haben wir dann bald auch Wasserhähne aus denen warmes Wasser fließt . . . aber das wäre wohl schon zu viel Optimismus, denn aus denen würde wahrscheinlich gar kein Wasser mehr herauskommen.

P.S.: An diejenigen, die die Toiletten bislang vermieden haben: Es gibt nach wie vor keinen wirklichen Grund dort hineinzugehen.

Randolf Carr

ISTA MUCH?

The "International Schools Theater Association" (ISTA) is the theatrical version of MUN conferences. Instead of discussing politics, students from all over the world get together and discuss, work on, and produce their very own plays. ISTA gives kids a chance to work as a team, be creative, meet cool new people and get a taste of different cultures.

The way ISTA works is that a school from any country can host the ISTA program for one year and invite international students to live with the students from the host school. Each year ISTA has a different theme (this year it's Hamlet), which determines what the students will be rehearsing in their

individual skits.

During the 4 days of ISTA, the students are divided into groups, in which they have the opportunity to not only write and rehearse their own works – related to the designated theme of course – but they also get the chance to meet and mingle with kids from different schools and countries and make new friends. "ISTA is always such a blast! Its really cool and you meet lots of new people!" says a former ISTA participant.

Last year our school hosted ISTA and now it's Denmark's turn! JFKs ISTA team will depart on Wednesday so good luck to guys!

Leonie Schulte

A Student's Work Week: 40 Hours +

A quick bite of toast, slip on your shoes, and hurry down the street to catch that 7:20 a.m. train. On the way, encounter sceptical glares from fellow passengers as you take up the last square inch of train space with the folder you want to flip through one last time before the big Math-Klausur. Relieved to finally give your tired legs a break, sit down in class, allow yourself a quiet sigh, and make every effort to muster enough concentration to stay wholeheartedly focused – paying your eight or nine classes their due interest. On the average school day, you're likely to leave the John F. Kennedy School gates at around 4 p.m. and arrive back at your front door at 4:40 p.m. With only 20 minutes to unwind – not for a session at the piano or a dive into the book you're in the middle of, but rather to tackle the second shift of your work day: homework.

We're all familiar with the unanimous murmurings that fill the air when the end of class time draws near and the teacher skims through the text book and mutters, "Number three's a nice one. Yeah, number three for homework." Are the students' "but's" a reply of laziness? Are they spur-of-the-moment expression of general tiredness or teenage lethargy? Or do these replies rest on accurate ground?

In the United States, homework first made its way into national consciousness in the 1800's, when more Americans pursued an education past the 8th grade. Even back then, it was a widely disputed controversy; the state of California grew so displeased, it decided to abolish home assignments for those under the age of fifteen and limit it significantly for those above, arguing it would be "better to let them play in the sunshine". This trend of an anti-homework mentality gained acceptance until the movement was brought to a sudden halt with the Soviet Union's launch of the satellite "Sputnik". For the USA to stay competitive, the nation's children would have to "shape up". More school and more homework seemed to become the patriotic thing to go for.

A good sixty years later, are we experiencing a similar upheaval of work, not in the face of Soviet space travel, but at the hands of an increasingly globalized world, not to mention the age of the Internet? With competition for jobs and university spots, could expectations be rising? With an absolutely overwhelming

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JFKS Life

Homework... continued from page 2

ming plethora of information springing out at us on the Internet, is learning getting harder? Harder, that is, than for our parents' generation, which had the confines of a textbook to hang on to? While the answer may be yes, the real question is: How do we cope with the challenges that our century poses?

Phil Lyons of a High School in Palo Alto, California says homework is no solution. Students of his advanced-placement history and economics classes and their parents were by all means flabbergasted when he told them he refuses to assign a single piece of homework, not one. On "back-to-school" night, he fought to make his belief of homework as a failed and fatal approach to a youth's natural curiosity understood by enraged listeners. Lyon seems to know what he's doing, though: His students excelled with a 94% passing rate on their AP tests – one of the highest rates in the country. And he isn't alone in his endeavour. A growing minority of educators and researchers are questioning the benefits of homework, arguing that it doesn't teach responsibility, as proponents insist, because it is dictatorial

in nature and therefore actually hinders a child from having to make choices about how to spend spare time. They also say that not only does too much homework deprive students of invaluable family time, but that by causing stress and strain, it actually leads to family conflicts. Especially elementary school students may be harmed rather than helped with the amount of assignments they are receiving, since they often don't have the insight to view homework as a review or a learning experience. To them, homework makes acquiring knowledge seem like a grinding chore.

