



THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

I plan to live forever.
So far, so good.
—Steven Wright



Homecoming Dance pix
(are you in one?) 2



Did you get a new tablet
for Christmas, too? 3

The COMMONS is published biweekly during the school year by the Upper School Newspaper class at Riverfield Country Day School, 2433 W. 61st Street, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74132. No issues are published the weeks of Fall Campout, Winter Break and Spring Break.

The COMMONS reserves the right to edit any article or letter submitted for publication. Send all submissions to the Editor-in-Chief at mafaeth@riverfield.org. All opinions expressed are those of the individual writers and do not reflect positions of the newspaper staff, advisers, or school administration.

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Independent Study



Mr. Hodges is supervising Matt's Independent Study on privacy rights in America and the ideal of "manifest destiny" in the 20th century. PHOTO BY TAYLOR BIRKS

By Matthew Faeth
STAFF WRITER

As Riverfield's high school continues to grow, academic opportunities are increasing. This is illustrated by the number and variety of electives now offered, and the addition of new core classes like Philosophy, Psychology, Fundamentals of Theater, Acting 1, and History: English Regency and Tudors.

This semester a new type of class has been made available for Upper School students: Independent Study. For those not familiar with this learning method, an Independent Study is an opportunity for a student to pursue a subject of their choice and learn about it in great detail. Independent Study normally involves a substantial amount of writing with a presentation of one's findings upon completion of the term.

This past fall I took Survey of Supreme Court Decisions, taught by Mr.

Hodges. As the one semester class neared completion, the seniors in the class had to figure out what to take this semester for History. As we saw it, we had three options. We could forget about taking History this semester because it is not necessary for graduation, we could take the second of Ms. James' new English History classes, or we could attend a History class at TCC.

I didn't really want to do any of these, so I was determined to create another option. I asked Mr. Hodges if he would be willing to oversee an Independent Study for me. He said something along the lines of, "Yes, just OK it with Mr. Clark." Mr. Clark had me put together a curriculum with Mr. Hodges, and now I'm well into my Independent Study.

Students, if you have an idea for a class you would like to create, I encourage you to approach Mr. Clark. He is very student-friendly with ideas. In fact, if it were not for students with varied interests and initiative, this very newspaper would not exist.

NEWS BRIEFS

International

ROME — Late in 2011, a 99-year-old Italian man filed for divorce after learning of an affair his wife had more than a half century ago. The gentleman, named "Antonio C.," discovered a series of letters revealing his wife's affair during the 1940s while going through her things before Christmas. His soon-to-be ex-wife, "Rosa C.," supposedly confessed, but was unable to persuade Antonio to forgive her after a 77-year mostly happy marriage. (abcnews.com)

National

DALLAS — GOP presidential candidate Rick Perry said on January 17 in a debate before the South Carolina primary, "Many perceive that Turkey is run by Islamic terrorists," and then went on to question Turkey's NATO membership. Turkey's foreign ministry released statements saying Perry's statements were "baseless and inappropriate." Two days later, Perry ended his campaign, endorsing Newt Gingrich for president. (ktxs.com)

NEW YORK — On January 19, GOP presidential candidate Newt Gingrich's second ex-wife said he lacks the character to be president because his campaign's positions on "marital sanctity and family values" are not the same as those she saw during their 18-year marriage. She alleges that Gingrich wanted an open marriage so he could have both a wife and a mistress. (abcnews.com)

State

CLAREMORE — On January 26, a jury awarded country music star Garth Brooks \$1 million, the legal maximum, in his suit against Integris Canadian Valley Regional Hospital in Yukon, Oklahoma. Brooks donated \$500,000 to the hospital in his hometown in 2005 to honor his late mother, Colleen Brooks. Testimony in the Rogers County civil trial showed that Integris offered to name a proposed women's health center after Brooks' mother in return for his donation to fund its construction, but the hospital later denied agreeing to the naming rights and refused to return Brooks' donation. (Tulsa World)

Nicotine patches may lessen memory loss

By Sam Laney
NEWS EDITOR

The nicotine patch is a common stop-smoking aid, but a new test has shown it can help those suffering from mild cognitive impairment as well.

