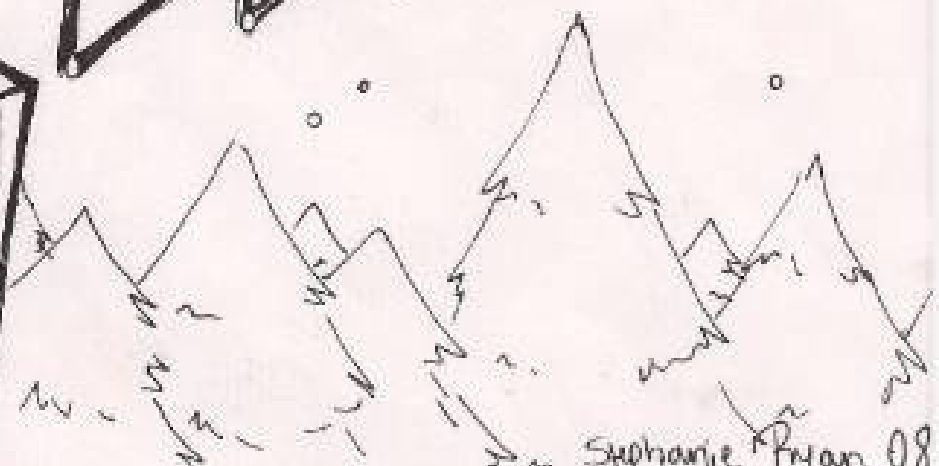




Merry Christmas!  
from the

LEONID



Stphanie Pivan 08

# THE WAR ON CHRISTMAS

By: Lucas Briola '09  
**Leonid** Editor

Yes, that's right, the ever-hungry Grinch of political correctness and secularism is sabotaging Christmas. Gradually, Christmas is being labeled simply as "holiday" or "winter" by government, corporate, and public organizations. It is no longer the Christmas season, but rather the holiday season. Public nativity scenes are being replaced by Santa Claus and elves. Instead of recognizing and remembering the birth of Our Blessed Redeemer, carols, trees, and shopping are being emphasized.

Why? One can easily surmise. Christmas is being secularized to be more "culture sensitive" and to avoid offending non-Christians. It is backed by the made up doctrine of the extreme wall-like separation of Church and State and the unjust political correctness.

By this, Christmas is being reduced from a very important religious commemoration and celebration to a secularized, commercial, meaningless holiday similar to Halloween. This simply cannot happen.

Some people may argue that the labeling of December 25<sup>th</sup> as Christmas is "forcing" Christianity upon them. There's a simpler way to combat this than to change the name and completely alter the concept of Christmas. Just don't celebrate it, or just ignore it. You know, to me, whenever I hear or read about the planets of our solar system, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Saturn, etc., I don't really have any problem with the fact that they are all named after pagan gods. I don't feel paganism is being forced upon me. I can ignore it, still accept the planets, and go on living my life.

Christmas is recognized as an official federal holiday. Naturally, some oppose this, arguing that it is a violation of the First Constitutional amendment. As does commonly happen, many purposely misinterpret this amendment. The First Amendment, religiously speaking, outlaws two things: the establishment of a state religion (like the Church of England) and the prohibition of the free exercise of religion. Government usage of the word "Christmas" clearly and obviously does not violate the First Amendment if one actually reads it. Religion, as well as the moral guidelines it provides, is necessary for a government to exist. There is neither need nor obligation for the U.S. government to not recognize Christmas any longer. Note that in the past, Christmas religious observances were banned in the communist Soviet Union. Is that the direction that we're heading?

Remember that Christmas was originally solely a Christian holiday. Therefore nobody has any right to secularize and change a holiday that was adopted besides the original founders of it. Because of this, only one person has the sole power to truly change something about the celebration of Christmas, and that's the Pope.

No matter what Christmas is called or what aspects of Christmas are emphasized or recognized, it is important that we get back to our roots and realize the importance of Christmas and live accordingly. No matter what, Christmas is a time for family bonding in a society that desperately needs it. It is a time to realize that God sent his only Son for our redemption in a culture that is growing more and more secular by the day.

## The Leonid

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## Christmas Trees: A *Real* Education

By: Tom Kennedy '09

Leonid staff writer

Call me an idealist, but I'm a "real" Christmas tree man. Not "real" as in the rest of you are wannabees, but real as in real compared to fake. You fake users may think you have good reasons as to why you sell-out, but I will educate you from here:

### Appearance:

Real>Fake

Pine needles or thin pieces of plastic. Forest green or artificial green. Both are too easy



### Storage:

Real>Fake

Throw it away or unpack it, pack it back up and dig it out next year. Too easy

### Selection:

Real>Fake

The whole outdoor experience or go to a store and stare at the same looking tree only inches different. Too easy

### Smell:

Real>Fake

Pine fresh or machine made plastic smelling. Way too easy

### Money:

Real>Fake

Go out in the woods and have your pick or go to a store and dish out \$70. Too easy

### Pride:

Real>Fake

To say you got the best looking tree there or to say you and your neighbor have the same tree. Too easy

### Use of tools:

Real>Fake

Get to use a bow saw or chain saw to cut it down or get to use a wrench to tighten the bolts on the base. Too easy

### Decorating:

Real>Fake

Get to man-up and get a prick every so often or hope you don't break a nail. Too easy

### Maintenance:

Real>Fake

You get to water it and take care of it or you get to dust off the box every year. Too easy

As all of you can see, there is absolutely no reason to sell-out and buy a fake tree. What were you thinking in this decision... were you thinking? For all of you procrastinators like me, go get yourself a real tree and enjoy the experience. (**Editor's Note:** The "Formatter" of this newspaper is a proud owner of a fake Christmas tree.)

# **Battle of the Sexes: *Black Friday***

## **His Side**

By: Sean Arndt '09  
**Leonid** staff writer

Black Friday is the day that all women and some guys in the world look forward to. This day the Coach store has a 73% mark down on their new big purses and their buy one get one for free at whatever shoe place sells those Ugg boots. Some might refer to this day as a High Holy Day, but to me it is just a Friday.

It is just a day where I can't fit into any of my pants and still want to eat the food from Thanksgiving night (not even warming any of it up). To me, this day starts with a nice sleep. I am not one of those who lose sleep over shopping. I can't imagine getting up at 3 a.m. to wait in line to get into that store for the darn sale.

Here is where I put my thoughts on this and let's just say I could put a single word down, stupid. It would make me more of a genius than the people who went to those sales at 3 a.m. See, I am a person of sleep and laziness, so not getting that well wanted sleep I do not like. I can't imagine losing sleep fighting over a pair of socks. I can't see myself as part of a mob rushing into a store and having to hurt old people and strange women I don't know (and don't think I wouldn't because I would) to get to a pair of jeans. It's just not worth it to me. I would go without jeans in order to get more sleep.

Now, I do like the deals of Cyber Monday. (If you don't know what that is, ask a friend.) I mean it gave me all the laziness that I wanted and needed plus the shopping. All I had to do was some finger clicks and mouse movements and I had the same thing that so many people fought for on Friday. I still got my sleep and I didn't have to hurt old people to get it. So, my advice is to shop on Cyber Monday and save some elderly man or woman from breaking a hip.