The homework debate is likely to drag on for long, seeing as both sides claim the statistical evidence works in their favour. One researcher aimed to find middle ground by defining homework as the realistic way to compensate for the expensive – but preferable – alternatives: smaller classes and more experienced teachers. Also, one must certainly consider that quality is an undeniable factor. There's redundant, copious work and there's meaningful work.

While studies clash, JFKS students seem to agree that even though good homework is beneficial, the quantity sometimes makes it difficult to get the most out of assignments. Those asked characterized their stress as "wave-like". If you have five projects and three tests all in two or three weeks, a short break, and then another few – nearly sleepless – weeks of chasing deadlines, work can neither generate genuine interest or enjoyment in assignments nor let what has been learned sink in. A steady, predictable, and manageable quantity of work would also support the fantastic JFKS extra-curricular activities.

40 hours and up? That seems about right. While in general, JFKS students appreciate the thought and creativity with which their assignments, especially projects, are set up, they feel the last word has certainly not been spoken in the discussions about homework and the school system as a whole.

Lena Walther

Tree o' Trash!

"Oh, Christmas tree, oh Christmas tree, how lovely are your branches? ... So full of trash and everything..."

The SC Christmas tree we had before the holidays was decorated, quite frankly, with trash. Coke bottles, coffee cups, candy wrappers, paper bags, yogurt cups, and even Muckraker pages served as garnish. True, whoever put these things on the tree did it quite professionally, even using red ribbons. No one felt like taking it off, since it looked kind of nice. But what does a Christmas tree covered in trash reveal about our school's spirit? Some may argue that the tree has nothing to do with our spirit, or that the decoration was only a joke. But not only do some people seem to think that it's funny to decorate a Christmas tree with the latest Muck issue, no, why not litter



the floor with them too. Our school has some serious issues with trash, and it's not getting any better – it's just getting worse. I might just be getting paranoid, but it seems to me that in response to my article on trash not being our fri-

end, people have littered the hallways even more, perhaps to show defiance towards a small effort to ensure cleanliness.

What is our school turning into if we decorate a tree with trash even after Dr. Hepner proclaims his disapproval in one of the announcements? Why don't we just simply change the school's mascot from ram into an empty soda can or a half-eaten sandwich? The next t-shirt design should contain a candy wrapper, and the next buzz book flies instead of bees! Wouldn't that be funny?

Our school will definitely continue to look like a dumpster if we, the students, do not change our attitude towards trash and cleanliness in general! It's up to you – Do something!!

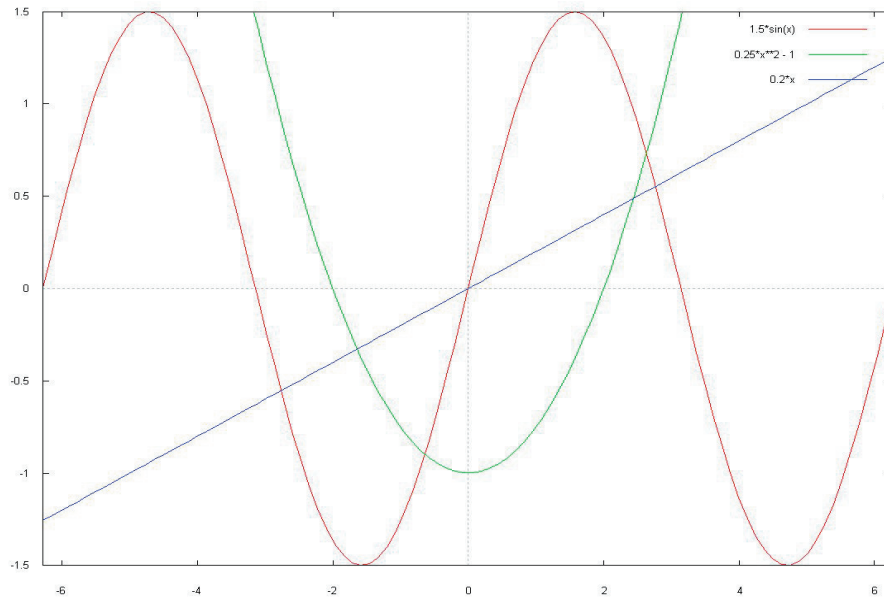
Farsane Tabataba-Vakili

Comments, Replies?

send your opinions and articles to:

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Mathematics – Only an Abstract Science?



