

Kingwoods FFA hosts **Santas Farm**

Veronica Martinez
Reporter

The 12th annual Santa's Farm was held Friday, December 5th at the agriculture complex located off of Woodland Hills Drive.

Santa's farm, an annual community service event, is put on by the Kingwood FFA students.

"Santa's farm is really cool. I have a goat names Willie and I decorated his pen for the event," sophomore Cody Bruns said.

The Kingwood FFA students decorate their animal pens and it is like a Christmas petting zoo. All of the animals are owned by the students in the KHS and K-Park FFA.

"KHS and K-park high schools are the only schools with an FFA program and the only schools that participate in Santa's farm," Bruns said.

Cookies, candy canes and hot chocolate were served and hay rides were provided for the kids. Santa made an appearance as well.

Members of the community, along with the families and friends of FFA students came out to support the organization.

"FFA is a great club to be in," Bruns said, "You get to adopt an animal and even go to the rodeo. I have a great time in FFA."



Junior Shaneah Carroll presents her rabbit to the children attending Santa's Farm on December 5. This is Shaneah's third year in FFA. Children and parents alike enjoyed a night of festive Christmas fun with the animals. Students in FFA receive their animals as early as September and care for them until they are shown and sold.
Photo By Veronica Martinez

CONSTRUCTION

UPDATE

Sadie Porter
Photographer

The road to perfecting the school's appearance and effectiveness has been long, and painful for many teachers and students. Teachers have had to move classes, students have had to cramp into uncomfortable spaces with less than enough room, and all together it has made it apparent that we all took the rooms and facilities in the old school for granted.

"My art class is shared by two or three different teachers, and we have an extremely cramped area. The huge tables barely fit in the space we have and there's no walking room," junior Emily Shultz said.

Almost every upper classman will agree that they have been put into a situation similar to this one in at least one

class. Some students believe that packing into inconvenient spaces has made it harder to learn and pay attention.

"Last year, my history class was in the 400 hallways before the first semester ended and second semester we were moved into a class on the opposite side of the school. All of the walls were different colors and there was construction right next to it. We had to move again in a couple months into a T-building class," junior Peyton Chapman said.

"I think everybody will be surprised when they see the new 700 and 800 hallways," Building Manager Bill McCabe said.

MCCabe believes that the school's construction areas should be re opened to the public for good by the second semester. All of the finishing touches are being completed this month and things are finally returning back to normal.

The T-building classes will officially be moved on December 19. The new 700 and 800 hallways will be opening over the holidays. 800 hallways will be ready for use by the computer and technology classes and video tech. The 700 hallways will house art, auto tech, ag classes, and stucco, along with other electives.

"The new hallways are fantastic. They have renovated the lab rooms and everything looks state of the art!" Principal Donnie Bodron said.

The most difficult part of construction for Bodron was last year when the students were all in the T-buildings and there were construction zones around the classes in the main building.

"My favorite part of our new school is the entrance. The large construction zone next to the bus loop will be used for visitor parking and additional student parking," Bodron said.



Volunteering for the Holidays

Monica Castellanos
Feature Editor

With a two week break coming up, there will be ample time to help others in need. Whether you help out at the local library or serve a hot meal at a soup kitchen, someone somewhere will benefit greatly from it. Get in the holiday spirit and volunteer at one of these areas or somewhere of your choosing.

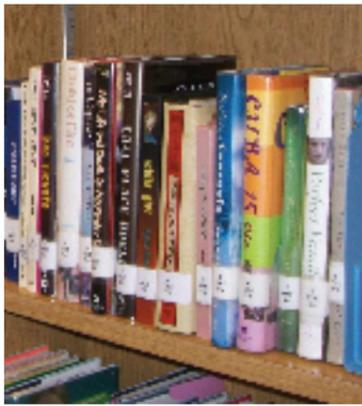
Harris County Public Library

Re-shelving books and movies, making sure the patrons are happy, and keeping the library clean is a great and easy way to help out the local community.

The quiet atmosphere will let you relax while earning points for any of the service clubs. Stop by the library to ask head librarian, Mrs. Ronson, when you can help her out.

Pals for Pooches

This is a great organization for animal lovers and future pet owners. You can stop by the Humble PetCo on Saturday and Sunday afternoons. Anyone can



Harris County Public Library could always use volunteers to help reshelv books. Photo by Monica Castellanos

help unite prospective adopters with loving pets, play around with cute animals, and help place them in a good home. You can also volunteer at the Animal Charities Thrift Shop on Loop 494.

Goodwill

Be prepared to stand up for long periods of time if you help out at the Goodwill Store in Humble as an attendant. You will be sort-

ing and organizing clothing and other items. This is a great way to have direct contact with a lot of the people you will be helping.

Hospitals

Go to any of the hospitals in the Kingwood - Houston area like Northeast Medical Center and Memorial Hermann Hospital and there will surely be a place that needs help. You can make gift baskets for terminally ill patients to let them know someone cares for them, entertain children with projects and a friend, and possibly work up to helping nurses.

The Brain Game

Mansi Raythatha
Contributing Writer

Do you know the answer to the meaning of life? The KHS Scholar's Bowl participants sure do.

Scholar's Bowl is a competition for all those students with a desperate need to prove their superior intellect, which took place this year on December 5.