## **Her Side**

By: Catherine Lamm '09  
**Leonid** staff writer

Thank God Thanksgiving has come and gone. Starting at 11 p.m. on Thanksgiving, many people have lined up outside of the department stores for the best deals at 5 a.m. on Black Friday. In my opinion, people are insane and love to mob the popular stores.

Target, Best Buy, Wal-Mart, malls, Kohls, Tanger Outlet, Toys 'R' Us and Old Navy were completely mobbed and there were no parking places and extremely long lines. There were people killed because of everyone wanting the best deals. Is it really worth the time, effort and risk?

I think the best thing to do is to go shopping on Saturday or to go shopping at non-crowded stores so you're not involved with the lovely mob. The stores could be Joann Fabrics, Barnes and Noble, Half-Price Books and other random places.

This is supposed to be a time of happiness and anticipation for the holiday season. This is not supposed to be a time of stress, headaches and weariness. So spend time with friends and family and spread love, peace and joy with each other.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!!!!!!

# IN THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

By: Zach Retort '09  
Leonid staff writer

Since it's that time of the year, I would like to talk to you about Christmas. I know you have heard it all before—Christmas carols, gifts, stockings, and the same Christmas specials they show every year on TV. I think by now everybody has them all memorized.

Instead, I want to talk to you about the spirituality of Christmas that you may not know that you have received. It's that euphoric moment when you realize that you are thankful for all the things in your life, like friends, family and possessions. (Don't forget pets.) I never really noticed that feeling every year. When I felt it at Christmas time, usually I ignored it, or I always felt like the Grinch because I never felt thankful for anything in my life except for a few things that seem pretty unimportant to me now. I always felt like I had no friends or family. It was a downer feeling that took me a few years to get over. Up to now, that feeling was there during Christmas time, but recently a few events in my life made me realize that I had friends and family who loved me.

It happened a few weeks ago on a cold winter night. I was walking around the street by my house with the cold wind hitting me like a cold slap hitting my face. I had my iPod on, my heavy Steelers jacket, gloves and my beanie. I was listening to



*Achtung Baby* by U2. It was an album about not having love and a person looking inward to his soul to find himself. I then listened to *Ultra Violet (Light My Way)*, a dark song about a person who feels lost and starts to see a light that he believes is death, but realizes it is a light of self-realization. The person is happy for all the things in his life.

As I kept walking, the only warmth I felt was the light from the streetlamp hitting my face. I stood there for a while and pondered my thoughts. *Where was I going? What is to come in my life?* I ask myself these same philosophical questions every night.

As I continued walking, I felt cold and tired and depressed because I saw people hugging and embracing each other. I felt I couldn't go on... then it hit me—a feeling of happiness that I never felt before. I finally had a realization that I was loved; I did have people who cared about me and appreciated my presence.

Time suddenly stopped and I finally came back, reborn as someone new and unfamiliar with wondrous awareness of the possibilities on planet earth. I ran away, a little freaked out about the experience I just had. I received my Christmas present early this year and every day I am thankful for the people in my life.

*“It's that euphoric moment when you realize that you are thankful for all the things in your life, like friends, family and possessions.”*

## Advent: A Time for Celebrating

By: Colin Gribben '12  
Leonid staff writer

As the Advent season has arrived and Christmas draws ever closer, we continue to wait and prepare for the coming of our Lord, Jesus Christ. The primary color for Advent is purple, a sign for penitence and fasting. In the four weeks of Advent, the third Sunday is a time of rejoicing where the fasting was almost over which was also marked by a rose or the color pink. The Advent wreath with four candles symbolizes Christ's promise to bring us to salvation. We light the candles on the advent wreath as each week passes, similar to the Jewish menorah.

Unfortunately, too many have lost

sight of what is really important in the Advent season, instead using these four weeks to rush around in an intense fury spending large sums of money buying Christmas gifts. While it should not be assumed that people should turn back to primitive times and not buy presents at all, some people focus too much on material possessions. For those who feel the above situation modifies their schedule around this time, it may be a good time to sit back, relax, and take in the joyous time of the year. It is a time for celebrating, a time for taking in God's love. Material things are nice, but God and family are everlasting.

## Jolly Old Saint Nicholas

By: Sarah Evans '10  
Leonid staff writer

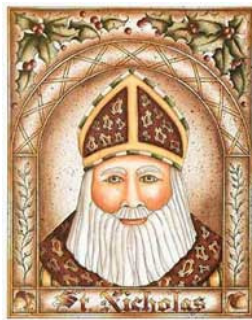
As Christmas draws near, certain questions run through our minds about St. Nicholas. Who is that man behind that beard? Is there a truth behind that man who comes down our chimneys every Christmas?

St. Nicholas was a real man who lived in a little village in Patara (now southern Turkey) in the third century. He died on December 6, AD 343. He is buried in his cathedral church where later manna, a unique relic, was found. This liquid is said to have healing powers. On December 6<sup>th</sup>, we celebrate his death, which we all know as St. Nicholas Day. Throughout time, many stories and legends have been told of St. Nicholas' life and deeds. He was a beloved and extraordinary character who protected and helped the needy.

Saint Nick became a bishop, but unfortunately he had to suffer for his faith. He was put in prison because he refused to denounce his faith. After his release, he

went on to do wonderful things for others. According to one legend, St. Nick helped a poor man and his three daughters. The father was supposed to have given his daughter's new husband a dowry. (A dowry is money or property a woman brings to marriage.) Without a dowry, the woman was not likely to marry. According to this legend, on three separate occasions, Saint Nicholas anonymously gave the man gold to help out his family. The bags of gold, tossed through an open window, supposedly landed in stockings or shoes left before the fire to dry.

Throughout Europe, people continue to celebrate the feast of Saint Nicholas on December 6<sup>th</sup>. They continue to keep the stories of his generosity alive. December 6<sup>th</sup> is still the main day for gift giving and merrymaking in much of Europe. It is said if people leave their shoes or boots outside their doors, in the morning they will awake to candy and presents from St. Nick.



# Christmas around the World

By: Amber Forrasi '09  
Leonid staff writer

Vrolijk Kerstfeest! Buon Natale! God Jul! Saint Dan Fai Lok!

I bet that many people reading this article have no idea what these four phrases mean, but if you do, that's kind of odd, but kind of impressive. I'll give you a hint, the first word begins with an **M** and the second word begins with a **C**. Hopefully everyone has caught on by now. It translates into *Merry Christmas*.

Although Christmas break is almost here, we can't forget about preparing for everyone's favorite holiday. We need to go out and get the Christmas tree, shop for our family and friends, bake some of our favorite cookies and see family that we only see once every couple months. But enough about our typical traditions; let's see what other countries do for the most celebrated holiday in the world.

Poland carries out a tradition known as Wigilia. Beginning on Christmas Eve, families follow a strict 24-hour fast and cannot eat their Christmas feast until the first star of night appears. Once the star appears, a rice wafer is blessed and broken into pieces for all. Finally, the meal begins and consists of twelve courses, symbolizing each of the twelve Apostles. The table is always set with one extra seat in case a stranger or the Holy Spirit should appear to share the meal.