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While the denotation of mathematics is "the abstract science of numbers, quantity, or space" for many students the connotation may be "learning a lot of boring formulas, theorems, or proofs with no applicability whatsoever to life". That is where the "abstract" part of the definition comes in, since there truly is a lot of material in math that has no or at least no significant connection to the world or the universe in general. One might argue about the relevance of James Bond (prime numbers ending on 007) or Holey (primes consisting only of digits with holes in them (0,4,6,8,9)) primes, as they are even placed in the trivia section of a book called Prime Numbers. Surely, the average high school student cares little about patterns within pi or about Riemann's zeta function, however math is very closely linked to physics, and truly what would life be without that? Would we have gravity on Earth without Newton's universal law? Probably, since many things are often discovered and not invented, but if mankind would not know that gravity existed how would we construct aircrafts or space shuttles?

It all goes back to the Babylonians, actually. Although they did not even use the so-called Arabic numerals, it is them to whom we owe the 360 degrees in a circle for example, since they used base 60, instead of our most commonly used base, 10. There are a lot of ways in which one can divide sixty and its multiples, and for people who dislike fractions, base sixty must be bliss. But what is the use of a circle anyway? Imagine having to run rectangles in sport because no one cared to discover the circle and hence the lap around it. How would global travel look like if airplanes

could not decrease their altitude by let's say 30°? How would an average worker keep track of his wages or savings without simple addition? Math, even if only the basic kind, is present in our daily lives not only in the mandatory classes at our schools, but whenever we buy as much as a sandwich – after all no one wants to be cheated about his change. Some people, mathematicians and math teachers in particular and mathematically interested people in general, simply feel more reverence towards the subject than the average smith, baker, or electrician would. Students often have extreme feelings about math, both good and bad. While a young student might dream of being able to use a calculator for his multiplication, the high school student may wish him or herself back to the time when all the math one had to know was that "Two and two make four and not five".

There is so much more to math than we learn in school, and so much even the brightest students will not understand that it is probably frustrating for quite a few who sincerely wish to comprehend and learn new things. Whenever people tell me how much they hate math because they do not understand it I feel sorry for them, since there is simply no escape from the grasp of its numerical claws. Math is definitively not purely an abstract science, since many things, such as the trigonometric and exponential functions, basic PEMDAS, or good old probability is in our every day use, without us being all too greatly aware of it. As an email address of mine shouts into cyberspace: math rocks the world!

Farsane Tabataba-Vakili

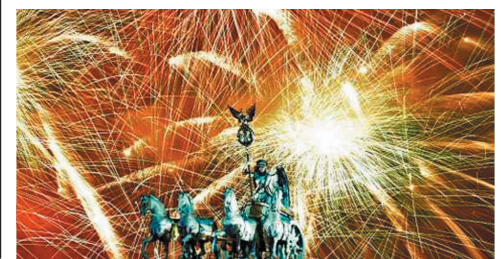
Happy New Year! Or not

The famous and most anticipated day of the year: New Year's Eve. Some people prepare weeks for this festivity. Usually it is a very joyful night, which borders into the New Year. People celebrate with champagne, good-luck charms and fireworks. But sometimes the evening ends as a catastrophe, when the firework injures someone or sets fire to a house. Every year at least 200 children end up in the emergency room on New Year's. Usually these are children ranging from the ages eight to fifteen. Common injuries are at the hands, since children hold the fireworks in their hands until they explode. The resulting injuries can range from minor burnings to broken fingers. The strength of the explosion multiplies when holding more than one firework, which leads to worse injuries. Firework-accidents happen not only New Year's, but also in the following days because of the used duds that lie around, which children collect attempt to reignite. In Berlin, the Fire Department was busier this year than in the previous years. They were called 1774 times – an additional 472 times compared to 2005/2006. The Red Cross had to help out an additional 400 times on the "Festmeile" in Berlin, in front of the Brandenburger Tor, because of minor injuries due to fireworks, dizzy spells, and drunkenness.

While most people were celebrating, for many, their New Year's was overshadowed by deaths and injuries. For instance, in Berlin, the police were called over 2.200 times and in Leipzig and Dresden, 800 times due to rampaging teenagers. Stray fireworks were the cause for many precarious fires, which created damage worth millions of Euros to repair.

A self-made firework killed a 23-year-old in Bavaria, 2 young adults from Baden-Württemberg. A man aged 40, was killed as the plastic bag, in which he tried to fill gas, exploded. A six-year old received major burns on the head and upper body, as a firework got caught in his jacket. In Switzerland a 27-year-old was killed as he bent over firecrackers to protect them from the wind. They exploded and tore up his face.

