

THE SPECTRUM

April 2008

Nyack High School

Volume XIII Issue 7

The Silence Heard 'Round the Halls

Katy Brockschmidt

Once a year in April, Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) and their schools participate in a national wide radical event called The Day of Silence (DOS). You may have already noticed, or soon will notice, a table in the main hallway with people calling for others to sign up. If you don't know what the DOS is, you've either been living under a rock or it's your first year in Nyack, because our GSA makes a pretty big deal out of it.

The GSA hold the DOS to remember the silence most LGBT (Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender) youth feel at some point in their lives. The silence is a killer in some cases, but breaking it can be even more dangerous. The DOS celebrates the courage of LGBT youth in their ability to be who they are, and tells those going through the silence that they are not alone.

This year Nyack (like many other schools across the country) is dedicating the DOS to Lawrence King. Lawrence was a 15-year old middle school student who was killed for being openly gay. He was shot three times in his head, in the middle of his computer science class, by a boy who felt so threatened by Lawrence that he chose to ruin his life and end another's by his act of hate. Lawrence was killed two days before Valentine's Day by the boy whom he had asked to be his valentine. The fact that Lawrence chose not to live in silence, and instead chose to be who he was during

what could be the most confusing time in an LGBT individual's life, is inspiring.

You don't have to be gay to participate in the DOS and there is another choice if you can't be silent for the whole day. You can be an Ally, which means you can talk but you also have the responsibility and the obligation to stand up for those who

are silent and being harassed. If you choose to be silent, then you do just that. You are silent for the entire day.

In the past, the GSA have found that most people ignore the DOS, wait until the day itself to ask questions about it, and try to have discussions about it. They even try to get the silent people to talk and explain the DOS to them, which defeats the purpose of being silent. So this year, for the silent participants' sanity, students and teachers will be encouraged to hold discussions and answer questions the day before the DOS.

This year, the DOS is on April 17, and signing up for this wonderful event is easy! Go to the table in the hallway with the signs that say "Sign

up for the Day of Silence today!" and sign up! Participation is free, and it is a wonderful thing to be part of. After school, there is a "Breaking the Silence" party hosted by the GSA, and it's usually held in the garden, if it is not raining. If it does happen to be raining that day, then the location for the party will be posted on the band room door. This year, the GSA are happy to announce that the DOS Breaking the Silence party will involve a drum circle and pizza.

On April 17, there are a few things to do if you are participating. Wear all black clothing that day, and if you have something that says "Day of Silence" on it, you are encouraged to wear it. When you get to school, go to the table in the main hallway (where you signed up) to get your DOS pin. Wear the pin all day in a place where you can see it, and start not talking! The DOS is an important event for many people. Not talking in class is not an act of disrespect to teachers; it's an act of respect for something you believe in. Teachers should not ask students to talk, because it breaks the silence, and the students participating feel really bad about it and themselves afterwards.

Sign up as soon as you can!



Courtesy of profileblogs.com

Inside The Spectrum

* Who Will Be The Next America's Best Dance Crew?

* Graffiti: Is it art?

Page 2

* Show Choirs: An Embarrassment to Music?

* Senioritis IS a Real Disease

Page 3

* A Pregnant Man!

* Sally Kern's Controversial Statements

* NHS has a garden!

Page 4

Did She Really Just Say That? Sally Kern's Shocking Statements

Matt Cramer

In early March of this year, a video was released on the internet in which Republican Oklahoma State Legislator Sally Kern spoke to a group who had invited her to speak about her views on the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) lifestyle. Kern unabashedly detailed her opinion on

the subject, citing her beliefs as a practicing Christian and a concerned lawmaker. At one point in the impromptu speech, she stated that she "honestly think[s] it's the biggest threat our nation has, even more so than terrorism or Islam." The audio was secretly recorded, so Kern was unaware that any part of the talk

would be heard outside of the event. While many might be shocked to read these words coming from an elected official, it is not surprising if you follow her track record.

