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OPINION 2



The COMMONS

Published biweekly by and for the Upper School students of Riverfield Country Day School in Tulsa, OK

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Don't take life seriously...
no one gets out alive anyway.
— Anonymous



Top movies of 2009 2



RCDS basketball photo
montage 2

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weekend
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The Third Quarter



James Pedro and Steve Pittman, deep in the throes of third quarter woes...

PHOTO BY RAMSEY TALLADIVEDULA

By Matt Faeth
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

There is a span of 2.5 months of pure gloom when it seems the school year will never end. This period of time is known as Third Quarter.

To truly understand the subconscious mindset of Third Quarter, I will dissect the other three quarters of the school year.

In the first quarter, students return from Summer Break, a long span of hanging out, video game playing, and vacationing. We're excited to see all the friends we've missed, our electives, and sometimes even the work. During the first quarter, we remind ourselves of our motivation for school and life.

By the second quarter, this honeymoon phase has worn off and reality has set in. As young scholars, we still have energy and are motivated, though. And of course, we are excited for Winter Break to arrive.

Skipping ahead, the fourth quarter arrives when we are freshly returning from Spring Break, the weather having improved greatly. This quarter is full of motivation, and it almost seems to fly by with all the end-of-year activities. Summer arrives before we know it.

But crammed in between Winter and Spring Breaks lies the infamous Third Quarter. This quarter starts with a return from a refreshing time in the middle of the school year known as Winter Break. But during Third Quarter the weather is cold and grey, and summer seems like nothing more than a faded memory. This rut that we are stuck in will last until the beginning of Spring Break when we are reminded, at last, that the end is near.

My recommendations are: (1) Hold on, and (2) Keep your grades up through this tough time. Hopefully you will survive and pull through to the end of the semester, having had a very successful social and academic school year.

New soccer program at RCDS

By Tristan Hightower
10TH GRADE

Riverfield has been trying to get a soccer program going for a year now, and this year will be the first for competitive teams with scheduled games.

Last year there was a very good showing of students who wanted to play soccer. Boys and girls practiced together with Mr. Breig on a regular schedule, and scrimmages took place often. However, they never actually got the chance to play against another school.

Already this year, the soccer

program is looking to take off, with even more Upper School students interested in playing and both boys' and girls' teams looking to compete. Ms. Watts, RCDS teacher and former collegiate player at ORU, will coach the girls' team while Michael Nsien, a former MLS player, has been hired to coach the boys.

There's no lack of talent for the game in the Upper School, and it is a great time to start this program. Everyone is excited to have a new sport at RCDS to play and cheer for, so if playing soccer

with friends sounds like a good time, sign up for spring soccer!



RCDS is ready for soccer!

PHOTO BY RAMSEY TALLADIVEDULA

H1N1 flu scare— is it over?

By Sam Laney
NEWS EDITOR

Most of the panic and distress over the latest influenza virus has disappeared over the past few weeks. This is simply because, while the projections were grave and the death tolls seemed to point to a global epidemic, the virus was not as bad as the seasonal flu.

The seasonal flu kills many people every year (probably more than most realize) and is accompanied by aching, loss of appetite, and fever. The symptoms can put someone out of commission for a week or more. The H1N1 virus was weak in comparison. As a survivor, I can attest that the symptoms were mild and lasted for only a few days.

Some pointed to the death toll as primary evidence that "the killer was coming," but when statistics were compared to the seasonal flu, the results were clear: the "swine flu" was nothing to worry about.

Those most seriously affected had preexisting conditions, which is to be expected for any ailment. Following those with medical conditions, the elderly and young children were next on the list. This should be no surprise.

The health system quickly delivered the H1N1 vaccine, which eased many minds. The vaccine was administered to school students at no cost since children were most at risk.

H1N1 activity has slowed in and around Oklahoma, but will be around for some time. However, due to the lack of severity and the availability of preventative vaccine, the public has lost interest in the "swine flu."

HOMECOMING DANCE

DATE: Saturday night,
January 30

WHERE: Upper School
Commons

WHEN: 7 to 11pm

COST: (Before Event)
\$10 single, \$15 couples
(At the Door) \$15 single,
\$25 couples

If you don't have a partner,
bring a friend and save \$5!

2 Features & Opinions



PHOTOS BY ROBERTA PEAKE

Riverfield's Varsity and Junior Varsity basketball teams have only played one game since Winter Break. The Varsity teams played Regent on January 12. The Ravens won 56-20 and the Lady Ravens won 33-8. The Junior Varsity boys played Rejoice on January 14 and lost in a nail-biter, 29-34. Our teams have lots of games left to play, so come out and watch!

Tiger Woods—a hero no longer

By Ben Rao
SPORTS EDITOR

Being a Nets fan, I envied Kobe Bryant's Lakers who clinched their third straight NBA Championship over New Jersey. Kobe has always been a polarizing figure, and his 2002 arrest and trial for rape after an incident at a Colorado Springs spa with a 19 year old girl sparked nationwide outrage. Major sponsors quickly cut ties with Bryant. Seven years later, Kobe is coming off his fourth NBA title and has regained almost all of his sponsorship dollars and fan support.