Theresa Volkmer



Opinion

Ein kleiner 6-Uhr-Gedanke

6 Uhr morgens ist die Zeit der Philosophen. Denn jeden Morgen um spätestens 6 Uhr stellt sich die tief philosophische Frage nach dem berühmten-berühmten Sinn. Macht es Sinn die eigene Wenigkeit von der viel zu harten und vom Verwandtennachwuchs voll urinieren Matratze zu heben, einzig allein um festzustellen, dass der Kaffee nach gar nichts schmeckt, da das tägliche hastige Herunterspülen die letzten Geschmackspapillen weggebrannt hat?

Macht es Sinn zum Bus zu rennen, um diesen sowieso zu verpassen und den nächsten X10er zu nehmen, in dem man mit seinen stolzen 163 cm gegen die schwitzigen Achseln von müden Morgengestalten gedrückt wird? Macht es Sinn im Unterricht zu sitzen, enthusiastisch mitzudiskutieren, um sich darauf zu freuen, dass man irgendwann auf ein gutes College kommt, dann einen guten Job findet, eine gute Familie gründet, eine gute Rente bekommt und sich dann einen guten Grabstein kaufen kann? Ziemliche Schwarzweißmalerei, nein schlimmer: Schwarzmalerei.

Man möchte jetzt geradezu meinen,

dass die Sinnesfrage auf ein großes, dunkles Nein zusteuert, aber es kommt noch besser: Die Antwort ist ein grammatikalisch furchtbares, dennoch banales „Keine Ahnung.“

Keine Ahnung. Das hört sich wahrlich nach Perspektiven an! Das steht für Zukunftspläne und Hoffnung! Hier möchte ich anmerken, dass wer nun glaubt, ich strebte auf die Enthüllung des sinnlosen Daseins und die baldige Apokalypse zu, fatal irrt. Es ist eher Hoffnung, die dieses „keine Ahnung“ antreibt, die Hoffnung auf Freiheit.

Freiheit? Nein, nicht die persönliche Freiheit, die wir verzweifelt in unsere PW-Klausuren versuchen einzubauen, denn frei sind wir, keine Frage. Wir sind sogar freier als frei und versuchen trotzdem noch irgendwie die Grenzen zu sprengen, auch wenn wir diese schon 50 Kilometer hinter uns gelassen haben.

Nein, es ist die Freiheit, die wir dem Leben schulden. Das Leben ist unbe-rechenbar, es pirscht sich heran und überrascht uns aus dem Hinterhalt. Es bringt Leid; es bringt Glück. Aber das darf es auch, denn was wäre es ohne

diesen gewissen Überraschungseffekt? Doch wo kann sich das Leben noch einmischen, wenn wir vollkommen durchgeplant sind? Wo kann es sich reinzwängen, wenn wir für alles eine Antwort haben und niemals ein „keine Ahnung“ wagen?

Das Leben ist die Fähigkeit zu träumen. Man muss sich nicht unbedingt in den Träumen verlieren, aber man kann ihnen Platz lassen; man muss sie nicht wissenschaftlich festnageln. Wo sind unsere Träume? Nicht die individuellen jedes Menschen, sondern UNSERE Träume? Jede Epoche symbolisierte einen Traum.

Wenn man durch die Stadt geht und sich die neuen modernen Glasbauten ansieht, fragt man sich was die Menschen in 100 Jahren an ihnen über unsere Gesellschaft werden ablesen können. In 200 Jahren werden die Glasscheiben bereits kaputt gegangen und ersetzt worden sein. Vielleicht werden nur Metallskelette in der Gegend herumstehen. Und im schlimmsten Fall werden sie einfach abgerissen. Zusammen mit uns.

Agata Bossy

Rettet den Palast

Am 25. April 1976 wurde in der DDR eines der modernsten Gebäude der Welt eröffnet: der Palast der Republik. Es war auch eine der teuersten Anschaffungen eines ohnehin wirtschaftlich schwachen Staates. Die Ostdeutschen wollten das Beste haben: Marmorböden, Säle, beleuchtet mit bis zu 1001 Lampen, „der Große Raum“, den man per Knopfdruck von einer Konzerthalle in einen großen Speisesaal verwandeln konnte und ein Mehrzweckgebäude, in dem Theater, politische Beschlüsse und Kegeln zur selben Zeit möglich waren. Erichs Lampenladen steht bzw. stand in einem Land, in dem das Volk dem Staat „diente“ und nicht umgekehrt. Als die Mauer fiel und die ersten demokratischen Wahlen in der DDR möglich waren, beschloss die Volkskammer den Palast der Republik zu sperren, da die Asbestverseuchung nicht den Arbeitsschutzgesetzen von BRD und EU entsprach. (Man sollte aber auch nicht vergessen, dass z.B. das ICC-Messe-gelände ebenfalls davon betroffen ist.) Also stand der Palast leer, bis die Regierung Berlins beschloss den Asbest aus den Wänden des Palasts zu befreien, was sich als sehr schwierig und teuer erwies (80 000 000 €). Diese Kosten trug der Bund und somit die Steuerzah-