Three years ago, Kern convinced the Oklahoma House of Representatives to approve a resolution that would restrict children's access to any "homosexual-themed" literature, making it only accessible to adult patrons. "There are some issues little children aren't emotionally equipped to tackle and many parents believe the issue of sexual preference is one of them," said Kern. "Expecting six-year-olds to deal with the issue of sexuality is about as realistic as expecting them to carry a 100-pound backpack to school every day. Parents have a right to know that certain books deal with age-sensitive issues and decide for themselves if their child is ready to read those materials." She and supporters of the resolution made clear they had no intention to ban the books, although a statewide poll found 42% in favor of a ban and 46% in support of withholding funding from libraries that fail to restrict access.

Forward ahead to March 16th of 2006, and that poll is reflected in legislation passed by the Oklahoma

House that calls for the withholding of funding for public libraries that do not place books with sexually explicit or homosexual content into an adult-only section. "Libraries and librarians should not be usurping the role of parents," Kern said. "You can't sell toothpaste without sex. Our society is obsessed with sex. And I will tell you this: the American Library Association is out to sexualize our children." Indeed. The problem in our nation right now is not our government, but our gays and our librarians.

Now this is not to say that her recent actions have gone unnoticed. Representative Kern has come under fire for her comments, notably by the gay rights advocacy groups The Human Rights Campaign and The Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund, both of which have petitions on their websites against the Oklahoma politician. In addition, there has been a veritable riot of comments across the internet in blogs and video-hosting sites where it has been posted. On the 19th of March, hundreds of protesters met at the Capitol in response. Tens of thousands of e-mails and voice messages have been sent to her,

Continued on Page 4

SOS Holds Hunger Banquet

Issac Argentineau

This year's Hunger Banquet highlighted the global issues of hunger and poverty. However, these are not just "Global Issues." They are personal, everyday, local concerns that we as citizens and as human beings must deal with face to face, in our own countries, in our own cities, in our own communities.

It is the mission of Students Opposing Starvation to do just that. Either through volunteering at the Soup Angel's Soup kitchen in downtown Nyack, or by "Midnight Runs" into New York City to provide food and clothing directly to the homeless, we work to in some way ease the suffering in our own communities caused by poverty and hunger.

On one of our Midnight Runs you quickly learn that the third world is

a lot closer than you think. The third world is on the side streets and back alleyways, with the homeless, the people, who either by chance or by the workings of our society, have been marginalized and are without the means to obtain the basic human needs we all take for granted: food, clothing, shelter, most importantly, respect and acceptance. We provide them with warm clothing, warm food, and warm conversation.

Although our charity is not on a grand scale or of grand designs, we are firsthand witnesses to its efficacy. We may not be able to lift someone out of poverty or out of homelessness, but we can at least, to the best of our ability, help someone through a harder night than any of us will hopefully ever have to face.

Who is America's Best Dance Crew?

Yong Kim

Only about eight weeks ago, many people did not know names such as "Kaba Modern" or "JabbaWockeez." However, now those names are popular discussion topics for millions of Americans today. Ending with a Season one Finale on the night of Thursday, March 27, 2008, *America's Best Dance Crew* has become one of the most popular reality game shows throughout the US. Randy Jackson, an *American Idol* judge, produces the show and it features street dance crews from across the US. Aired on MTV in the US and on MuchMusic in Canada, this show, hosted by Mario Lopez, has grown very popular.

Twelve dance groups from the US were chosen through rounds of auditions during the months before and on January 26, 2008; all twelve crews were invited to compete for the Live Audition Special. This was performed in front of the three actual judges of the show, Shane Sparks, Lil Mama, and JC Chasez.

From these twelve, three groups were eliminated on the spot, and with nine groups left; the show dove into Week one of its first season.

In that first week, each of the crews were given a week to prepare their performances to any song of their choice. Then after showing the audience and television viewers their dancing skills and stylized performances, it was left up to the American public to vote for whichever

crew they felt was the best. People could vote online on Mtv.com or by phone. The following week, the two groups with the lowest number of votes would face off to save themselves from elimination, while the other groups were guaranteed a shot at the next round. The judges would select who would be saved and who would be eliminated from the bottom-two.