In some parts of France, Pere Noel brings small gifts in the beginning of December and comes back to deliver more on Christmas. The French eat their feasts at midnight on Christmas Eve called "Le Reveillon" and immediately go to sleep and await the coming of Pere Noel. Children get to open their gifts on Christmas, but the parents and other adults have to wait until New Years. I feel bad, but that's the breaks.

Spain has one tradition that is not at all common elsewhere known as

"Hogueras," which means bonfires. This tradition is characterized by individuals jumping over fires as a symbolic protection against illness. (I could definitely see a few people from our school joining in on that.) On Christmas Eve, individuals flock to "La Misa Del Gallo," a candlelight service, and wait until after midnight the following night to eat their feast.

In China, families decorate their houses with stunning paper lanterns and decorate their Christmas trees, which they call "Trees of Life," with red paper chains, flowers, and paper lanterns. (I guess they don't like glass ornaments?) On Christmas Eve, children hang up their stockings that are specially made so Dun Che Lao Ren, or "Christmas Old Man," can fill them with a few gifts, but most families wait until New Year's Eve to exchange their gifts. The New Year is the most important celebration in Chinese culture.

The traditions carried out by these few countries seem pretty normal to me, but some countries aren't so normal. Here are some odd facts:

\*In Italy they have no Christmas trees; instead they decorate small wooden pyramids with fruit.

\*In Caracas, the capital city of Venezuela, it is customary for the streets to be blocked off on Christmas Eve so that the people can roller-skate to church.

\*An artificial spider and web are often included in the decorations on Ukrainian Christmas trees. A spider web found on Christmas morning is believed to bring good luck.

\*In Norway on Christmas Eve, all the brooms in the house are hidden because long ago it was believed that witches and mischievous spirits came out on Christmas Eve and would steal their brooms for riding.

In the end, tradition is tradition and Christmas is still the most loved holiday of them all. Hopefully, that will never change.



# The Twelve Days of Christmas

By: Alex Shaw '10  
Leonid staff writer

I'm sure you have all heard the song "The Twelve Days of Christmas." Have you ever wondered what the meaning behind it is? I decided to look into it because I wrote about the meaning behind some of the Christmas symbols last year. When I first started looking into it, I was a little disappointed at what I found. Many people think that the gifts in the song represent

certain teachings in Christianity. For example, the two turtle doves represent the New and Old Testaments, and the six geese a-laying represent the six days of creation. When early Christians were being persecuted, they supposedly used this song as a way to remember the church traditions.

I became a little skeptical that this was the only reason for this song. I just didn't understand how one simple song could remind a person of the beliefs of an entire religion. I also couldn't grasp the reason why they would make this "memory song" a Christmas song. It would be a little suspicious if someone were singing a Christmas song in the middle of July. This could not be the true reason for this song. As I further investigated, there were some other theories that started to come up.

First, I found out that there are actually twelve days of Christmas. They are the days between the birth of Christ and the visit of Magi. There were festivals held in early years that celebrated these twelve days. One of the theories that I found was that the song could have been a game that was played on the twelfth night. Many people played memory games where someone sang a verse and children repeated

it. More verses were added until there was an entire song.

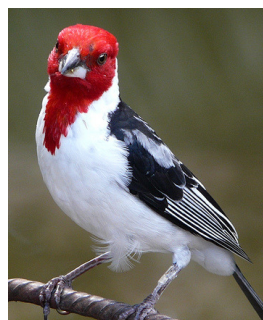
The most interesting theory that I found, however, is a very odd interpretation of the song. Some people believe that this song is really all about birds, and that over

the years the words could have been mixed up. For example, the "calling birds" were originally "collie birds," meaning black birds. Five golden rings may not necessarily mean jewelry at all, but five

birds such as pheasants that have a ring of color around their necks. I find this very odd; who would give their true love seventy-eight birds for Christmas?

Another interesting thing that I found was that people actually give their loved ones the gifts in the song over the course of twelve days. A website that I came across listed the prices of each gift and everything. The total price is \$86,608. The most expensive items on the list were twelve swans-a-swimming, which cost \$5,600.

No matter what your interpretation is, "The Twelve Days of Christmas" is still an important song during the holidays. The days between Christmas and the Epiphany are to be days of celebration. Why not begin celebrating with the song that started it all?





# Christmas Symbols Revisited

By: Marque Marry '11

Leonid staff writer

Throughout the Christmas season, we see many decorations on the streets or in people's yards. In grade school, we would receive coloring sheets or make a Christmas card to send home for our parents to open on Christmas day, and I don't know about you, but I chose what was easiest to draw, a simple candy cane or a snowman. Now, looking back, I wonder what those symbols meant that I once colored in with red and green crayons and orange for the carrot nose.

The candy cane is a tasty treat that we may find in our stockings on Christmas morning, but what does the color and shape symbolize? A specific candy cane maker in Indiana chooses to make these treats to show his love for Christ, and what a better time to show that than at the time of our Savior's birth. This man started with the color of pure white, but not just because he could not think of another color; he wanted it to symbolize the Virgin Birth and sinless nature of Jesus from the moment of his conception to his last breath on the cross when he forgave his tormentors.

The bending of the candy cane into the symbol of a "J" represents Jesus. The solid structure shows the solid foundation of the church, and the promise of God descending from Abraham and stretching to Jesus when he was born and God's promise fulfilled. The staff that shepherds carried to tend their sheep is represented through the bend in the candy cane, and just as a shepherd tends his flock, Jesus tends to us as his flock. The maker of the treat finally added another color into the mix, red. Red was used in remembrance of the blood Jesus lost at his scourging at the pillar, which he endured to save us from our sins and let us join in eternal life with him.

The symbol of the wreath is used in many

different ways in many different religions, but in the Catholic religion we see it used in the season of Advent. The Advent wreath is a never-ending circle that shows God's love has no beginning and no end for us. The evergreen represents immortality and the victory of life over the darkness and challenges we face every day. Evergreen is one plant that can be seen throughout the summer and winter season. This represents our strength in life and our ability to overcome our many trials and tribulations.

The snowman, that has melted our hearts since we were old enough to sing the lyrics to "Frosty the Snowman," can also show us the love that God gives to us. The body of the snowman made up of circular balls is believed to represent God's everlasting and never ending love for us. The

pieces of coal that make up his eyes and his never-ending smile are made of coal to show God's almighty power. Frosty's red scarf around his neck kept him warm outside just as it showed God's warmth and tender care. The black top hat that the children placed atop his head was placed above everything else, and our faith should be placed above everything else in our everyday lives. Frosty gathered the children in his twig arms and embraced them and he was always there for them, and God is always there for us, even though we might not always recognize it or appreciate it like we should. The broom made of straw and wood shows that Jesus was born and died to cleanse the world of sin. The orange carrot nose shows us that God gives us everything we need to live and grow. Christ always has a way of coming into our lives. We just have to open our eyes and see those ways.