The test focused on older adults with early memory loss. The study included 74 non-smokers. Half of the participants were given 15 mg/day of nicotine, and half were given a placebo. Over the six month trial, the nicotine group's long term memory improved by 46% while the placebo group's memory decreased

26% according to *Medscape News*. Use of the patches was also associated with a reduction in blood pressure as well as weight loss. However, changes were not severe.

Patients reported no problems stopping treatment at the end of the study. Early success suggests that further studies are needed to address the feasibility of the treatment.

Some previous short term studies have suggested that nicotine may aid those suffering from Alzheimer's. It is believed that nicotine alters some of the receptors in the brain that deal with memory.

Side effects of the treatment appear to be minimal, and further research should be finished by the end of this year.

Even so, doctors warn that patients should not administer nicotine except under a doctor's orders.



A clinical trial showed that the nicotine patch, available over the counter in drug stores, can improve memory in older adults.

PHOTO BY PATRICIA DICKEY

weekend weather

SAT 57
SUN 53

INFORMATION FROM WEATHER.COM, 2/3/12, 10:00 a.m.

2 Sports

NEXT VARSITY BASKETBALL GAME: The Ravens and the Lady Ravens play Wynona again tonight at 6:30 and 8 p.m. at Wynona. Come out and support them! ...

2012 Super Bowl predictions

By Bryce Rossler
STAFF WRITER

Due to the two biggest goats of the NFL season thus far — Baltimore's Billy Cundiff and San Francisco's soon-to-be-cut punt returner — two teams' title hopes have been crushed. Even worse, I went 0 for 2 in my conference picks.

In a rematch of Super Bowl XLII, the New York Giants will square off against the New England Patriots on Sunday for the Lombardi Trophy.

In 2008, Eli Manning and the Giants just eked their way

into the wildcard round and went on to upset the previously undefeated Pats 17-14 in one of the most exciting Super Bowl games in recent memory.

Revenge will be a popular topic in this year's media coverage, with Bill Belichick and the Patriots looking to avenge their loss from three years ago.

There's not as much at stake here as there was when they squared off a few seasons ago. A perfect season isn't on the line, and neither is anybody's job. However, bragging rights — not to mention the Lombardi Trophy — are still up for grabs.

You better believe there are still hard feelings in Foxborough and the Pats' organization.

The progression of Eli Manning and the addition of new offensive weapons will make this game a whole lot more offensive than it was last time around. On top of that, the Patriots' defense has been anemic.

Due to the defensive decline of both teams and the ever-developing Giants offense, I predict the final score will be the same number of death threats Billy Cundiff gets in a day, 31-24, and Tom Brady will have his revenge in Indy.



Super Bowl Sunday is this weekend! Have you stocked up on snack foods yet? The game begins at 5:30 p.m. The Super Bowl isn't always the biggest entertainment that day — sometimes the commercials are.
PHOTO BY MATTHEW FAETH



Bryce Rossler jumps for another two points during the Homecoming game against Wesleyan Christian. PHOTO BY ROBERTA PEAKE

Riverfield basketball teams shine

By Ryan Peake
STAFF WRITER

Riverfield's Upper School basketball teams are both doing very well this year.

The Ravens are 15-3 for the season and have two regular season games left, followed by district play. The Lady Ravens are 8-7 for the season and have had a tough but solid year. They also have two games left, followed by district competition.

The Ravens have had one of their best seasons ever this year, led by a solid senior group of guys. Their 15 wins are impressive, and the three losses came

in games against a strong defensive-minded Rejoice team, South Coffeyville (which most likely will win the conference championship), and lastly, to Wesleyan Christian. Riverfield had already beaten Wesleyan twice by 25+ points but failed to do so again on Homecoming night, suffering a devastating loss of 38-42.

Interestingly, the Ravens' three losses all have been at neutral sites or on their home court — surprisingly, they have had no losses on the road. Maybe this is a good sign for them as they approach the playoffs starting February 10 in Dav-

enport. The Lady Ravens' team has had an interesting story this year. They started out with seven players and are now down to five. But even though their roster is short and they are a young squad, the Lady Ravens still play with the most heart and work the hardest of any girls team out there. They will also be in the playoffs in Davenport starting February 10.