From Week two through Week six,

other aspects. Although each group performed their best, each week one group was eliminated until there were only three groups left.

With three groups remaining, the crews went head to head in their performance to a master mix of the same songs that went through the history of street dance and hip-hop. The week before, Americans had voted and Kaba Modern and JabbaWockeez were placed in the

performance, in which they were able to use any music and any dance to show America that they were America's best dance crew.

The finale of Week eight was highly anticipated by many Americans, who voted numerous times to help their favorite crew to win. For the finale, the winner wouldn't be crowned by the judges, but solely by the American public. Breaking a record number of votes, the show received a total of over 38 million votes. However, before announcing the winning group, all of the original twelve dance crews were invited back to Los Angeles to perform for the grand finale. The groups worked with their respective divisions, the East, West, South, and Midwest, to put together four big performances. Afterwards, the JabbaWockeez were crowned as America's best dance crew, ending Season one of the show.

However, it was announced that there will be a Season two in the summer. Dance crews that want a shot at the \$100,000 grand prize can go to dancecrew.mtv.com to find out more information about where and when to apply and audition. Season one went from a brand-new TV show to one of the most popular shows today, and the viewers are highly anticipating the next season. With the Season one dance crews setting the standard so high, Season two's competitors must bring everything they have to be the next America's best dance crew.



Courtesy of www.mtv.com, www.davechung.com

crews were presented with different songs and different challenges that they had to accomplish in their dance routines. Each week had a unique theme, such as keeping the crew's own style, remixing a "dance craze," telling a storyline, performing one of Michael Jackson's songs from his album *Thriller*, and making a hip-hop dance from a Broadway musical. The judges praised or criticized the groups on their creativity, performance, unity, execution, stunts, and many

bottom two, while Status Quo was safe to enter the finals. Utilizing the same six songs for all three performances, these three groups performed, trying to bring their best to the dance floor. However, when the judges had to decide between Kaba Modern and JabbaWockeez, Kaba Modern was eliminated and had to say goodbye. With Status Quo and JabbaWockeez moving into the finals, they were each given a "sudden death" encore

An Unorthodox Art Form: Graffiti

Jake Lepori

Banksy - A name that was once unheard of has now gained global attention. Though initially starting his work in England, this anonymous graffiti artist has spread his work around the world and is known for bringing up social and political issues in his public art. He is also known for many unorthodox art forms. Some of his stunts include hanging his own humorous and often satirical art in museums, such as The Metropolitan Museum of Art and putting a life size dummy of a Guantanamo Bay prisoner in Disney Land.

Not even the wall in the Gaza Strip is safe from Banksy. In this land of turmoil and violence Banksy has created numerous pieces on the wall that surrounds the Gaza Strip.

Little is known about Banksy, despite his popularity. His name is shrouded in mystery. Because most of the art he creates is actually illegal, it is imperative that he remains anonymous. Initially, he began using stencils because he felt that freehand painting took too long to do a good job. If you were going to destroy someone's property, you should at least be kind enough to do it well and detailed. His graffiti has a very unique style; his detailed stencils separate him from other graffiti artists. Even when his art isn't signed, it is very evident that he has done it. Rats, social commentary, suggestive

material and humorous images often flood his artwork. Many of Banksy's pieces give rats personalities and make statements about society.

Originally starting out as a pure street artist around the age of thirteen or fourteen, Banksy has now begun to branch out. He has started creating art exhibits for his less illegal work. In his new work, he uses canvas and reworks many familial paintings of the past to put his own ideological spin on them. At one of his exhibits he even had an elephant painted the same pattern as the wallpaper as a statement about world poverty and how it is something that, like the "elephant in the room", cannot be ignored. He has also come out with small self-published books of his work, has done art for Blur's *Think Tank* album and even has a coffee table book.