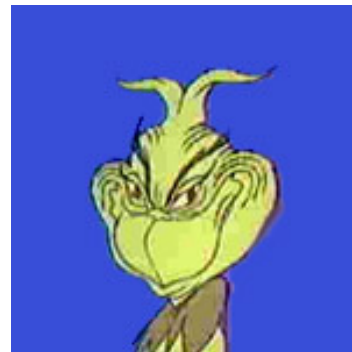
# A Walk Down Memory Lane

By: Catherine Lamm '09  
Leonid staff writer

This is the season for watching our favorite Christmas videos and listening to holiday music. I know that I have already started watching my favorite videos whether on television or on DVD. My favorite Christmas movie when I was little was *Madeline's Christmas* and *Annabelle's Wish* and now it is a tie between *The Santa Clause* series, *Holiday in Handcuffs* and *Santa Baby*. Here is what some BC students have said:

## Now:

*Christmas Vacation*- Fran Lison  
*The Polar Express/Miracle on 34<sup>th</sup> Street*-Chelsea Pacconi  
*Bad Santa*- Pat Leyland  
*The Santa Clause*- Nick Palastro  
*A Muppet's Christmas Carol*- Alison Hufnagel  
*Elf/Christmas Vacation*- Rachel Lytton  
*National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation*- Elizabeth Ferraro  
*Snowglobe*-Jenny Klimek  
*A Christmas Carol*-Kathryn Dlugos  
*A Christmas Story/The Santa Clause*- Jayme Smith  
*Frosty The Snowman*- Nick Marini  
*The Snowman*- Casey Dewitt  
*The Holiday*-Jessica Downs  
*How the Grinch Who Stole Christmas*-Maddy Burgess  
*The Christmas Story*-Sarah Evans  
*The Santa Clause*-Brenden Walter  
*Miracle on 34<sup>th</sup> Street*-Caroline Stankovich  
*Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer*-Patticakes  
*Elf*-Maria Wagner  
*Elf*-Greg Tutsock



## Then:

*The Santa Clause*-Pat Leyland  
*How the Grinch Stole Christmas*-Nick Palastro  
*Annabelle's Wish*-Rachel Lytton  
*Polar Express*-Jenny Klimek  
*How the Grinch Stole Christmas*-Jayme Smith  
*To Grandmother's House We Go*-Maddy Burgess  
*White Christmas/How the Grinch Stole Christmas*-Chelsea Pacconi  
*The Christmas Story*-Fran Lison  
*Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer*-Chloe Boehm



## Today's Health

Jack Spratt could eat no fat...

# What Are You Eating?

By Jayme Smith '10  
Leonid staff writer

Not all fats are created equal. In fact, there are four types of fats in this world. Two are good for the body in moderation, monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fat, and two are bad, even in moderation, saturated and *trans* fat—the worst being *trans* fat. *Trans* fat is a man-made substance that is created when hydrogen is added to vegetable oil. This process, called hydrogenation, is used to increase the shelf-life and "flavor stability" of foods. Another name for this deadly fat is "partially hydrogenated oils," which when put on food labels seems indiscreet.

Scientific evidence has proved that the consumption of this fat not only raises bad (LDL) cholesterol levels, which causes artery blockage, but also puts one at a much higher risk for coronary heart disease (CHD), type 2 diabetes, and stroke. According to the National Institute of Health, CHD affects 12.5+ million Americans a year, and is the leading cause of death in the United States. *Trans* fats not only raises LDL levels, but significantly lowers HDL (good cholesterol) levels. The Centers for Disease Control have found that Americans are becoming more obese every year, thanks largely to *trans* fats.

*Trans* fats can be found in abundance at fast food restaurants. Chains, such as KFC, use them in oils that are meant for frying, and keep them around because they are easy to use, and inexpensive to produce. Since the late 1990s, when *trans* fat was labeled "harmful," some states, like New York, have virtually outlawed the use of it. While places like Starbucks have already eliminated *trans* fats from all of their food, chains such as McDonalds are

"working" to simply reduce *trans* fat levels. In addition to the fast food retailers, *trans* fat is lurking almost everywhere. It is commonly found in your normal "junk" food, being cookies, pies, pizza, crackers, pastries, doughnuts, and french fries to name a few. A medium order of fries has around eight grams of *trans* fat, a doughnut five, and a candy bar three. It may not seem like a lot, but if a Percent Daily Allowance was created for *trans* fat, an acceptable intake would be two to three grams per day.

As of January 1, 2006, the Food and Drug Administration has required *trans* fat to be listed on all food labels under "Nutrition Facts." Individuals can limit their *trans* fat intake by reading food packaging and asking restaurants for brochures on their nutrition. Next to the "*trans* fat" section on food labels there is no Percent Daily Value because there is no recommended serving per day. In other words, the best amount of *trans* fat is no *trans* fat.



# Helping the Planet

By: Michele Morgan '12  
Leonid staff writer

People are always hearing about global warming on the news, in magazines, or on the Internet. Arctic animals are becoming endangered. The polar ice caps are melting. The hole in the ozone layer is getting larger. However, no one ever hears about what you can do to help. So, here are a few things you can do to help the planet.

1. Recycle Paper. Using just a part of a piece of paper and then throwing it away, wastes thousands of trees a year. Besides, don't we have a recycling bin by the basketball courts anyway?
2. Use compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs). CFLs use 60% less energy than an incandescent light bulb, and makes the room just as bright.
3. Unplug your chargers, computers, televisions, etc. when not using them. These items still draw electricity even when they are turned off or do not have any device plugged into them.
4. Plant a tree. Trees reduce the amount of carbon dioxide in the air, and the can shade your house in the summer, keeping it cooler.
5. Turn off the water when you brush your teeth. This might seem really simple, but think about all the water that goes down the drain in two minutes time
6. Ride a bike, walk, or carpool. By walking, or riding your bike, you are not only saving gas, but your getting exercise too.
7. Recycle your bottles and cans. This one is pretty obvious. How many empty soda bottles do you think we throw away at lunch every day?
8. Turn the thermostat down one degree. Turning down the temperature and wearing a Canevin sweatshirt instead saves a lot of energy and shows school spirit.



Just doing one of these things can have a big impact on the environment. If everyone would try to be greener in the first place, maybe we wouldn't even have global warming.

# THE GIFT OF FOOTBALL

By: Brady Langmann '12  
Leonid staff writer

It's the greatest time of the year! Santa, presents, days off school, cookies, and the conclusion of the college football season, and what a season it's been! We've seen the rising of newcomers such as quarterbacks Sam Bradford, Graham Harrell, Penn State's crushing loss to Iowa, finishing off with Florida earning a chance to play for the national championship in their stunning victory against then #1 ranked Alabama. On that note, the bowl match ups are set, so here's a look on whom you should be watching this holiday season:

## **#13 Oregon State vs. #20 Pittsburgh— Brut Sun Bowl 12/19**

Pitt could easily defeat this high-scoring offense if quarterback Bill Stull takes control of the Pitt offense, which features an impressive backfield starring LeSean McCoy.