Last year, NHS held two Scholar's Bowls, the first time any such event has taken place at KHS. Both of these brain-straining events were extremely successful, and this year's even was no exception.

"We played it at NHS National Convention last year, and it was so much fun that we just had to bring it back to KHS with us," senior and NHS President Kristen Webb said. "We definitely plan on keeping this tradition going."

The Scholar's Bowl is a trivia game designed to test competitor's skills in topics ranging from math to pop culture. After the narrator reads the question, the competing teams are given ten seconds to buzz in with an answer. On the whole, the process is extremely

intense, as members of the team are not allowed to discuss the question before answering.

"The game we played at convention was really strict, so we try to loosen it up a little bit for the KHS tournament," Webb said. "It's an intense game, but we want to have fun with it, too."

The Scholar's Bowl takes place in schools across the country, and can be compared to the mathletes, but with a greater range of questions. The KHS Scholar's Bowl is open to anyone in the school who is willing to face the challenge. Even players without a team are permitted to sign up to be put in a random grouping. Winners of the bowl earn a \$100 cash prize, which amounts to \$25 per person on the four-person team. This year's winners were Ian Miller, Abhinav Iyer, Chris Faucett, and Fritz Prejean.

"Scholar's Bowl is a really great opportunity to have fun and a good chance to practice for those destined to go on Jeopardy or Trivial Pursuit," junior and two-time Scholar's Bowl competitor Carson Roper said.

Gas in our struggling economy

Marieke Harrell
Reporter

In terms of paying for an expensive Hummer, gas can be a large part of the price. Dealerships had a huge sale drop in F150s and other large vehicles. It was costing \$70 to fill up gas guzzling cars. At the end of September, gas prices began to decline, and it seems as though there is a new low for consumers.

"They might lower a little bit more and may go all the way back up in the summer," Shell customer Dave Cummings said.

Many people are afraid that gas prices will shoot up again as a result of the problems the U.S. is having with the economy. Many people are thinking about trying to sell their low-mileage cars so that they might get a car with better mileage to save money.

"Demand is down and people are

traveling less," Coach Hendrix said.

When less and less people travel long distance, demand for gas goes down. Because gas has gone down, everyone is going to be excited and will start traveling more.

"Because gas is going down, it makes it easier on the teenagers who pay for their own gas," senior Julie Palmer said.

There are a lot of young adults in the United States who are paying for their own gas. The lower price gas makes it easier for this generation. The less money spent on gas, the more money can be saved or spent on other things.

No one has any idea what is going to happen with the price of gas. It might be \$1.20 one day, and then the next it could be almost \$4.00. All people can really do is hope for the best, and that soon America will be using resources that are better for the economy.



Origins Of Traditions

Veronica Martinez
Reporter

Families have traditional ways that they celebrate Christmas, but not every family celebrates with the same tradition.

"My family and I open presents and then eat dinner, we go to a Christmas tree farm and cut down our own tree," sophomore Sarah Stepanian said. "Then we come home and decorate the tree. My mom, my sisters' and I always have a girls' day where we go Christmas shopping, eat dinner, and watch

a movie. On Christmas Eve we always open one present. On Christmas Day we all get up, watch the parade, eat coffee cake, turn on Christmas music, and we open our presents. The tradition started when I was a baby."

Many other families may celebrate Christmas like Stepanian does every year, but some families celebrate differently.

"I celebrate Christmas every year with my family," freshman Mattie Elhaimer said, "We open presents in the morning of December 25, known as Christmas

Day. I don't know when our tradition started but I would say when I was born. Every year my mom and I make Christmas cookies in different shapes and colors and we give them to friends, family, and neighbors."

Some families celebrate Christmas by eating turkey and ham on Christmas Eve. On Christmas Eve some families drive through the neighborhood to see Christmas lights and decorations. Some families buy a Christmas tree and decorate it and others help put the lights on the house and put out decorations inside.

On Christmas Day, many families open presents that were given to them by aunts and uncles. They also open one present that Santa Claus gave them or maybe presents from their parents.

"When my family passes out Christmas presents, we wear our Santa hats," freshman Baylee Watson said. "It started with my grandparents a few years ago. We usually drink eggnog the entire season and have a Christmas party on Christmas Eve with tons of junk food."

Deck the halls for the Madrigals

Spencer Williams
Reporter

Every year around Christmas time, a group of choir members dress up and sing carols to people in all kinds of places. These singers are the Madrigals and they have been caroling and performing since the founding of the school, but it is all voluntary.

The Madrigals do not only carol, they go to all kinds of events including UIL competitions, festivals in the spring, and Cabaret, which is a mix of the more popular music, in October.

"They are a very talented group," choir director Jason Watt said. "It is a extra curricular activity which kids who

are in choir participate in."

Madrigals is an extracurricular group that likes to sing carols and newer music. There are 16 to 32 students in Madrigals and many of them have been there since freshman year. All grades can participate in Madrigals.

"It is fun to watch them sing and see the looks on their faces when they are singing," Watt said. "I love to watch how they develop over the years, and how their voices develop as singers."

The Madrigals have concerts frequently typically they have at least two small concerts a day in the Christmas season. They last for about an hour and a half to two hours. They also go to small



Photo by Spencer Williams

restaurants and those only last about thirty minutes. While they do not raise money for a certain organization, they sometimes receive tips from generous people, which go to funding the choir trips and other activities.