Both teams are in action tonight at Wynona, which Riverfield picked up wins against earlier this year. The boys won by 72 points and the girls by one.

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HOMECOMING MEMORIES

PHOTOS BY DANIEL HODGES, BROOKE KNIGHT, and ROBERTA PEAKE

3 A&E

CONGRATULATIONS to our new Upper School Academic Bowl team! They took 3rd Place in the region in their first year of OSSAA competition. Way to go, guys! ...

The best alternative to the iPad

By Sam Laney
STAFF WRITER

The Samsung Galaxy Tab 7.0 Plus is the newest 7-inch tablet from Samsung. It aims to take customers from the e-reader market to a device that can do more than the Kindle Fire.

Samsung's newest tablet also has cameras and faster speeds than the Fire when it comes to screen rotation and opening applications. The battery life, reported to be around 8 hours, appears to live up to its claims.

The Galaxy Tab 7.0 Plus tablet features the basic speakers and microphones, but it also includes front and rear facing cameras with an LED flash. There is also an expansion slot for a micro SD card, a feature that many tablets this size don't offer.

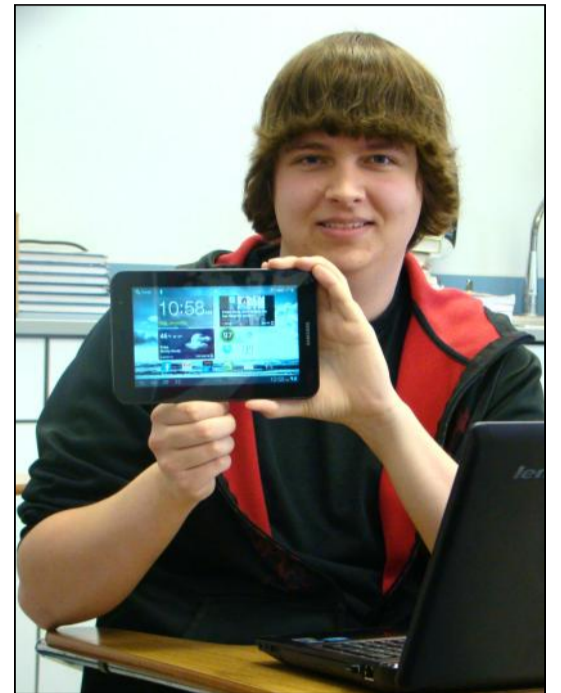
The Galaxy runs Android 3.2 with the proprietary Samsung overlay that has appeared to be useful throughout preliminary testing.

I do wish the quick access

apps that run as windows over other open apps could be changed.

The screen is clear, and the tablet's small size is conducive to reading. With more apps than the Fire, it's clearly more versatile than the locked-down Kindle. The proprietary connector used is also a bit frustrating considering other devices are using the micro USB.

The trade-off is price. The Galaxy Tab 7.0 Plus is \$100 more expensive than the Kindle Fire. Other than the cameras, the two tablets basically do the same things. The Galaxy is lighter, thinner, and a bit faster. But it does cost more.



Sam Laney shows off his new Samsung Galaxy Tab 7.0 Plus. PHOTO BY PATRICIA DICKEY

I would recommend the Samsung Galaxy Tab 7.0 Plus for anyone who wants a full tablet experience without having to shell out the money for a new iPad.



ILLUSTRATION BY KENZIE ZWAYER

Picasso and Mondrian paintings are stolen

By Nick Hartman
STAFF WRITER

In the early moments of January 9, thieves stole two valuable works by 20th century masters Pablo Picasso and Piet Mondrian from Greece's largest state art museum, the National Gallery. The museum is located in one of the best-guarded areas of central Athens.

The crime was well organized and completed quickly. Only taking a total of seven minutes, the heist was clearly planned by professionals.

The day prior, the thieves began intentionally setting off alarms until the guards disabled them. However the thieves still set off the alarms during the actual heist, and police spotted hooded figures running away.