## **#5 USC vs. #8 PSU—Rose Bowl 1/1**

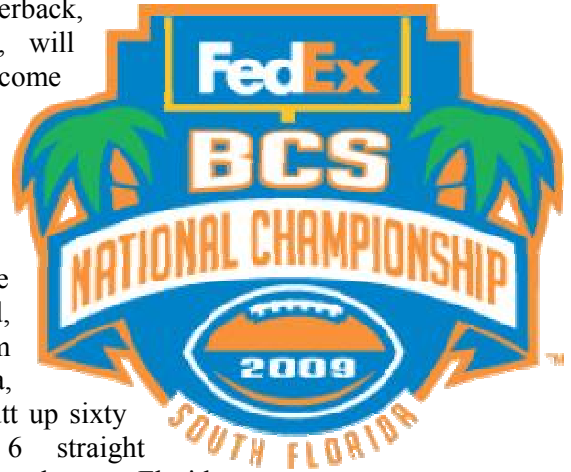
This match up pits PSU head coach Joe Paterno who has won 383 games in his career, vs. USC head coach, Pete Carroll who has a career winning of 85.3, in a battle of wits. Seeing as they both have their flaws in their teams, the best game plan will decide the winner.

## **#3 Texas vs. #10 Ohio State—Tostitos Fiesta Bowl 1/5**

Heisman candidate, Colt McCoy, will put points on the board, as he's done all season, allowing for the Texas defense, led by Lombardi Trophy winner, defensive end Brian Orakpo, to put away still-learning freshman quarterback Terrell Pryor for the win.

## **#1 Oklahoma vs. #2 Florida—FedEx BCS National Championship 1/8**

The best match up of them all, which pits possibly the top two Heisman candidates, Oklahoma quarterback, Sam Bradford and Gators quarterback, Tim Tebow, will probably come down to the wire, as the better offense will probably have the upper hand, and that team is Oklahoma, who have put up sixty points in 6 straight games. The only way Florida will win is if they bring the fire that was in them in their recent upset against Alabama, and if they do, we could be in for a historic game.



# At the Movies

By: Catherine Lamm 09

Leonid staff writer

## Twilight

Every teenage girl has been waiting for the opening of *Twilight*. This movie, based on the best seller by Stephenie Meyer, recently opened to sold-out theaters. It is an action packed, modern day love story, between a teenage girl and a vampire. Bella Swan (Kristen Stewart) has always been a little bit different, never caring about fitting in with the trendy girls at her Phoenix high school. Her mother re-marries and Bella goes to live with her father in the rainy little town of Forks, Washington. Bella doesn't expect much of anything to change. She meets the mysterious and dazzlingly beautiful Edward Cullen (Robert Pattinson), a man unlike any she has ever met. Edward is a vampire, but not the stereotypical kind. He and his family are unique in their choice of "drink." Intelligent and witty, Edward sees straight into Bella's soul. Soon, they are swept up in a passionate, thrilling and unorthodox romance. To Edward, Bella is what he has waited 90 years for -- a soul mate. However, the closer they get, the more Edward must struggle to resist the primal pull of her scent, which could send him into an uncontrollable frenzy. Edward and Bella cross paths with a clan of new vampires -- James (Cam Gigandet), Laurent (Edi Gathegi) and Victoria (Rachelle Lefevre) who threaten to disrupt their way of life. The movie is filled with twists and turns.

I thought this movie was excellent and for the most part, the characters were portrayed very well. The vampires were exaggerated a bit too much. Edward and Bella's characters had similar personalities. The Cullen family was captured perfectly. Like most movies adapted from books, there were some parts that strayed from the text. For example, the vampire and wolf legends were not fully explained. I found the scene where Edward and Charlie first meet as rather comical. Overall, the movie was worth the wait and the screaming girls.

## Australia

*Australia* is an excellent movie directed by Baz Luhrman. He exceeded his former film *Pearl Harbor*, which was basically a drippy love story. Although the movie was about three and a half hours long, it was well worth watching.

It is pre-World War II in the beautiful scenic Australia. Nicole Kidman plays a cattle rancher's wife who falls for a burly cattle driver (Hugh Jackman). Their love is forbidden and endless. A native Australian and his family who live on the ranch, along with a little boy, work to bring "Mrs. Boss" and the cattle driver together. At this point in the film, Japan attacks! Everything breaks loose. There is plenty of action and romance in this movie, but it is not over the top.

I found the acting superb and the scenery breathtaking. The movie shows what can happen to a greedy man and his many losses. No matter what happens, there will always be happiness and love.



# Medjugorje: My Experience in the Town of Mary

By: Teresa Cardone '11  
Guest writer

8:00 a.m. Wednesday, October 29.  
It was a great feeling it is to wake up two hours later than usual on a school day. But, this was not just a day for sleeping in and staying home from school. October 29<sup>th</sup> was the traveling day for my trip to Croatia, and what a travel it was. Since I had been to Europe before, I knew I would have a long trip, but that was second grade, I was drugged with Benadryl, and completely satisfied with watching the Flintstones in Italian. Now I had homework to do, three meals of airplane food to eat, and back at school I knew I was missing a lot more work than three pages of phonics and a timed math test. After a flight to Dulles, a seven-hour layover, another plane to Frankfurt, a plane to Zagreb, and my last flight to Split, I was finally at my destination. I arrived in Split and was informed that I had a three-hour bus ride to Medjugorje (pronounced 'mehdjew-gohr-ee-uh').

I got on the bus and was greeted by a small, dark haired woman with a thick Croatian accent. Ana was to be our tour guide for the next ten days. There were 50 people on our bus, 50 pilgrims ready for a week packed with plans. I examined the group, not finding anyone near my age. At that moment I was grateful for my brother, Joe, who is only a year and a half younger, figuring he would be my companion on the trip.

Sooner rather than later I found myself waking up in darkness, surrounded by a group of tired adults and restless kids.

"My dear lovely group [her pet name for us], welcome to your home in Bosnia - Herzegovina," Ana's accented voice boomed over the bus speakers. What? This whole time I had been telling everyone I was going to Croatia, and now I learn I will only be in Croatia for one day. There goes the only knowledge I had about my trip. I knew that Bosnia - Herzegovina was



a break-off of Yugoslavia, just as Croatia was, but other than that I just assumed it to be a savage, third world country with lots of farms and a population ratio of 50 cattle to one person. We arrived at our hotel (our 'pansion', the only Croatian word I had learned) and were greeted by the adorable Kozina family. It was getting late, so I went to my room to get some rest.

The first day we had started what I noticed to be a trend. Everyone got up around 7:00 A.M., were called down to dinner, and left for mass. Mass turned out to be pretty interesting because the priest spoke with an Irish accent, which kept me paying attention. There were so many different cultures all gathered for mass. In fact, the whole town revolved around religion, making it a unique experience. We went to the first of many testimonies, in which someone with a broken life amended their ways through conversion in Medjugorje. We were told stories of physical healings, mental healings, and spiritual healings alike. To be honest, over the course of a week and a half, hearing conversion stories constantly gets a bit tiring, but there was one story I'll never forget.