ler. Zwar ist Asbest giftig, bleibt jedoch harmlos solange er nicht staubförmig in der Luft schwebt. Nun, in den Jahren 2004 und 2005 war der Palast wieder betretbar. Dann wurde beschlossen, dass dem Palast, wie der gesamten DDR-Vergangenheit, ein Ende bereitet werden sollte. Da man ihn aber nicht so einfach sprengen kann (bitte in den Taschenrechner schon mal '12 000 000' eintippen), weil sich in den Kellerwänden noch Asbest befindet, muss der Palast „rückgebaut“ werden (plus ,9 600 000'), das heißt es muss jeder Stahlträger und jedes Fensterchen abmontiert werden. Aus den persönlichen Lego-Zeiten erinnert man sich vielleicht noch daran, dass man seine Gebilde am schnellsten mit einem Fußstampfen und nicht durch sorgfältiges Auseinanderbauen loswird. Also wird seit Januar 2006 „rückgebaut“ und das „Rückbauen“ wird voraussichtlich im Frühjahr 2008 fertig sein. Der Palast der Republik sah eigentlich nicht hässlich aus, tut es aber nun, weil man ihm jetzt „das Fell über die Ohren zieht“ (und nackte Wölfe sahen noch nie schön aus). Die Touristen werden sich wundern warum sich der Palast der Republik so hässlich zeigt; „Rückbauen“ kann man nun mal nicht so einfach übersetzen. Was ge-

schieht, wenn der Palast weg ist? Leere, die in Berlin nicht ganz selten ist. Ach Scherz, man lässt erstmals „Gras drüber wachsen“, es wird ein Garten gepflanzt (plus ,2 100 000'). Wenn der Bund dann nach ein paar Jahrzehnten genug Geld gesammelt hat (plus ,670 000 000'), dann wird das Stadtschloss, das im Krieg zerstört wurde, wieder aufgebaut (auf seinen Ruinen, die unter dem Palast der Republik liegen, falls man sie noch finden sollte). Das Stadtschloss soll das neue Humboldt-Forum werden – warum es nicht im Palast sein konnte ist vielen ein Rätsel. Wer richtig getippt hat, wird feststellen, dass ca. 691 Millionen Euro ausgegeben werden müssen von Berlin und vom Bund, also vom Steuerzahler. Wissen Sie, wie viel Geld das ist? Das wäre genug Geld um die Qualität der Schulen zu verbessern. Das wäre genug Geld, das man sparen könnte, wenn man die „Rückbauarbeiten“ des Palasts durch Sitz- und Lernstreiks stoppen würde. Aber Berlin hat nun mal die Angewohnheit sich durch „Freimachen“ sexy zu machen, auch wenn es arm macht.

Oliver A. Sen

Opinion

Madame President: Is Royal truly a positive change?

Women are better leaders than men! At least considering the recent emergence of key female heads-of-state throughout the entire world one could get this impression.

Angela Merkel has taken office in Germany as chancellor and the former crisis point Liberia has somewhat stabilized since Joan Sirleaf is in power as president of the country that has been tormented by civil wars for over 20 years. Furthermore, Chile and Finland have elected female presidents in the past 12 months. Emancipation has definitely come a long way since Margaret Thatcher. The coming year could once again mark an incredibly important step for the equality of women in politics if Marie-Ségolène Royal manages to become the first Madame President of France.

The 52 year old mother of four children is definitely a fighter. She was born and raised in Dakar, Senegal as the daughter of Jacques Royal, a former artillery officer and aide to the mayor of Chamagne, and of Hélène Dehaye. She grew up among 7 brothers and sisters. She often says how her father's resentment towards females formed and strengthened her values and personality. Not only did Royal prove him wrong by getting an excellent education despite his constant interference, but at the age of 19 she also sued him because he refused to divorce her mother and pay alimony and child support to finance the children's education. Although she won this court battle after several years, she never made peace with her father who died of lung cancer when she was 28.