A police statement said the burglars entered the museum through a balcony door.

In addition to the paintings by Picasso and Mondrian, they

also seized a pen and ink drawing by Guglielmo Caccia, a 16th century Italian painter. The police spoke of a fourth work, also by Mondrian, that was snatched although the thieves dropped it as they ran away.

Among other stolen works was a cubist female bust that was donated to Greece by Pablo Picasso in 1949 for their resistance to Nazi occupiers during World War II.

In addition to these works of art, thieves also took a 1905 oil painting of a riverside windmill by Mondrian, and a drawing of St. Diego de Alcalá by Caccia.

These thefts raise many questions about the protection of the gallery. Security will undoubtedly increase when the gallery re-opens after a great deal of refurbishing.

We can only hope that this will not happen again, and that the thieves will return the stolen paintings so that others may again enjoy them.

Martha Stewart sued by Macy's

By Nick Hartman
STAFF WRITER

We all remember when Martha Stewart was sentenced to jail for five months and fined \$30,000 in 2004. The jury found Stewart guilty of obstructing justice and lying to investigators about an exceptionally well-timed stock sale.

Unfortunately, Martha is in trouble again. On January 23, the great home expert's company was sued by the corporate conglomerate Macy's in the New York State Supreme Court.

What kind of trouble is she in this time? Macy's claims that Stewart's company, Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia Inc., has signed an agreement with J.C. Penney that violates the terms of Macy's contract to exclusively sell Martha Stewart Living products at its stores.

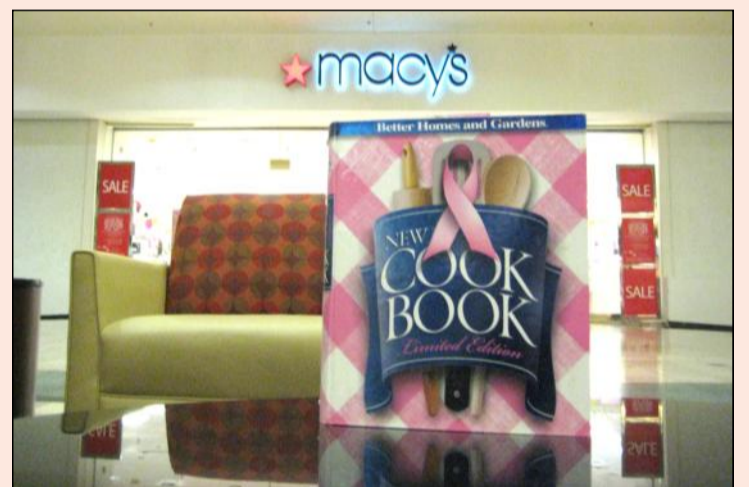
Under the new deal, J.C. Penney will sell its own brand of Martha Stewart products and will open new Martha Stewart Living shops in its department

stores starting in early February 2013 according to reports from Reuters, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, CBS, and other sources.

Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia normally does not issue statements on legal matters, but it did issue a statement saying that it received a notification from Macy's that it intends to renew and extend its

agreement to promote and continue to exclusively sell Martha Stewart Living merchandise.

There are still many unanswered questions, and the trial is imminent. While we hope Martha stays out of jail this time, we know no more about the probable outcome of this case than that of the 2012 presidential election.



Will Macy's continue to be the exclusive seller of Martha Stewart Living merchandise? PHOTO BY MATTHEW FAETH

Assange to host new talk show while under house arrest

By Sam Laney
STAFF WRITER

Julian Assange, the founder of WikiLeaks, is set to host a new talk show that will air in March.

The *NY Times* quoted WikiLeaks, which said Assange would interview "key

political players, thinkers and revolutionaries from around the world" with an apparent theme of "the world tomorrow."

The network carrying the show is RT (previously known as Russia Today). The show will be made available all across the world, including some major cities in the U.S.

The show will be filmed in Assange's house in Britain, as he is under house arrest while he fights extradition to Sweden.