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## Medjugorje

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My group arrived at a monstrous castle built by a Canadian native named Patrick. Patrick spoke of how he and his wife, Nancy, were an immensely rich couple who lived together for many years off of their multi-million dollar fortune. Patrick was a successful car dealer, and Nancy was a well-known lawyer with years of schooling. When approached with the question, “Who is God?” from his 14-year-old son, Patrick literally told his children that money was their only god. He had dozens of cars, two ex-wives, and plenty of cash to spend on whatever he wanted. One day as he was moving to a larger home, he picked up a book entitled *Medjugorje and Our Lady’s Call*. He skimmed through the book and read the messages. Immediately he was infused with knowledge and believed every single one of the messages written in the book from Mary. Patrick saw the place called Medjugorje named several times, and quickly decided that he and his wife must visit. They came to Medjugorje, and were forever different. Patrick decided he wanted to go to confession, and was in the confessional for two hours. He and his wife decided they would be baptized Catholics on their arrival home. Days after their return, Patrick and Nancy’s drug dealer son called them up and said that he wanted to get a job, particularly become head of an orphanage for troubled kids. The other son, an alcoholic, told his mother he was going to convert to Christianity and become a firefighter. Since then, Patrick and Nancy have been building a huge retreat house (the castle) for traveling priests and youth.

Other peculiar things occurred on my trip. On one day, I climbed to the top of Cross Mountain where 75 years ago, a priest and a few parishioners carried a concrete

cross to the peak of the hill. Ever since the cross was placed on the top of the mountain, no lightning has struck the areas, and no brushfires have damaged the trees. After praying the Stations of the Cross to the top, we were told to remain in silence. I had heard that it is possible to look at the sun without burning your retinas while in Medjugorje, so I thought I would try my luck. As I stared at the sun, I noticed it



began to pulsate. The colors faded lightly from pink to blue to purple in shades of pastel. It was like nothing I had ever seen before.

I went to a very touching mass in a small chapel equipped with a mountainside view and a stained glass mosaic of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. At the end of mass, we

had the blessing of the throats in the tradition of Saint Blaise. The blessing of Saint Blaise gives you the graces to speak kindly of others, face conversations you find difficult, keep your words clean, etc. I find it hard for a teenage girl to refrain from gossiping, so I knew the graces from the Saint Blaise mass would transfer over to my life.

The end of our trip grew near, and I grew homesick. I knew I would miss the Adriatic Sea, the majestic Alps, and the Mediterranean climate (not to mention the loving attitude that came out of the religious atmosphere), but it was time to go home. From my trip, I found that being prayerful, going to mass, and listening to testimonies can be a pretty good time if our hearts are in the right places. I learned a lot – we really do get out what we put in, God’s mercy can fall on anyone, and we are all called to be good people, every single one of us.

I woke up 2:30 a.m. on November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2008. November 8<sup>th</sup> was not a normal day for me-- it was the day I would go home a changed person, a new and better version of myself.

## ***Senior Spotlight on Matt Klein***

By: Chloe Boehm '09  
Leonid staff writer

Matt Klein's name is *everywhere* and *everyone* knows who he is. He is involved in tons of activities and sports at Canevin. Matt is so active at school that he has become one of the **Leonid's** chosen ones for this issue's senior spotlight interview. The devilishly handsome, debonair Matt Klein has spared the **Leonid** a few moments out of his rigorous lifestyle to explain just why he is so omnipresent at Canevin, and who he really is.



*Chloe:* "Matt, since you're so involved at Canevin, what's your favorite activity/sport that you participate in? What kind of activities do you actually do?"

*Matt:* "Well, when push comes to shove, I'm not *that* involved. Well... at least compared to some other people. The only reason people know who I am is directly because of my sophomore biology class when Mrs. Davis decided that I have the ability to do no wrong.

Anyway, my favorite sport is football. It's the biggest rush I've ever felt, and I'm going to miss it. Outside of Canevin, I play guitar and, most recently, a lot of video games."

*C:* "What was your initial response when you were elected as the football captain by your peers to lead the 2008 season?"

*M:* "My initial response was very similar to the attitude I had towards it at the end of the season. I knew it was going to be

a challenge, and it was never easy, but I loved every moment of it. The best part, however, was being the face of the team that was only supposed to win one game in AA and ending up making the playoffs over teams that were supposed to win the conference."

*C:* "I see. Have you ever thought about making your own line called Matt Klein (your name sounds/reminds me of Calvin Klein)? If so, do you think you'd be successful? What's your take on success? If you want to do something, do you go out and do it?"

*M:* "Um, yes actually, but not sincerely. I like clothes, but I like wearing the kind that is already made. I'm not much of an artist. The only chance I'd have at the line being successful would be if everyone bought it for the name.

'Hey, isn't that the kid that Mrs. Davis said was God?'

'Yeah, let's go buy all of his stuff!'

Success, for me, doesn't necessarily mean money. Money is nice, but I'd rather be remembered as someone who helped change the world. And yes, I'm a very ambitious person. If I want something, I'll find a way to get it."

*C:* "You're also pretty smart (or so I've heard). What's your ideal college? Is there such a thing (I'm assuming you are attending college)? Where did you apply/get accepted? What's your first choice?"

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**Matt Klein**

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*M:* “Well, contrary to popular belief, I don’t think there is a perfect college for everyone, and that’s the way I approached it. I prioritized. Academics and location came first. Athletics and social life came second. I wanted to be close to home and I wanted a good education. So, naturally, Pitt and Penn State popped into my head first. I’ve gotten accepted into both of their engineering programs, and right now I’m leaning heavily toward Pitt.”

*C:* “*Speaking of the somewhat near future, where do you see yourself in four years (I know, I know, this question’s a bit repetitive, isn’t it?)? Do you think (perhaps) that you are capable of ruling the world?*”

*M:* “Am I capable of ruling the world? Yes. In four years? No. In four years, I’ll be graduating from college and hopefully in the process of landing a job with NASA.”

*C:* “*Okay, then. What do you do during your free time? Do you watch a lot of TV? Do you do (attempt) any extreme sports? Do you own any pets?*”

*M:* “My free time mostly consists of one of three things: Other people, music, and Call of Duty. I don’t watch much TV minus the Discovery Channel. I tried skiing this year for the first time with Kristi. I love it, but I’m not very, mmm... adept quite yet.

No pets for me, but if I could have any pet that I wanted, I would definitely have an owl that could take letters I write to anyone at any time.”

*C:* “*Why are you so intelligent? Do you have a weakness for anything (school subject-related, or actually anything at all)?*”

*M:* “If there’s one answer to that question, it’s the Discovery Channel (plus being a sore loser). I hate doing worse than my friends in anything, school included. Fortunately, I also have pretty good genetics so I don’t have to try very hard. I’m one of the biggest procrastinators you’ll ever meet. My weakness lies in the other side of my brain. Emotions can kill me. It’s not that I don’t understand them, it’s that I have a hard

time controlling them sometimes, and at any time I’m likely to just pour my heart out to you.”

*C:* “*Oh, really. What’s the most romantic thing you’ve ever done?*”

*M:* “I’m not the person to ask, but I guess when I recorded a song about missing someone and gave it to her right before she left to go to Japan. But it was in a package, and I told her not to open it before she got there.”