After joining the French Socialist Party, she quickly made a name for herself holding numerous prestigious positions – among them that of the Minister of Environment (1992-1993) and the Vice-Minister for Education (1997-2000). In 2005, Royal announced her intention to run for the presidency in the September issue of "Paris Match". The youth riots against the CPE laws strengthened her position in the presidential race and catapulted her into the position of the favorite in the presidential race against Nicolas Sarkozy. To further strengthen her campaign, she launched an internet campaign at Désirs d'avenir („Desires

of a future"), publishing the first chapter (out of ten) of her political manifesto. She also included the public to contribute by allowing visitors in order to help complete her manifesto and published her manifesto two months prior to the Socialist Party pre-presidential elections.

Despite all her efforts, she harshly criticized her own party as being sexist, stating that she was certain that if she was a man her party would have rallied around her and supported her from the early stages of her campaign. She then was named Presidential candidate of the Social Party in 101 of 104 districts.



Ségolène Royal and Mahmoud Abbas

To the dismay of many French traditionalists, Royal and François Holland, who currently is the first secretary of the French Socialist Party, aren't married yet, but already have 4 children together. Royal publicly defended their living situation, insisting that they were already bound by the Pacte Civil de Solidarité, which provides for a civil union between two adults, regardless of their gender. She also promised that if she becomes President, she will introduce a bill to legalize same-sex marriages and adoption.

Even more controversial than Royal's living situation are her political views. Royal was strongly criticized by her own party for her drastic concepts on how to deal with young delinquents. Royal also feels very strongly about strengthening the rights of homosexuals. For this purpose, she introduced a law that recognized families with same-sex parents for the first time in history.

Royal strongly disapproves of Turkey's role in world politics and shares the French majority's disapproving of Turkey joining the EU.

Despite the image that Royal has tried to create of herself, she is very far from being perfect. She definitely made a huge mistake during her trip to the Middle East which was her first official overseas trip since she had won her party's nomination. Prior to her trip, she had criticized the influence of America in the Middle East and she didn't seem appalled by the Hezbollah – quite the contrary actually. Royal met the Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and former Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas. After those meetings she went on to meet

a Hezbollah MP, who – during a joint news conference – compared Israel's policy towards Lebanon to Nazism. Much to the surprise of the public Royal didn't respond to this comment in any way, but later claimed that her translator hadn't translated that passage properly and that she certainly would have condemned the remark had she been aware of it. During the meeting she also said she shared many of the Hezbollah politician's critical views on the US.

These actions caused massive criticism from Jewish organizations and American politicians who now might notice that Jacques Chirac wasn't that awful after all, at least when comparing him to one of the possible new leaders of France.

It is assumed that Royal will definitely bring some major changes to global politics. She might be just what France needs to wake up from its sleep and deal with the problems at hand. However, I fear that her ego and her very unique philosophy of life could be a very dangerous mix. We might just have to wait and keep an eye on the new direction France could be taking with Royal leading the country. In the year that also brought up the, for the first time, realistic chance of a female US president, Royal France finally has the chance to make a major impact.

Culture

Movie Review: "Catch a Fire": When Former Freedom Fighters Become Today's Terrorist

My freedom fighter is your terrorist. Where does the difference between a terrorist and a freedom fighter lie? The breathtaking movie "Catch a Fire" might not fully answer this question, but it indicates that there really is no explicit difference but only a difference in perspective. The movie relates this question to the situation during South Africa's Apartheid, one of the darkest moments in Africa's recent history. The story of Patrick Chamusso (Derek Luke) is amazing throughout the entire movie and the scenes between Patrick and Nik Vos (Tim Robbins) are simply phenomenal.

The movie's plot, which is entirely based on a true story, is quickly told. During the times of uprising against Apartheid and the rise of the African National Congress (ANC), the young, black South African, named Patrick Chamusso, tries to stay out of trouble. He is always on time at work at the "Segunda" factory and he clearly distances himself from all activities that might attack the concept of Apartheid, in order to keep himself and his family safe. After an explosion in the Segunda factory, Patrick's life takes a dramatic turn that is closely linked to the police colonel Nik Vos who stops at nothing to fight the "terrorist" who endangers his country and his family. He tortures Patrick and his wife Precious (Bonnie Henna), which leads Patrick to force himself into action. Leaving his

family, his former life and his ideals behind, he joins the ANC and devotes his entire life to avenging his wife's death and fights for equality. The inevitable chase between Vos and Chamusso begins and both men suffer immensely during the movie. The last quarter of the movie is very intense – the surprising turns in the plot almost seem too good and shocking to be true.