The Madrigals are expanding and

looking for people, and you do not have to be in choir to join.

"You don't have to be good or the best, you don't even have to have sung before," Watt said. "If you're curious, give it a try. Just come see me, and we'll sign you up."

Warming up to Winter

Sadie Porter
Photographer

Every season a new look and style is developed. Different shades and colors are used to keep everyone guessing. The majority of the fashion industry is spread through magazines and television and is influenced largely by celebrities and famous people around the world.

"My favorite winter accessory is a jacket from Pac Sun," junior James Vessel said.

It is often agreed that more men than women value comfort in their clothing styles. Men are more prone to larger and looser pants and shirts. Zip-up hoodies are one of the fashion statements favored among the majority of guys in the U.S.

"The most popular shoe styles here at KHS seem to be Vans, Nike's, and Converse," senior Chris Reece said.

Shoe styles have been just as important as accessories and basic cloth-

ing articles in the fashion years. Many shoe companies are extremely competi-



tive, and buying the season's newest shoe fads can become extremely pricey.

Many people will spend just as much money for a pair of shoes as they would for a pair of jeans and a shirt together. There are colorful new shoe styles and looks every season. A common place for many teenagers to go to buy these clothing articles and accessories is the local mall.

"I religiously buy my clothing from Urban Outfitters in the Woodlands. They generally have everything I need. I love it!" junior Sara Cummins said.

Many people in our community consider fashion statements important and value their consumerism. There are some individuals that would go to different places with higher prices just to achieve the look they desire. There are so many different styles and looks with different personalities that express a person's individualism.

A Town Center Christmas

Kimberly Kurtz
Op/Ed Editor

Christmas is the time of year when everyone gets together with friends and family to have a good time. They carry out traditions that have been perfected over generations. Kingwood's tradition during the Christmas season is holding the holiday festival in Town Center.

Every year, when Christmas Day comes, families and friends get into their cars and go down to Town Center to take part in all the festivities.

Everyone gathers together and celebrate one of the happiest days of the year with the people that mean the most to them.

This year, the event happened on December 6, instead of December 25.

"My favorite thing about the festivities in Town Center is that everyone is there together," senior Emily McDearman said.

There were vendors, places to get something to eat, Santa Claus, and more.

Randalls Food Market sponsored "decorate your own" gingerbread houses for the young and the old. Other sponsors included GameForce and Green Mountain Energy.

While food and festive activities were found around every corner, there were also booths and vendors where parents, friends, and family could find Christmas gifts for the ones they love.

You could also do things like get a picture of your pet with Santa to put on the front of Christmas cards.

GameForce had a demo for the newly released Rock Band 2, so even parents could try it out and see if it was the perfect gift for their children.

"I go with my friends, and the best part is that I'm there with *all* of my friends, not just a few of them, and that makes it even better," McDearman said.

The Christmas tree was lit at 6:00 PM as a conclusion to the event.

"There were little kids that gathered around the Christmas tree, held hands, and sang Christmas carols," McDearman said.

Countdown to Christmas

Brittany Milam
Reporter

It's that time of year again! When Christmas songs seem to be on repeat and the Christmas movies finally begin.

As students in high school it seems that with school, work, family and friends the Christmas season is no longer a time of relaxing and watching movies every night like it used to be.

So, here is the rest of Fox Family's 25 day countdown Christmas movie schedule! (Maybe you can find a little time to crash and watch your favorite one.)

Tuesday: 12/16	8pm/7c
Mary Poppins	
Wednesday: 12/17	
I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus	7pm/6c
Thursday: 12/18	7pm/6c
Dr. Seuss' The Cat in the Hat	7:30pm/6:30c
Dr. Seuss' The Lorax	
Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas	8pm/7c
Friday: 12/19	8pm/7c
Santa Clause 2	
Saturday: 12/20	8pm/7c
Christmas in Wonderland	
Sunday: 12/21	6pm/5c
The Incredibles	
Monday: 12/22	8:30pm/7:30c
The Polar Express	
Tuesday: 12/23	6pm/5c
White Christmas	
Wednesday: 12/24	
Holiday Classics Marathon	All Day
Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas	8pm/7c
Thursday: 12/25	6pm/5c
The Incredibles Cars	8:30pm/7:30c

Holidays Around the Globe

Ramadan: A 30 day Muslim Celebration

Brittany Milam
Reporter

This time of the year is one of the many different times of celebration in the world.

Although a lot of people in the United States celebrate Christmas, it is not the only celebration that takes place between thanksgiving and New Year's that holds great importance and a way to close yet another year and welcome a brand new one.

Most families who practice the Muslim faith consider Ramadan an important celebration that takes place at any time of year depending on the Islamic lunar calendar.

"Man, I love christmas don't get me wrong, but still, Ramadan is always a lot of fun, its a great time to relax and enjoy being with family," senior, Haseeb Rahman said.

This year, Ramadan fell on September 1st and lasted until the end of September. Ramadan is a 30 day fasting period during which Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset everyday.

During those 30 days, many Muslim



followers meet at a certain place depending on their location. Some may go downtown, while some gather in Sugarland and other places near and around the Houston area.

Everyday, the priest in charge of the sermon reads from the Quran and dis-



cusses the importance of the topics that are read. There are also important prayers that are recited during these teachings. In total, the service is usually about 30 minutes long.