Most would have thought that pro athletes would have learned a lesson from the Kobe

incident. Yet it seems the world's most star-studded athlete, Tiger Woods, never got that message. Tiger's squeaky clean image has been tarnished lately by allegations of affairs with at least 12 different women, probably more to come.

The man has a model for a wife, over \$1 billion, and the second most major championships in golf history, yet apparently he had affairs with Hooters waitresses and high priced call girls. Once seen as the beacon of all that was good in professional athletics, he now is considered no better than the likes of Dennis Rodman or Mike Tyson.

Moreover, it's not just what Tiger did, but the fact that he

has gone into hiding like a coward rather than facing the media and telling the whole story. At least Kobe had the guts to speak publicly.

Maybe we are overreacting. Many Hollywood celebrities have cheated, yet the world still adores them. Then again, no one expects them to be squeaky clean. Tiger Woods cultivated his image as a role model.

Tiger may come back to the world of golf and be better than ever. He may get his sponsors back as well as his fame. However, if Woods ever steps back on a golf course, think before you cheer for him. For a man that has the courage of a lion on the golf course, he has the dignity of a worm off it.

The Top 10 Movies of 2009

By Meghan Kelkar
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

It's going to be tough for the movies of 2010 to beat the top movies of 2009 at the box office. All of them made more than \$100 million, and three even made more than \$300 million! This past year, the top films included drama, comedy, action, and family movies. Here are last year's Top 10 in order:

1. Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen: An action film that not only became the #1 movie of the year, but also became one of the top 10 highest totaling movies of all time, coming in with \$402,111,870.

2. Avatar: One of the most anticipated movies since James Cameron's other film, Titanic. Totaled \$367,536,685.

3. Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince: The sixth installment of the popular series brought in \$301,959,197.

4. Up: This summer family

film totaled \$293,004,164.

5. The Twilight Saga: New Moon: The second installment of the vampire series was a November romance. \$288,548,185.

6. The Hangover: A summer comedy. \$277,322,503.

7. Star Trek: The classic sci-fi film released in the summer brought in \$257,730,019.

8. The Blind Side: An inspirational fall drama. Total: \$210,068,528.

9. Monsters Vs. Aliens: Another summer family movie that made \$198,351,526.

10. Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs: Good summer family movie that brought in \$196,573,705.



Sophomores Ryan Peake and Meghan Kelkar watch a movie in Ms. James' room.
PHOTO BY RAMSEY TALLADIVEDULA

Glowing kittens?

By Kenzie Zwyer
STAFF WRITER

A group of scientists in South Korea have successfully produced a litter of cloned, glowing kittens. When exposed to ultraviolet light, the cats' skin glows deep red. Another cat, Mr. Green Genes (a tabby tom), glows bright green.

The ears, nose, and other bare places on the cats seem to be the only places that glow, but this is because the skin—not the fur—of the cats is engineered to glow. If the cats were to be shaved, their entire bodies would emit fluorescent light.

The purpose of this experiment was to manipulate genes. Making fuzzy animals glow was just an interesting way to go about it.

Skin cells were taken from a donor cat and genetically altered

to produce a red fluorescent glow. These gene-altered nuclei were put into eggs for cloning. The process was successful, and a litter of glowing kitten clones was born.

The fluorescent glowing protein was chosen as the gene to be injected into the cats' clockwork because it is an easily recognizable marker that lets scientists know if the passing-on of the gene through the clones was a success.

Scientists figure that since this experiment was successful, they may someday be able to move on to larger genetic changes, such as creating cloned cats modeling human diseases. Although this type of animal experimentation would no doubt spark heated debates, these cats would provide ideal subjects for finding cures for human diseases.



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A review of Obama's first year in office

By Bryce Rossler
OPINION EDITOR

With 25% of his current term knocked out, President Obama has achieved a lot of things during his first year in office, such as being the first African-American president and winning the Nobel Peace Prize. But has he accomplished anything else?

While I'm not one of those calling for his impeachment, I'm not saying he's done a great job, either.

For inheriting such a difficult job that has been inhibited by the multitude of missteps made by his predecessor, he's done a good job. This country is in the red in more ways than one, and he's attempting to get us back in the black.

But even considering that, he's still only putting up an average performance.

While he has saved some corporations with Cash-for-Clunkers and the federal bailout, he's done a better job serving the corporate bigwigs than the average Joe that he fervently promised to defend during his campaign.

When we entered the recession in December 2007, the

unemployment rate was at 5%. It currently stands at 10%, which admittedly is down from the lowest point of the recession.

As for the Middle East, the war he promised to bring an end to was assigned a deadline for the start of a withdrawal (June 2011), but this would-be-positive resume item is cancelled out by his sending of 35,000 more troops overseas.

However, President Obama has done some other positive things. He's tried his darndest to institute a universal healthcare plan, which has had several political assassination attempts upon it, mostly by Republicans and misled or uninformed left-wingers. He's also been a figurehead in the climate talks in Copenhagen, as well as being one of the key players in leading the charge against North Korea.

So I find myself defending him more often than not, although I still say he has done only an average job. His second year should be another shot at righting the ship. Then the public should start expecting big changes in his junior and senior years. Until then, we just have to hold on tight.