*C:* “*Speaking of gifts, what is the ultimate Christmas gift? Would you rather give/receive it?*”

*M:* “Fairy godparents. I’d definitely want to receive them, and I’d grant the person who gave me them a wish...as long as the wish wasn’t to have my fairy godparents.”

Fairy godparents, I suppose, is one creative way to get everything you want. However, it seems as if Matt Klein *does* have everything or will in the future (including the world). We will just have to see how his college plans play out, as well as his scheme for world domination.

Some of Matt’s Favorites:

Favorite soup—Cheddar and broccoli

Favorite tie—my yellow tweed one

Favorite color—navy

Favorite class- sophomore biology

Favorite person—Matt Pekular

Favorite place *ever*—I haven’t been many places, but I love outer space

Favorite song—*Black* by Pearl Jam

Favorite foreign film—*Pan’s Labyrinth*



## **Bishop Canevin Comedy Night 4:** *The Sister Judy Roast*

Bishop Canevin High School's fourth annual Comedy Night event will be held on Monday, December 29 at O'Connor Hall in St. Paul's Seminary, 7:30 p.m. This year will feature a special one-night-only format: a Roast of Sister Judy!

Jesse Joyce, '96 will serve as Roast Master. He has been called "half of the best roast writing team in the country" in reference to his work with Greg Giraldo. Jesse has written for the Comedy Central Roasts of Flava Flav and Bob Saget, and according to the Comedy Central website, he wrote one of the 6 "Best Lines of the Evening". Most recently, Jesse wrote some of the highlights of *Cheech and Chong Roasted* from the Comedy Festival in Las Vegas on TBS that aired this November. He's done roasts for the prestigious Friar's club in New York City and has roasted everyone from Carrot Top, to Mother Teresa's doctor (not a joke), Ice T to Geraldo Rivera, Snoop Dog to Pittsburgh Mayor Luke Ravenstahl.

Additional Roasters include KDKA-TV's Mr. Bob Pompeani. In addition to the following alumni comedians/writers: Tim

Dimond '04, Chris Dimond '97, Darrin Hall '97 and Justin Janosko '98. They will be joined by Mr. Bob Jacoby and former Headmaster Mr. John Maurer - plus other surprises.

Students tickets are \$10.00. Adult tickets are \$20.00. All proceeds benefit Bishop Canevin High School as the Roasters have donated their time-and-talent free-of-charge.

## **COMEDY NIGHT 4** *The Sr. Judy Roast*

(Complete information is available online at: <http://comedy.bishopcanevin.org>. Tickets can be purchased in the school's Development Office, online or at the door the night of the show.)

## **FBLA Update**

By: Kaylee Cyprowski '10  
FBLA reporter

Many things have been happening with FBLA this year. In October, our board officers, Heather Kaczarowski, Rachel Bobby, Natalie Celmo, Maddy Burgess and Kaylee Cyprowski attended the state workshop at Penn State. Along with representatives from other schools, we attended workshops with subjects ranging from etiquette to writing a proper resume. We also had free time in which we were able to tour Penn State's campus.

We are helping with the mat ball tournament that will take

place after Christmas. Forms will be distributed after break. Our latest project was Toys for Tots. Members were asked to bring in new toys to G201 by mid December.

The regional FBLA tests were held were held right here at Canevin on December 12<sup>th</sup>. The competing schools were Keystone Oaks, West Allegheny, South Fayette, Peabody, and Bishop Canevin. Results from these online competitions will be announced on December 16<sup>th</sup>.



# The Lost Coastlines of Music: Sounds that Mattered in 2008

By: Fran Lison '09  
Leonid staff writer

Every year, I strive to find music that encompasses everything that I feel is what music should be about: beauty, originality, integrity, and overall artistic value and worth. Every year, new music by new artists comes out and gets me all excited for the future of music. This year really took me by surprise, however. If you glance over my picks for the best of the year, you'll notice some familiar names: rock's elder statesmen delivered the masterpieces. Cave, Petty, Malkmus, Escovedo, Costello, Oldham, the Drive by Truckers, etc, etc. For young artists and career artists, 2008 was a rich year for music lovers. It was hard whittling down my list to just ten albums, but without further ado and the risk of losing your attention, I bring to you my picks for ten of the year's best records.

## 10) Elvis Costello – *Momofuku*

Elvis Costello, known primarily for his laid-back balladry anymore stepped up and delivered a record that finally matches the fiery, guitar driven rock that the Attractions, now deemed The Imposters, once brought throughout the seventies and eighties. The record was titled after the creator of Ramen Noodles, because of the speed in which Costello cut and released his latest. The music reflects the “just add water” ethos, and tracks like “No Hiding Place” and “American Gangster Time” are a flashback to his angst-ridden first albums. What *Momofuku* does best, however, is provide a telling synopsis of Costello's multiple styles: jazz, rock, a little balladry and pop. I'd go as far as to say it's his best record of the new millennium.

## 9) DBT – *Brighter Than Creation's Dark*

The Drive by Truckers returned yet again, this time with an overbearing record that shows flashes of brilliance. With 19 tracks, *Brighter* is a sprawling record that includes some top-notch songwriting from the band's two front men: Patterson Hood and Mike Cooley. Tracks like “Two Daughters and a Beautiful Wife,” “Three Dimes Down,” “Righteous Path,” and “That Man I Shot” are all amongst the Truckers' classic songs, but overall the record includes about six or seven filler songs. If pared down to 13 tracks, *Creation's Dark* truly shines.

## 8) Mudcrutch - *Mudcrutch*

In 2008, Tom Petty reunited with his former band, Mudcrutch. The Mudcrutch story has been an oft-fabled one, being Tom Petty's first musical endeavor that built a following in the south in 1970s but somehow escaped making a record. Their self-titled debut, although about 35 years late, takes the listener back to the heart of American southern-rock in the seventies. “Scare Easy” is classic Petty, a rollicking single that features the songwriter at his most gritty, while “Crystal River” sounds like guitarist Mike Campbell filtered the soul of Duane Allman through his liquid slide guitar playing. Petty's songwriting has not seemed this laid back in years. After the introspective, solemn *Highway Companion* in 2006, it seems like the bearded old-hippie is finally having fun.

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## Music

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### 7) Bonnie 'Prince' Billy – *Lie Down in the Light*

For the initiated, something we've come to expect from prolific songwriter Will Oldham is quality music at an alarming rate. His latest, *Lie Down in the Light*, is a welcome addition to the Oldham canon. Often a man of great sorrow and darkness, his latest album finds Oldham embracing the beauty of nature and life around him. Opener "Easy Does It" sets the lilting tone for the record, which sounds like it was recorded around a campfire on some hot summer night. Standouts include the haunting "Willow Trees Bend," and one of my favorite songs of the year, "For Every Field There's a Mole." *Lie Down in the Light* is not the rumination on the pain of life that Oldham is so often recognized with, it's a celebration of its beauty.

### 6) Stephen Malkmus – *Real Emotional Trash*

Former front-man of indie-legend's Pavement, Stephen Malkmus has made quite a name for himself in music circles as the quirky poster-boy of youthful innocence and joyous pop. His latest, *Real Emotional Trash*, is a far cry from his two to three minute pop song routine that we've come to expect. Filled with lots of jams and guitar noodling, it sounds like something television would have put out in the 1970s. Lyrically, Malkmus is as odd as ever, twisting words and painting Picasso-like pictures that never cease bringing a smile to the listener's face.