On the 31st day, the priests go outside to see if there is a full moon. If there is,

then the Muslim celebration of Eid-UI-Fitar officially begins. However, if it is not a full moon Eid-UI-Fitar doesn't start until the 32nd day of Ramadan.

Eid- UI-Fitar is three days long and is the most similar thing to Christmas that the Muslim faith practices. During these days, families on both sides, combine and gather to pray, eat, visit each other and exchange gifts.

"Its just a day to enjoy family, and chill with everyone," senior, Haseeb Rahman said. "Its really a fun day, I love all of it. My favorite is probably the presents and seeing family."

Because people who practice the Muslim faith celebrate Ramadan and Eid-UI-Fitar, they do not celebrate Christmas. This is not because they are against it but because it simply holds no value to them. Although some may decorate and even put up a Christmas tree, many do not.

"We haven't put up a Christmas tree yet, but I'm pushing for it this year," Rahman said while laughing. "My mom doesnt mind if I put Christmas lights up, as long as I do it myself. I'll probably end up doing that this weekend."

HANUKKAH

Kelsey Spinnato
Copy Editor

The Jewish holiday, Hanukkah, is celebrated during the winter time by the Jewish community. Meredith Pollard, a senior, celebrates Hanukkah every year.

"Hanukkah first began when the Syrians destroyed the Jewish temple in Jerusalem and the eternal light, which is always supposed to be lit," Pollard said. "It shouldn't have had enough oil to stay lit for even one night, but miraculously it lasted eight."

Therefore, Hanukkah is eight nights long. The dates of the holiday change every year on the American calendar because it is based off of the Jewish calendar, which is very different. This year Hanukkah begins on December 22 and goes through December 29.

"Usually my family goes to temple

on the first night and also on the Sabbath like we always do," Pollard said. "The Sabbath falls on the fifth day of Hanukkah this year."

The menorah, an eight-candle candelabra, is lit each day, one day at a time, symbolizing the eight days that the eternal light in the temple in Jerusalem stayed lit. Jewish families also sometimes make latkes, or potato cakes, and play dreidel.

"Each night my family exchanges gifts," Pollard said. "The gifts usually get progressively larger, with our big gifts culminating on the eighth night."

This Jewish holiday is a chance for families to come together to celebrate the season, just like Christmas.

"My favorite part of Hanukkah is having the opportunity to spend time with my family in the evenings after we exchange presents," Pollard said.



Diwali: A Hindu festival of lights

Cali Apodaca
InDepth Editor

One of the many celebrated holidays within the Hindu religion is Diwali, also known as "The Festival of Lights," which is celebrated in October and/or November following the Gregorian calendar. The Hindu calendar is centered around the new moon, which ends the month of Asvina then begins in the month of Kartika. This year, the start date for the Diwali celebrations was October 28th.

"Diwali is such a beautiful celebration, its my favorite holiday," senior and active practitioner of the Hindu religion, Abhinav Iyer said.

Diwali is called the "Festival of Lights" because one of the many customs that are performed is decorating with lights. This is similar to the customs in the U.S., when lights are put up on the outside of houses and various other public places. These decorations bring in the holiday spirit.

"In India, it is more of a city type life instead of the Kingwood suburbs that we live in, so many people light Diyas or Kandils which are colorful paper candles and hang lights on their balconies of their apartments," Iyer said.

Diyas are cotton-like string wicks that are inserted in small clay pots that are filled with coconut oil, which signifies victory of good over the evil that is within an individual.

Another custom that is practiced is the cleaning of the house from top to bottom.

"When this day comes my whole family goes crazy cleaning, all the cleaning is to prepare the house for the gatherings and guests that are soon to come in the next few days," Iyer said.

When the cleaning has come to a halt, family and friends make their way to each others homes to come together for prayers and religious rituals. Along with the many gifts that are exchanged during this time, food is also a very important aspect. Many gather to have very elaborate breakfasts and lunches. Children also participate in the popping of various kinds of fireworks in celebration of the victory of good over evil and light over darkness.

"I really enjoy the emphasis on the closeness of family that Hinduism incorporates in every aspect of day to day life," Iyer said, "this time of year is very special to me because I love being with loved ones, exchanging gifts, and eating delicious food like dry fruits and chocolate."

Kwanzaa:

more than just a funny word

Kristen Webb
Editor-in-chief

"I don't know anything about Kwanzaa," junior Jorge Cotte said. "I don't even think that a lot of African-Americans have any idea what Kwanzaa is all about."

Kwanzaa began in 1966 as an African-American alternative to religious holidays during the winter season. Founder Ron Everett, also known as Maulana Karenga, which mean "master teacher" and "nationalist" respectively, started to celebrate Kwanzaa as a means of celebrating his own heritage and culture instead of practicing the holiday of the predominantly white society.

Kwanzaa is celebrated from December 26 to January 1, as a seven day celebration that consists of rituals such as candle-lighting and the pouring of libations. Each day ends with an African feast and the exchanging of gifts.

"[Kwanzaa was created] as an act of cultural self-determination, as a self-conscious statement of our own unique cultural truth as an African people," Dr. Maulana Karenga said on his website, www.theofficialkwanzaawebsite.org. "That is to say, it is an important way and expression of being African

in a multicultural context."