The movie might not be one of the best movies of the year but the extremely moving story of Patrick Chamusso is reason enough to at least rent this movie once it appears on DVD or VHS. Nevertheless, this film was actually considered a failure in the U.S. box offices, grossing less than \$5 million and politely ignored by the award season. The Oscar-buzzed "The Last King of Scotland" overshadowed "Catch a Fire" and had already filled this year's niche for a "touching African movie". Truthfully, when comparing "Catch a Fire" to last year's "Hotel Rwanda", the deficits in the former do become very apparent. All the same, Derek Luke's performance is a highpoint in the production, capturing the spark that once led to his big break in "Antwone Fischer" while Tim Robbins once again manages to portray a man who seems to have no soul, as in "Mystic River".

Lawrence Boadum

Movie Review: "The Queen"

Stephen Frears' "The Queen" is about the reaction of the royal family of England to Princess Diana's death. A noble cast consisting of Helen Mirren as Queen Elizabeth II, Michael Sheen as Tony Blair, and James Cromwell as Prince Philip portray the events as realistically as possible. The movie presents the time span from a day before Diana's death to a week after Diana's death.

On August 31, 1997, the former Princess Diana, divorced the previous year from Prince Charles, died in a car accident in Paris. In the days after a family member's death, the royal family is required to adhere to a set of traditional rules on how to behave and what to say. However, in Diana's case, they did nothing, they said nothing – and England could not believe it. There was no flag flying at half-mast on top of Buckingham Palace to signify their mourning and no formal address to the people of England on the matter. All over the world there were pictures of civilians crying in front of Buckingham palace yet the important face of the Queen was not seen. And if it was seen, there was no evident sign of the love on her face, which everyone else felt for Diana. Or was there? Helen Mirren brings the queen to life, closer than most people will ever see her to show what truly went on in this extraordinary woman's life during the days after Diana's death.

Charlotte Foerster-Baldenius

Freestyle? – No more!

Usually dancing is used to express one's feelings and thoughts. Different types of dances represent different cultures all over the world. From the waltz to the salsa, dancing is a fun group activity and can be done anywhere at any time. Especially teenagers and young adults like to express themselves freely through dancing, and school dances present perfect opportunities to do so. But in the United States and parts of Europe, "free-styling" was taken a step too far. Administrations are now closing down school dances and prohibiting students from attending them, all because of a new, popular dance style. Some call it "grinding". Some call it "booty dancing". But mostly it's called: "freak dancing". There is no exact definition for freak dancing, but it can be described as sexually evocative bumping and grinding, or upright lap dancing. It's mostly older generations that are outraged by this type of dancing yet

they seem to have forgotten the provocative beginnings of the hustle, the Lambada, and the hip-shaking roots of the rock 'n' roll period. Truthfully, this is not the first generation that has created a hormone-driven dance style.

What is the cause of it all? The biggest promoter of this dance style is the media, especially television channels such as MTV or VIVA. These music channels enable teenagers to watch their favorite rapper's or singer's dance style on a regular basis. Their dance style is often very similar to the now widely spread freak dancing.

Another cause, some say, is that proper dancing is not taught in sports class anymore, as it was years ago. Only a minority of today's youth takes ballroom dancing courses. Due to this, one never finds cha-cha steps or a swing-turn on today's school dance floors.

But is closing down school dances and prohibiting students from atten-

ding them really the right approach to this new dance style? As a revenge for this combative reaction, students in the United States started throwing their own, private bashes or rented clubs. Of course, their dances are free of rules, chaperones and any clothing restrictions, which lead to bigger problems than the freak dancing at school dances.

"Freak dancing" and how to avoid it, are two of the most frequently discussed topics in the United States right now. It is not foreseeable if a compromise between students, school administrators and parents will be found and the outrage will just fade away, but hopefully it will be possible.

So let us learn from this and act appropriately at our school-dances, so that ours don't meet the same fate.

Theresa Volkmer

Culture / Entertainment

Drei Meter Über dem Himmel

Alle Mädchen aufgepasst! Hier kommt eine schnulzige, aber sehr unterhaltsame Liebesgeschichte aus Italien. „Drei Meter Über dem Himmel“ von Federico Moccia ist eine Romanze des 21. Jahrhunderts. Das Buch ist zurzeit in Rom der Bestseller unter den Jugendlichen und es gibt bestimmt kein römisches Mädchen, das diese Lovestory noch nicht gelesen hätte. Nun ist der Roman auch ins Deutsche übersetzt worden. In Italien erschien vor kurzem auch noch der Film zum Buch, der aber erst in einer Weile in Deutschland erscheinen wird.