### 5) Alejandro Escovedo – *Real Animal*

This far into an artist's career, delivering a magnum opus is often unexpected. When it happens, an overall sense of celebration for the artist's work is revived and praises are sung. Escovedo has delivered his masterpiece with *Real Animal*, a record filled with fiery punk, sweet pop hooks and brilliant lyrics. Opener "Always a Friend" sets the scene for the album, a rocking number that finds Alejandro telling his lover to "Every once in a while, honey, let yourself go." The stellar "Sister Lost Soul" remains in my top three favorite songs of 2008. *Real Animal* is truly a great accomplishment for such a respected songwriter.

### 4) The Hold Steady – *Stay Positive*

After 2006's brilliant *Boys and Girls in America*, the music world awaited its follow up with ever-excited ears. The Hold Steady have returned, baby, and they've brought the rock yet again – this time on a somewhat darker affair. The ever animated front-man Craig Finn turns in some of the year's catchiest tunes, the most addicting of the batch being "Sequestered in Memphis," which contains one of the greatest choruses of recent memory. Standout tracks include the down-trodden "Lord, I'm Discouraged," which features an epic guitar solo by Tad Kubler, and the album closer, "Slapped Actress."

### 3) Bon Iver – *For Emma, Forever Ago*

Bon Iver is the alias of a little-known songwriter named Justin Vernon. After the dissolution of his relationship with his girlfriend, Vernon holed himself up in his father's Wisconsin cabin and recorded this heart-wrenching set of break up songs. Sounding like it was recorded next to a lonesome fire on some foggy winter's night, *For Emma* has become the 2000's  
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## Music

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answer to Bob Dylan's break up album, *Blood on the Tracks*. Highlights include the soft-spoken pop song "Flume", and the bitter, harsh-tongued "Skinny Love." If you're feeling the pain and heartbreak from a failed high school romance, light some candles, wrap yourself up in your bed sheets, and settle in with this lovely, painful album.

### 2) Okkervil River – *The Stand Ins*

When word got out that Will Sheff had another batch of tunes he originally intended to be released at the same time as 2007's brilliant *The Stage Names*, I couldn't help but feeling excited and skeptical at the same time. Opening with the first of three instrumental interludes and bouncing straight into the lilting "Lost Coastlines," it's clear from the first track that the *Stand Ins* aren't just throwaways from the Stage Names sessions. Will Sheff's songwriting is in fine form here, and standout tracks include the soulful "Starry Stairs," the Petty throwback "Calling and Not Calling my Ex," and the epic "Blue Tulip," which finds Sheff singing such anguished lines like "With every single cell of me I'm going to make you mean the words you sigh." When put together with *The Stage Names*, what we have is one of the greatest double-album concepts of the past 20 years. Where the *Stage Names* was confident, *the Stand Ins* is weary. Where the *Stage Names* showed glimpses of light, *The Stand Ins* plays in the shadows. This is truly another masterpiece from Okkervil, America's current greatest band in indie-rock today.

### 1) Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds – *Dig, Lazarus, Dig!!!*

Nick Cave is at it again, baby. With a career that dates back to the late '70s, it wouldn't be ridiculous to put Cave in the pantheon of great songwriters with Tom Waits and Neil Young. He's been responsible for such masterpieces as 1989's *Tender Prey*, a heroin-drenched classic, the orchestral *The Good Son*, the fiery *Let Love In*, the tender, emotional *Boatman's Call*, the gospel filled double-album *Abattoir Blues*, and even a side project of hardcore punk called *Grinderman*. This far into the game, with Cave's long black hair thinning and his moustache growing ever the more creepy, delivering a record filled with fire and brimstone that surpasses most of his prior albums is an accomplishment that needs to be recognized.

Opening with the title track, Cave fires off his re-telling of the Lazarus story, this time raising him from the grave and dropping him in New York City as the Bad Seeds grind away behind him. It's quite a ride from there, with the bass-driven "Today's Lesson" showing a more poppy side of Cave's songwriting, with lyrics like "We're gonna have a real good time tonight." "Moonland" is one of Cave's creepier moments as a songwriter, with him pleading with a lover in a post-apocalyptic city. The guitar-driven "Albert Goes West" is quite literally the catchiest song Cave's ever written, with the Seeds throwing "sha la la las" in the background as he grinds away on electric guitar. The album centerpiece "We Call Upon the Author" shows Cave's preacher side, with him spouting off anger at God for the state of the world. Possibly his sexiest love song to date, Cave's brilliant "Lie Down Here and Be my Girl" sounds like the Beach Boys from hell, with a rollicking violin groove from Warren Ellis riding high atop acoustic guitar strums and Cave's ever-anguished vocals. Things slow down a bit with the introspective "Hold on to Yourself" and the beautiful "Jesus of the Moon" which features a stunning flute solo by Ellis.

The best album of 2008 concludes with two of Cave's best songs yet, the man-at-the-end-of-his-rope rocker "Midnight Man," and the Velvet Underground meets Dylan style send off, "More News from Nowhere," a song that recalls characters from Cave's previous story telling songs.

# Christmas Horoscopes

By: Overly Dramatic Dude

(Warning: not to read by those with closed-minded personalities)

**Aries:** No, I see what you want and all I have to say is that you'll shoot your eye out, kid.

**Taurus:** Double check the water under the tree less your dad's poor wiring system of lights ignites that thing like a blazing Yule log of death.

**Gemini:** That thing you asked Santa for is coming—don't worry. I would suggest stock pilling some cookies in your room for when those relatives you forgot about show up at your door. That's a little gift from me to you.

**Cancer:** Your month will be blessed with good cheer, at least what you call good cheer. Others don't understand that your version of a good time is much different than that of the normal person.

**Leo:** Should you receive a package in the mail wrapped in red ribbon and covered in green wrapping paper from your Aunt Gertrude, make sure you have an Aunt Gertrude before opening the package.

**Virgo:** People may question your taste in gifts, but you should not let this stop you from buying your 67-year-old grandmother that Harley for Christmas.

**Libra:** This month will be filled with cheer and good will -- mostly when you give those socks and undergarments you're getting to the local charity, along with all those fruitcakes your annoying relatives give you.

**Scorpio:** Take note, dear Scorpio-- you should have a fire extinguisher by the fireplace, a bucket of sand near the tree and a new lock on the fireplace grate before that Yule log ignites your house after falling out of that rusty old fireplace.

**Sagittarius:** Should you shake your presents this year and hear a ticking sound I suggest pushing the whole package into a bucket of water until the ticking stops.

**Capricorn:** You're going to be ambushed in a snowball fight and probably have some damage done to your face, but cheer up. It's Christmas after all, no matter how many stitches you have in your cheek.

**Aquarius:** Plans you thought were going to be wonderful and pleasant have changed, and reworked into the springtime.

**Pisces:** Make sure to remember that weird individual that you see every day on your card list, lest you hear that person griping about it for the rest of this and next year.