Kwanzaa focuses mainly on the seven principles of African tradition as defined by the Nguzo Saba. These seven principles are Umoja (unity), Kujichagulia (self-determination), Ujima (collective responsibility), Ujamaa (cooperative economics), Nia (purpose), Kuumba (creativity), and Imani (faith). According to Karenga, upholding these seven principles contributes to the greater purpose of upholding African heritage, and therefore each of the seven days of Kwanzaa is dedicated to one of the seven principles. Kwanzaa ceremonies also consist of the lighting of the kinara, a candle holder with seven spaces to represent each of the principles.

"This stress on the Nguzo Saba is an

emphasis on the importance of African communitarian values in general, which stress family, community, and culture and speak to the best of what it means to

be African and human in the fullest sense," Karenga said. "Kwanzaa was conceived as a fundamental and important way to introduce and reinforce these values and cultivate appreciation for them."

Both Kwanzaa and its founder, however, were highly controversial during the 1960's, and still continue to raise controversy today. In the beginning of

the 1960's, Karenga founded the United Slaves Organization, a rival to the Black Panthers on the UCLA campus. Karenga and two others were later imprisoned for brutally torturing two women in the

USO.

Several years later, Karenga condemned non-Africans who celebrated Kwanzaa, claiming that it was a black alternative to existing holidays, not to be commercialized. He later revised his statement to say that all people could celebrate African heritage, in an effort to raise awareness of African culture.

Another large controversy concerning Kwanzaa involves the meaning of the flag of Pan-Africanism that is one of the official symbols of Kwanzaa. The flag consists of three horizontal stripes, with red on top, followed by black and green. Many people suggest that Kwanzaa actually encourages violence and intolerance of other races.

"The red, or the blood, stands as the top of all things," Karenga's website said. "We lost our land through blood; and we cannot gain it except through blood. Without the shedding of blood, there can be no redemption of this race."

Despite the questionable origins of the holiday, Kwanzaa continues to be a celebration of African heritage. Today, it is often celebrated by African-American families as well as Christmas and New Year's to blend the two different important cultures in their lives.



A Danish Christmas

Brooke Ley
Reporter

Not everyone at Kingwood High School gets presents from Santa on Christmas morning. Unlike most of the kids at our school, Junior Ida Madsen celebrates Christmas a different way.

Ida recently moved here from Denmark, which is just north of Germany. Just like other countries, they have many traditions, and like most Americans, they decorate their houses, but they do it in a different way.

They have an assortment of 24 candles which are used as countdowns for Christmas. One is burned everyday.

Instead of receiving presents just on Christmas morning, they have a present calendar which means they get a small present everyday. Instead of being from Santa, they are delivered by the goblin.

"The goblin is a little person with a pixy hat," Madsen said.

As for Christmas meals, they eat a variety of meat on Christmas night. Duck, turkey, roast pork with potatoes, and cabbage are just a few Denmark delicacies.

"After dinner we dance around the Christmas tree where all the presents are, we sing Christmas songs, and then we get presents," Madsen said.

They finish their festive night with a dessert called "risalamande", a popular snack in Denmark which is a type of cream y

rice pudding.

Their Christmas isn't over yet. December 26th is called the Second Christmas Day. Families gather to feast on lots of food and play games. It is usually referred to as a social day.

Even though Denmark has a few differences in ways of celebrating Christmas, Danish and Americans



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2008 Top 10

10. The Nintendo DS

The Nintendo DS is a portable game system that Nintendo first came out with on November 21, 2004. It is still one of the most sought after electronic video game systems this Christmas. *Price: \$129.99.*

Photo courtesy of www.mydigitallife.info



9. The Panasonic Viera

The Panasonic Viera TH-50PZ850U is a 50" plasma screen television that has superior graphics to many other televisions currently out on the market. *Price: \$2,999.95*

Photo courtesy of www.itechnews.net



8. Nikon-Coolpix

The Nikon-Coolpix 8.0MP Digital Camera has a 3.8 out of a 4 star rating on the Best Buy Website, making it a very popular camera. *Price: \$129.99 to \$179.99*

Photo courtesy of www.jewelry-boxes.com



7. Cell Phones

There are too many cell phone carriers and cell phones in the world today! That is why cell phones in general are the 7th most requested item for the Christmas Holidays. *With a two-year contract plan, several cell phones are FREE after mail-in rebate.*

Photo courtesy of www.cellularwirelessplans.com



6. The Wii

Last year, the Wii was the most sought after video game console in the world! However, even though millions of Wiis are sold, the hype has diminished along with its rank, now making it the 6th most requested electronic item this season. *Price: \$249.99*

Photo courtesy of www.webtvwire.com



5. The Macbook Air

Still taking home the gold medal for the thinnest laptop in the world, the Macbook Air makes it to the 5th spot on this countdown. *Price: Starting at \$1,299.99*

Photo courtesy of www.instablogsimages.com



4. Ipod Nano

Ever since The Ipod Nano came out in 2005, it has been a major success for the Apple Company. For this holiday season, the Ipod comes in a variety of colors ranging from black to orange! *Price: \$149.99*

Photo courtesy of images.bestbuy.com



3. X-Box 360

Photo courtesy of buyselltradeitnow.com



2. Apple-I Touch

The apple I-Touch is one of the Apple Company's most profitable items, thus making it the number 2 most wanted christmas item. *Price: Starting at \$229.99*