Im Mittelpunkt der Geschichte stehen die beiden Teenager Babi und Step. Babi ist ein wohlgezogenes Mädchen,

das hart für die Schule arbeitet. Step hingegen ist der Inbegriff eines Frauenhelden und Draufgängers, der sich kein bisschen um seine Ausbildung kümmert und wegen Körperverletzung vorbestraft ist. Die beiden lernen sich kennen, als Step Babi vor der Schule anspricht. Babi mag ihn zuerst überhaupt nicht, doch in den folgenden Tagen begegnen sie sich immer öfter. Als sie sich bei einem illegalen Motorradrennen zufällig treffen und gemeinsam vor der Polizei fliehen, kommen Step und Babi sich näher. Von da an werden die beiden unzertrennlich. Doch schon bald treten Konflikte auf. So sind zum Beispiel Babis Eltern mit der Beziehung nicht einverstanden und Steps negative

Angewohnheiten, zum Beispiel seine Vorliebe Leute zu verprügeln, gefallen Babi überhaupt nicht.

Das Buch ist nicht sehr anspruchsvoll geschrieben, aber sehr amüsant. Mit viel Humor werden verrückte und einzigartige Erlebnisse geschildert, die die beiden Frischverliebten erleben. Es werden jedoch auch traurige Momente in den Leben der Jugendlichen dargestellt, die den Leser mitfühlen lassen. Dieses Buch wird jenen Jugendlichen gefallen, die Lust haben eine leichte romantische Geschichte zu lesen, mit deren Charakteren sie sich vielleicht auch identifizieren können.

Laura Kampf

Essen wie Gott in Frankreich

Schnecken, Froschschenkel und Rotwein, dazu Baguette. Danach eine Käseauswahl, eine Mischung aus pelzigen Weich- und übel riechenden Hartkäsen. So also sieht eine göttliche Mahlzeit aus. Schnecken, diese schleimigen Kriechtiere, die ihre silbrig glänzenden Spuren überall hinterlassen und die so unappetitlich aussehen, wenn sie mit Salz bestreut oder einfach zertreten werden. Die Schenkel der nicht minder schleimigen, Fliegen-fressenden Frösche. Und Käse, überzogen mit Weißschimmel oder durchzogen von blauem. Rotwein in Massen statt in Maßen. Und

wenn sie Fleisch essen, die Franzosen, dann trieft dieses nur so vor Blut. Oder es ist möglicherweise noch zur Gänze roh. Feinschmecker also, unsere südlichen Nachbarn. Dabei sollte allerdings nicht vergessen werden, dass die original französischen Croissants wesentlich besser schmecken als die hiesigen. Und das mit dem blutigen Fleisch stimmt auch nur partiell. Fest steht, wenn eine französische Familie sich zu Tisch niederlässt um zu speisen, seien es Coq au Vin, Meeresfrüchte oder eine andere regionale Spezialität, dann dauert es einige Stunden, bis das normalerweise

üppige Mahl beendet, alle Weinflaschen geleert und die Leckereien vernichtet sind. Meistens jedoch verspeisen normale Franzosen ähnliches wie normale Deutsche, nämlich genormte Spaghetti, Fleisch von normalen, glücklichen Schweinen und Kühen, oder internationales Fast Food. Nur zu außergewöhnlichen Anlässen lassen sie den Gourmet raushängen. Und verschlingen dann die eingangs erwähnten Schnecken und Froschschenkel.

Dies Irae

Sudoku

He-in Cheong

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 through 9.

One challenging Su Doku that will take you twice as long as it normally takes you to solve one...

	6							7
	1			4	8			
		7			3	5	9	
			3			2		1
			5		1			
1		2			7			
	8	5	6			1		
			2	7			4	
3							2	

10 Hair Tips for 2007

Theresa Volkmer and Charlotte Foerster-Baldenius

1. The bigger, the better.
2. Rainbow colors will be IT this year.
3. Don't visit the hairdresser – cut it yourself!
4. Don't listen to the people who say that helmet hair isn't cool. It is.
5. Volume hair sprays are back – 70's style!
6. If hair spray doesn't work, stick your finger in an electrical socket.
7. Instead of wearing your hair in one pony tail at the back of your head, wear many smaller ones, all over your head.
8. Tie your hair up on the top of your head, right in the middle (in a messy sort of way) to make yourself look taller.
9. Don't wash your hair for two weeks. This way, not only will your hair look nice and sleek, but you will also have a very individual smell.
10. Crimp your hair with a crimping iron to give your hair – literally – an edge.

THE MUCKRAKER is an independent newspaper. The opinions expressed here in no way reflect those of the administration of the John F. Kennedy School.

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