Assange has no previous experience in television, though he has been quoted as saying, "Through this series I will explore the possibilities for our future in conversations with

those who are shaping it. Are we heading towards utopia or dystopia, and how we can set our paths?"

Assange continued. "This is an exciting opportunity to discuss the vision of my guests in a new style of show that examines their philosophies and struggles in a deeper

and clearer way than has been done before."

The show, with a provocative host and obvious ties to further controversy, is sure to spark conversation. With RT's limited impact in the U.S., one can only guess as to whether the new talk show will spark outrage or not.

4 Opinions

COMING UP IN OUR NEXT ISSUE: A proposed tax on sugar, Oscar nominations, The Weeknd, Twitter censorship, and more ...

Spring flirtations and dances

Q: Both of my friends are talking to the same guy. How can I prevent one of them from getting hurt without getting too involved?

Meghan: The reality of the situation is that neither of your friends should be with this guy if he is leading them both on. There are different ways to handle this situation, though.

First things first, make sure the guy really IS leading on both of the girls! He may like one and just be talking to the other as a friend. Spreading false information is never good.

Once you have confirmed that this is what is happening,

and if you would like your identity to remain unknown, you can send an anonymous letter to one of your friends. This way, you won't be seen as the culprit if things backfire.

If you are only friends with one girl, then tell her in an environment where she feels comfortable and will be able to let her emotions out. Don't tell her in the middle of class — this will ruin the rest of her day, and she might spend it crying in the bathroom rather than focusing on her school work.

In the end, just let her know that there are plenty of fish in the sea, and she shouldn't be wasting any more bait on this one.

Q: How do I ask someone out on a date to the Prom or another dance?

Omar: Riverfield has that special knack of not doing anything the first half of the school year, then trying to cram it all in at the end of the year. So we recently had Homecoming, and right around the corner is the Rave, then the Prom. Plus, there are other romantic date destinations this spring such as Street Party and the school play, which is a love story this year.

It is definitely dance season at RCDS. It's an interesting time to date because all our hideous Michelin Man sweaters



By Omar Rana & Meghan Kelkar

will soon be put into storage as the winter melts away, and skin will be in.

It's always important how you ask that special someone out. First off, don't do it over Facebook or the cell phone. That's not personal enough. As long as you avoid a social medium, you can do it any special way you think of.

Sophomore Hunter Hoffman asked out his honey by arranging for Zio's Italian restaurant to stay open late so he could have a secluded dinner with her alone while he asked her out.

Now for dances and Prom, you must be creative. Even if you are already in a committed relationship, you need to make this part special.

Last year I asked my date, senior Caitlin Pond, by playing "Teenage Dream" by Katy Perry and holding up a sign that said "PROM?" If you don't think that's creative enough, then come up with something else.

Good Luck!



Ever get a message like this? SCREENSHOT BY MEGHAN KELKAR

Should Obama be re-elected?

By Stephen Sesso
and Jeff May
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Stephen: Obama isn't a really popular name in Oklahoma. So when I say in the next paragraph that I believe President Obama deserves a second term, I'm sure I will have more than a couple of students come up to me with some comments.

Obama deserves a second term. (*Whew* I'm glad I got that over with.)

So now, let's be proactive and preempt the obvious question of "Why?" with some interesting facts.

For instance, let's take a look at 2009, Obama's first year in office. In this year, Obama closed Guantanamo Bay, rescued the banks, enacted a massive stimulus package, and stopped the economy's slide into depression.

That won't be enough for some of my peers, so here's a look at some of my favorite of Obama's accomplishments from 2010 and 2011: (1) Provided \$1.4 billion to improve assistance to American veterans, (2) Abolished "Don't Ask Don't Tell," (3) Ended Bush-era interrogation methods, (4) Created and passed the Health Care Reform bill, (5) Loosened regulations on Cuba so that Cuban-

Americans can visit the island and send remittances to the island, and (6) Expanded Pell grants so underprivileged students can go to college.

So when I look at President Obama's term in the Oval Office, I see success. And I wonder why he is blamed for so many of the nation's problems. The truth is, he deserves a second term because he is a moral individual. And that's what we need most.