Photo courtesy of imageec21.com



1. Apple-I Phone

We have finally reached the #1 product on the electronics countdown: the Apple I-Phone! In 2007, it was Time Magazine's Invention of the Year, and it is still a very successful electronic device! *Price: Starting at \$199.99*

Photo courtesy of www.intomobile.com



Movie Reviews

Cole Gratz
Reporter

James Bond:

The Quantum of Solace

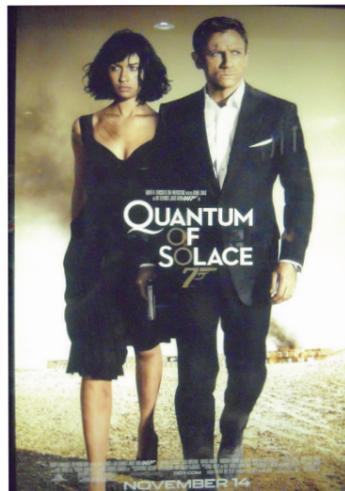
The action packed movie series of James Bond makes your heart start pounding in the first five minutes and does not stop until the end. From intense car chases to foot chases, and from the boat chases to the sky chases, there was hardly a point where Bond was not shooting someone, or where someone was not shooting at him.

In *Quantum of Solace*, James Bond is out for blood, and does not care about the rules of his agency or

even of the law of the country. He is out for the man that killed his girlfriend in *Casino Royale*.

As the actor playing Bond, Daniel Craig brings a new look. James Bond is originally an assassin, and the past Bonds did not have the killer mentality that Daniel Craig gives the character.

Casino Royale and *Quantum Solace* are the most action filled movies of the series. I strongly suggest action movie fans to see this thriller and get ready to be on the edge of your seat.



Transporter 3

Frank Martin, an underground driver known for always completing his job, finds himself kidnapped by a sinister American (Mr. Knepper) and forced into traveling Europe. Strapped on his wrist is an exploding bracelet, and if he wanders too far from the car, he will blow up.

His job is to follow the cell phone instructions on where to go and to put up with a girl named Valentina, whose father is in government environmental protection. She was kidnapped to force her father to allow tankers with radioactive waste into the country.

With few amazing moments, there are cool action parts dealing with car stunts

and uneven fight scenes. It amazes me that this simple Frank guy can beat down large masses of huge men on steroids.

The Transporter trilogy has never caught my attention as something great. The action is too unrealistic and dialogue is just stupid. I believe if that cab driver Frank Martin were to fight the assassin James Bond, there would be no contest. When Frank's fighting style is compared to Bond's gun, Frank would be left dead.

But if you are interested in crazy car stunts and an unrealistic action movie all together, then Transporter 3 would be your choice. I suggest just wait until it is out for rent at Blockbuster.



Restaurant Review: **Sushi Hana**

Craving some real sushi from a local restaurant? What better place to get your fix than Texas Sushi Hana? Try their great sushi, sashimi, curry, and more without breaking the bank. Most of the menu items are under ten dollars. Couple that with a cozy atmosphere with asian decorations and it is one of the best sushi bars around.

Even on busy days, the staff is quick to serve the customers' food and quick to accommodate their every need. Every plate is served in visually pleasing arrangements and usually has the taste to back it up. Sometimes the rice covering on their sushi is slightly gluey, but generally every bite packs a powerful yet tasty punch.

One big tip for Sushi Hana: get the edamame. These salted steamed green beans are the perfect pre-sushi snack. After ordering this delicious dish or an-

other appetizer such as egg rolls, feel free to order any of their superb rolls (like the Rising Sun Roll, the Spider Roll, and more), spicy curry, and anything else on the menu. If you are splitting a dish with a friend, consider getting the River. It has portions for two, with sashimi, sushi, and vegetables.

As for dessert, the tempura cheese-cake is a great choice. It is fried cheese-cake with whipped cream and a cherry.

Unfortunately, mine was left partially frozen, although that could have been intentional. Either way, it would have been a lot better hot and melt-in-your-mouth

Another awesome choice, which is sometimes given out for free, are thai donuts. Bland on their own, these are meant to be dipped into the sweet glaze provided for you. This glaze looks and tastes amazing. It has a slight nutty taste and will leave you wanting more.



Start off with a Fine 2009

Chelsea Williams
Sports Editor

Of course there are ways to throw a normal party. The usual preparations such as chips and soda are always important, not to mention some good music. But for New Years Eve, everything has to be over the top! New Years is the ultimate party night,

maybe because you actually have an excuse to stay up till midnight. So here are a few tips to throwing the perfect New Years party.

1. Have a creative theme, such as Midnight in New York or The Fireworks over France. Your whole party should be centered around your theme, which actually makes it easy to find the party necessities such as cups and plates.

2. Only invite your closest friends and family to the party. Having a bunch of random people that you don't know over to your house may sound like fun, but when you have to clean the house the next morning, you will regret it!

3. Make sure you supply plenty of refreshments, especially water. Buy the refreshments at HEB or Walmart in bulk, not individually. Chips and dip are always a good idea, but try to be creative about their presentation.

Make the bags of chips in the shape of the Eiffel Tower or the Empire State Building.

4. Encourage others to bring their own music. A wide variety of music is always better than hearing the same songs on the radio ALL NIGHT LONG! If the guests fail to bring their own music, do not freak out! Have a mix of songs from the year prepared.