Though his style of art may have changed a lot since his days of spraying rats on the sides of



Courtesy of blog.arcadia.it

buildings, the fundamentals behind his work have stayed the same. He is constantly expressing his opinion on society and what he feels needs to be changed. Whether it is a spray painted image of a London police officer searching a little girl for weapons on the side of wall or a painted elephant representing world poverty, Banksy is making important statements about our society.

Senioritis: It's Uncontrollable.

Nicole Oestricher

What is Senioritis? Well, every high school student can tell you in a heartbeat. It is a state of laziness, and a mindset of not caring that takes over seniors, and at times juniors. What is this specified "disease" that every person in America, as is assumed, knows about? Well from observation, it can be stated that Senioritis pretty much kicks in for a student when high school, and all the activities associated with it, are no longer important to the student. There are some that may say that Senioritis is just another of the many common excuses used by students when they miss an assignment, or don't do a project, but it really is a serious issue. Senioritis has been the source of many failing grades, cut classes, missed projects, and lack of articles and editing for *The Spectrum*. What can be done for this problem? In all honesty, nothing! Seniors reach a point when they have been accepted to

college, and certain classes are no longer deemed important. For many, the only thing on their mind is how to pay for college. "Oh my gosh, college is hard to pay for. My school is \$47, 000 a year!" says Allie Colsey, when asked about her future plans.

New worries now plague the minds of Seniors, and with the coming of beautiful weather, new ideas to help deal with these plagues come about, such as playing Frisbee in the field, or just taking in the beautiful sunshine from the day. Can the seniors truly be blamed? After going through four years of grueling work, countless nights of studying for tests that you knew were not passable, and reading *The Great Gatsby* once more, it is only understandable that the seniors have been infected with this very serious disease.

And everyone should just feel for the Seniors....and yeah....

Are Show Choirs

An Embarrassment to Music?

Matt Cramer

There is a phenomenon that occurs in much of the United States that has (fortunately) never seeped into the microcosm that is Nyack High School. It involves song and dance, but no dramatic ties, and often, even less musicality than your token high school marching band. No, these are performers of the strangest sort I have ever encountered in my late-night adventures on the Internet. Ladies and gentlemen, I give you a glimpse of the beast that is, SHOW CHOIR.

What first brought shock and awe to this young adult was watching a YouTube video of one such SHOW CHOIR participating in what was being hailed as a "vocal jazz competition", although the jazz seemed conspicuously absent. I apologize, though, because I have yet to explain clearly what this mysterious group actually is. Perhaps the best way about this is to say that a SHOW CHOIR is the vocal equivalent of a marching band. The SHOW CHOIR is what its name states; a singing

ensemble that puts on a show. Usually these shows have themes, and they consist of medleys of loosely related songs that tie to that theme (does the marching band similarity become more blaringly clear?). Usually these songs are of the show tune or pop song variety. This is not to put down show tunes or pop songs, both of which have their own time and place, and some of which are quite brilliant. Sadly, the SHOW CHOIR does nothing for these songs, as the vocals are often drowned out by either loud accompaniment or are marred by superfluous, silly choreography. The arrangements of the songs show little originality or thought, and are likely churned out by staff arrangers of publishing companies who seek to cash in on the vast array of SHOW CHOIRS seeking to program their competitions full of '80's dance songs and well-known hits from the Broadway stage. However, that gripe is not the real fault of the SHOW CHOIR.

Where does the SHOW CHOIR go

Our End of the Spectrum

It is no longer a surprise to turn on the nightly news and hear of scandalous tales involving our elected politicians. The relentless media thrives on the drama and appears to have no fear in exploiting the personal lives of political figures, who more than likely would prefer to have an ounce of privacy.

Unless you've just landed in from another planet, you've probably heard of the Elliot Spitzer saga. Due to the story of his numerous "encounters" with a prostitute, which recently surfaced, Spitzer shamefully resigned from his position as New York State Governor. This is not the only personal story to be covered regarding a politician in our current history. Senator Jim McGreevy announced he was gay in a national press conference in 2004. Without the increasing role of the media and television in politics, it is likely that this information would have never been known to the public.