Jeff and Stephen defend the president's record in office. PHOTO BY MATTHEW FAETH

Jeff: Let me be up front: I am not a member of the political Animalia; I'm Independent.

To me, the question is: Does Obama *deserve* to be re-elected? Take a trip back in time with me. Let's go back to 2008.

When running for president,

Obama said he would help to institute a health care reform bill, support abortion rights, and support gay marriage. He's been true to his word.

But that doesn't really matter. Those are social issues, and what makes or breaks a president are national issues — namely, the economy.

Former president Bush had raised the national debt by \$4 billion — that's more than any president. Ever. In addition, Obama came into office in the middle of a war that he had opposed from its very beginning.

I'm not pointing fingers, but one must not consider just what a President has done, but the hand he has been dealt as well. And this President didn't exactly get a royal flush.

Ever since the Republicans gained power in the House in 2010, Obama has had to endure one of the most diametrically opposed political environments since the Whigs. And all things considered, he's stayed true to his word.

That's not to say all that glitters is gold. But so far, the Republican candidates have proved to be more concerned with tearing each other down than winning a seat in the Oval Office in November. Given the choices, I'll choose the lesser of two evils.

Ron Paul for prez!

By Bryce Rossler
OPINIONS EDITOR

Traditionally speaking, Texas has long been a political breeding ground for hardcore conservatives and Republicans. But amidst the warmongering Goldwater incarnations, there stands a champion ready to provide clarity to this year's Republican race and restore America's luster.

Dr. Ronald Ernest Paul, who is not a conservative, is Texas's 14th District's representative in the House of Representatives. He is the best candidate for the upcoming presidential election. (And the second best at making Newt Gingrich look stupid, right behind Newt Gingrich.)

Paul has proven to be the Nostradamus of the American political landscape, consistently proving time and time again to have predicted — among other things — 9/11 (during Clinton's 1998 impeachment proceedings), the current economic cri-

sis, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan that began in April 2002, and the Occupy Wall Street movement that began in March 2011. You can find evidence of these and more on YouTube simply by searching "Ron Paul predictions."

Not only will his foresight prove to be invaluable, but his policies will allow him to act appropriately. Paul's international policies (he takes a strong stance against interventionism and outsourcing) and domestic policies (increased taxation on upper income brackets) are designed to reverse the retrograding of America in an attempt to regenerate what is now a failing nation.

For those of you who will be eligible to vote, I strongly urge you to take a look at Paul's policies. You can even find campaign advertisements on VEVO-sponsored YouTube channels from time to time.

Go Blue Republican. Vote for Ron Paul. Vote for America.



Want a job here? Try majoring in Agriculture.

PHOTO BY PATRICIA DICKEY

Study identifies five "useless" majors

By Chris Dickey
STAFF WRITER

A popular article on *Yahoo! News* last week identified the five most "useless" majors in today's job market according to the National Association of Colleges and Employers' 2012 Job Outlook Study.

Agriculture topped their list. People with Agriculture degrees typically manage the day-to-day operations of farms. However, farms are becoming more and more efficient as well as automated, meaning that the few jobs that remain are disappearing.

Up next, we have Fashion Design. That's right ladies, your dream job is number two on their list because of the lack of available positions. Many jobs in this field are being outsourced overseas while the remaining few in America are hyper-competitive. Only the best of the best graduates have the slightest chance.

Sadly, Theater is number three. According to the U.S.

Department of Labor, Theater graduates typically face long periods of unemployment, erratic earnings, and frequent rejection. Many of these grads have to find second jobs.

Then we have Animal Science. This one made the list because it is such a specific major that the approximately 5,000 jobs that exist in this field are all already taken.

Lastly, there is Horticulture. This is in the same realm as Agriculture, but it has more to do with the science of growing crops. Horticulture suffers the same dilemmas as Agriculture.

However, if you plan to major in one of these fields, don't let this news discourage you. Your degree needs to be in a field that you really love and are passionate about. You don't want to pick a high paying degree and be miserable for your entire working life.

So pick something that you would enjoy doing, but also take into account what it will mean for your style of living.