5. It is a smart idea to have most of the party outside rather than inside, mainly because the clean up is much easier. Plus the risk of something breaking is very minimum. Then move the party inside ten minutes before midnight to watch the New Years Ball drop in Times Square.

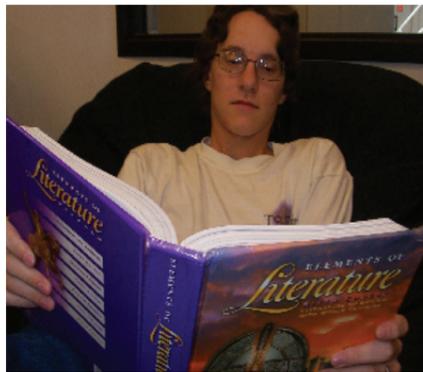
6. For entertainment, prepare some party games for the night. Games such as Murder Mystery where you are assigned a character by picking a piece of paper out of a hat. Hopefully you don't become the murder. Or you and your guests can try and guess each other's New Year's Resolution.

Just have fun creating your party and everyone else will have fun. Do not stress over what goes wrong, just join the party. New Years is about making a fresh beginning, so start it off with a bang.



Semester Finals

Nick Doremus
Entertainment Editor



Senior Mark Harris studies for his upcoming English final. Photo by Nick Doremus

It is the end of the semester, and you are worn out. It is three days before you get out for Christmas, and you can not wait for the vacation. You get home, sit on the couch, and realize: finals begin tomorrow!

Almost every student has this moment one time or another. While some still slack off and hope for the best, others crack down on their studies and feel at least somewhat prepared for their exams. Is this really a good way to study?

After the semester is over, many of us just wipe our memories of all of the information and focus strictly on the impending holiday. So how, exactly, are we supposed to take our exams, with only half of the knowledge in our heads! It is usually impossible.

Another issue is the exemption policy. While it does provide relief for students who deserve it, it could be even more helpful. What if there was an extra exemption for a class that a student has an A in? There would be a possible 3 exemptions for each student, enabling them to focus on more challenging subjects.

The dress code on exam days are troubling. Students want to feel comfortable while they are taking their exams. Why not allow students to wear pajamas? It is a way to relieve stress and allow them to focus more on the exams themselves. To be successful on the exams, there has to be a minimum amount of stress placed on the students.

The exams should begin later in the day, probably around 11:00 and ending at 2:45. Many students have little or no time to eat a good breakfast before taking their exams, nonetheless put on clothes! To give students more time to prepare for their exams as well as get ready in the morning, the exams should therefore begin later.

Many exams extend over 100 questions, sometimes even to 200 difficult questions. In two hours, completing 200 questions, in difficult classes, to the best of your ability, is nearly impossible. To eliminate this issue, there should be a limit on the amount of questions that teachers are allowed to put on the tests. Around 150 questions is a much more reasonable number, allowing students to actually think through each individual problem.

Finals, while they obviously can not be eliminated, should be changed. Many of the policies do not help the students, but rather hinder them from making a great grade on their exams. Therefore, there should be an extra possible exemption, a more relaxed dress code, more time in the morning before exams, and a limit on the amount of questions a teacher can put on a test. All of these changes should help students do better on their exams.

THE RETURN OF ELMO

Anna Hojnacki
Reporter

Remember when Elmo was just a Sesame Street character? Now he is all grown up and in our high school classrooms.

All students know the familiar tune it plays as the projector is turned on, and the motion sickness incurred from shuffling papers, but the advantages of this

little machine outweighs any downfalls.

The days of tripping electrical cords are over. The Elmo does not take up as much space as its older brother, the overhead projector. And, by being located on the teacher's desk, students are able to see the board again.

While the new Elmo may have a

higher price than the old projector, the money Kingwood is saving on Vis-a-Vis markers and transparency paper makes up for it.

The new Elmos are encouraging more interactive learning, and students are choosing to participate in hopes of trying out the new technology. The pro-

jectors offer better image quality and more advanced options, such as freeze screens.

The introduction of Elmo projectors to our school has offered us many new and innovative learning opportunities. Students are embracing this unique technology and using it to their advantage.

Merry (Early) Christmas

Kimberly Kurtz
Op/Ed Editor

Feet, dirty nails, crooked lines - everybody has pet peeves. There's the minor pet peeves, the ones that you can tolerate if they ever happen to catch your attention. Then there are the major pet peeves, the ones that make you want to scream if you ever have to see it, or hear about it, again. The one that just makes me want to puke Disney-colored rainbows every time it happens is when people put up their Christmas

lights too early, or leave them up until the end of February, for that matter.

Don't get me wrong, I enjoy celebrating the holidays and expressing my never ending holi-



day cheer in the form of fake reindeer and expensive novelty items, but I've seen neighbors begin to decorate for the winter holidays as soon as Halloween. Trying to incorporate the morbid gloom of Halloween

with the shimmering joy of Christmas just doesn't really seem to be working. Beginning to decorate while still in the month of November is still taking it a tad bit too far.

If you really cannot wait to show your festive spirit, please do everyone a favor and try and wait until December first. Give Thanksgiving a chance for once, and fight back to urge to put up Santa Claus by purchasing some fake turkeys instead.