The media has played a huge part in the amount that the American people know in regards to the personal lives of our elected officials. However, this has not always been the case. During the Presidency of John F. Kennedy, his "secret" affair with actress and model Marilyn Monroe were not covered in the press. In fact, the story didn't come out until after his presidency. Today, if the two were seen just once together, a story would somehow formulate within hours across newspaper headlines and magazine stands.

With this increase in media influence, we the people are overwhelmed with information that perhaps we didn't want to know. While Spitzer's involvement in prostitution is illegal, his personal business may have had no effect on his political business.

The notion that politicians should be some sort of "perfect" person in every aspect of their life is completely unrealistic. Although in a representative we seek certain qualities that make a strong leader, we also know that every person has faults, and it is unfair to hold political figures at such high and unattainable standards.

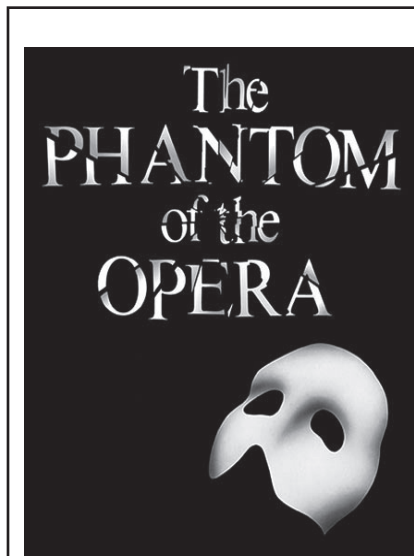
wrong? From the very conception, that is where. The problem with marching bands, SHOW CHOIRS and many films and new musicals of late, is that they often forget the basics – musicality, good technique, originality, to name a few — in favor of what I and a good friend of mine have deemed SPECTACLE.

Those in charge of these SHOW CHOIRS seek to give SPECTACLE to their audience.

Excessive, garish costuming combined with derived dance moves all in time with uninspired, sub-par vocal performances. What is worse is that there are what seem to be cults of SHOW CHOIR followings – families and music departments who focus on the success of the SHOW CHOIR. There are rampant competitions, replete with extravagant lighting and, dare I say it,

dry ice! Sometimes a SHOW BAND is incorporated, offering more chances to hear too many cymbal crashes and not enough chordal accompaniment.

The kids involved with these SHOW CHOIRS dedicate themselves to a form that is in its very core faulty and many steps backward from good music making. It is an offense to those people who composed the music, and it is filling these young people's lives with a past time that has no purpose but to further push our young generations from cherishing quality musical literature or good performance technique, and also to delude audiences and the general public into thinking that they are experiencing something worthwhile. What they are getting is a loud, flashy façade with no substance underneath. The SHOW CHOIR is a SPECTACLE-fueled monster to be avoided at all costs.



The Spectrum
Congratulates the Cast
and Crew of
The Phantom of
the Opera
for an outstanding
performance and great
success!

THE SPECTRUM STAFF

Editor-in-Chief..... Allie Colsey
Managing Editor..... Yong Kim
Layout Editors..... Katy Brockschmidt, Yong Kim, Allie Colsey
Copy Editor..... Sebastian Baere
Staff Advisor..... Ms. Adele Metrakos

Writers: Jake Lepori, Yong Kim, Inayah Davis, Crystal Antoine, Matt Cramer, Katy Brockschmidt, Isaac Argentineau, Nicole Oestricher

Disclaimer: Any opinions expressed in *The Spectrum* are purely the opinions of the author, and are not endorsed by the Spectrum Staff, or the community of Nyack High School, both faculty, and students. It is our interest to provide fair and accurate accounts and opinions, therefore we are open to accepting opposing perspectives on issues addressed in this publication. However, *The Spectrum* reserves the right to edit for grammar, clarity, and content.