I AM THE PUNISHER

Marieke Harrell
Photographer

It is a game where heads can hit anywhere above the waist. The ball gets kicked on the ground. This game hardly has rules to follow, but has some strange, unheard of terms. This sport is called rugby.

Each player on the boys rugby team has their own nickname. This nickname came from their position or how they act on the field.

"They call me Death because whenever they run into me they don't finish the game," senior Chris Reece said.

Senior Hunter Larson goes by "Beef" because he has a lot of meat on his bones.

"They call me the Punisher because I hit people really hard with huge force," senior Matt Meade said.

Many people wonder exactly what rules rugby follows. Most people know that Rugby is a mixture of football and soccer. One major difference is that in football, the team players wear padding and in rugby, the players do not.

"A few of the rules are you cannot throw the ball forward, you cannot hit a player while they are in the air, and you cannot hit below the waist," Reece said.

This sport is very physical, and it is expected that a player will get hurt unless they are careful.

"The thing I enjoy about rugby is the scrum, which is when the ball is down and you get in a big group of people and the hooker tries to get the ball out of the scrum," senior Hunter Larson said.

Tuesday and Wednesday practices are from 4-6pm and the Saturday practices are from 3-5pm.

Like all other KHS sports teams, Rugby athletes are competitive and ready to dominate.

"I am really looking forward to beating the Woodlands this year," senior Matt Meade said.

The rugby team has high hopes in this year's season. They all believe in each other and try to support each other.

"I feel very confident on winning the season because our defense team has really stepped it up this year," senior Hunter Larson said.

Every day before practice, all the rugby players work out on their own to make sure that they have a strong team that can beat anyone who tries to overcome them.

The first rugby game is Sunday, January 25th against Katy.

Welcome to our House In the Gym

Chelsea Williams
Sports Editor

The Kingwood Mustang girls basketball program hosted the Humble ISD Junior Varsity and freshmen basketball tournament December 5 and 6.

Due to the recent construction, this was the first time Kingwood

was able to host this tournament. The Mustangs also took advantage of the new concession stand area run by the freshmen and JV parents. For Kingwood's first big tournament, it went well. Eight teams, including six JV and two freshmen

teams, were involved in this year's tournament.

The freshmen had a rough start to the tournament with a loss to College Park. This girls played hard, but were not able to overcome the older and more experienced team. They came



Photo by Chelsea Williams

back with a big win over the freshmen Atascocita team. The freshmen ended up taking fourth place after a hard fought loss to Elsie.

JV defeated both the freshmen team from Atascocita and Elsie, placing them in the championship against rival College Park. The Mus-

tangs fought had for the first two quarters, but lost the momentum in the third. The girls continued to fight, but ended up losing by ten and taking second place.

While JV and freshmen were playing in the Humble ISD tournament, varsity traveled to take on Huntsville. The girls worked hard, but due to previous injuries, they fell short and lost by ten.

The next home game will not be until after school is out for Christmas break. All three teams will be traveling for the rest of the semester.

Secret Sports

Cole Gratz
Reporter

Kingwood High School is known for being an exemplary school, from its building to its teachers and, last but not least its sports. Kingwood has a wide variety of sport programs students can participate in, but there are sports some are unknown to most students. Gymnastics, inline hockey, rugby, tri-cycling and many more are not supported by UIL, and they have no classes.

"I really never had a clue that we had an inline hockey team," sophomore Becky Risenhoover said.

Inline hockey is for boys and girls from all grades. They play and practice at the JOPA sports complex in the Woodlands. Their upcoming season begins in January. They have both a fall and spring season.

"I saw the summer olympics and saw the gymnastics part, I was left interested

in joining gymnastics," freshman Hannah Stephens said.

Gymnastics is steadily improving its scores in Kingwood with each competition. The girls are involved in four events: Vault, bars, beam, and floor. Boys have six events: Parallel bar, pommels, rings, floor, high bar, and vault. Gymnastics has many different levels, including olympics competition.

"Lacrosse is where it's at. It's the only way to go," junior Christian Brakke said.

Lacrosse is a high and rising sport in Kingwood. With a large population of athletes involved. Lacrosse is described as one of the most fun sports, bringing competitive mentality and the youth of Kingwood together. Lacrosse is for both boys and girls from all grades.

These sports are growing and getting better year in and year out. They are open to all grades.



Tevin Svihovec Player Profile

Spencer Williams
Reporter



Q. What do you do in the off season to stay in shape and on top of your game?

A: There is open gym most of the time and we run a lot. Other than that, I usually work out in the morning and shoot for a while.

Q. How did you get into basketball in the first place?

A: "I started playing in the first grade and just have played ever since i guess."

Q. Are you planning on playing basketball in college and eventually trying to go professional?

A: "If I could go to any college, I would either go to San Diego University or Colorado State. If I can go professional pretty much any team will work."

Q. Who influenced you to play basketball the most?

A: "My mom and dad."

Q. Was it hard to get on the team? If so, what can someone do to prepare for tryouts?

A: "I'm on the Kingwood Varsity Basketball team and basically all you really need to do is make sure you're in shape. You also need to do what the coaches want, when they want. If coach wants you to play defense then you need to get down court and play your best."

Q. Which position do you play? Which position is your favorite to play?

A: "I mostly play shooting guard, but other than that, I would want to play point guard."

Q. If there was any other sport that you could play, which would it be and why?

A: "If there was any other sport I would probably play football, because I used to play."