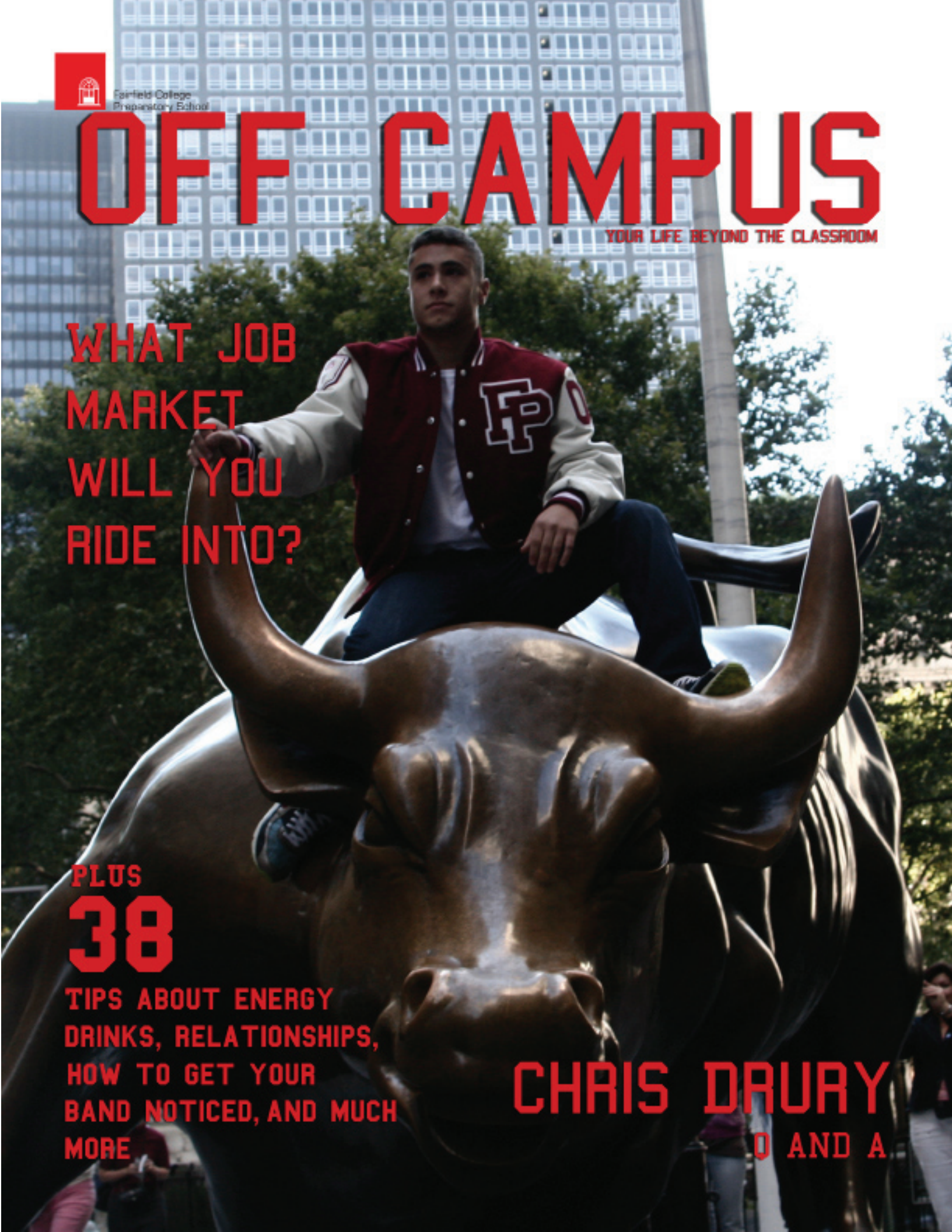
Fairfield College Preparatory School

OFF CAMPUS

YOUR LIFE BEYOND THE CLASSROOM



WHAT JOB MARKET WILL YOU RIDE INTO?

PLUS

38

TIPS ABOUT ENERGY DRINKS, RELATIONSHIPS, HOW TO GET YOUR BAND NOTICED, AND MUCH MORE

CHRIS DRURY

Q AND A

OFF CAMPUS

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JANUARY 2009

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Brandon Massaro, photographed by PAUL MICHELI

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Our current economic nightmares may not seem like something a young guy in high school should be overly concerned about, but Tim Nash's cover story "Career Planning," (page 12) will give you some insights that may reshape your thinking. In fact, arming you with statistics and advice from experts on issues you care about is our primary objective. Our editorial mission is to give you an informative, engaging, entertaining, and socially relevant magazine.

Your life is consumed with concerns as carefree as what movie to see this weekend, and as serious as wondering if smokeless tobacco is the harmless habit most teens say it is. Ross Riskin and Mike Williams give you the scoop on what movies to check out in '09 (page 17), and Tim Lincoln and Jake Van Sant have the facts that your friends don't on the dangers of dipping (page 14). If you haven't seen one of your boys out on the weekends in a while and think he's whipped, but he doesn't believe you, show him pages 8-9. James Worsfold, Kevin Westberg, and Connor Kelly will put an end to the debate by giving you "5 Ways To Tell If You're Whipped." A cold shoulder isn't the only thing you'll get if you're stranded in the snow this winter. We know you're cool now that you can drive without Mom or Dad, but you still need to check out Matt Pekar's "How to Winterize Your Car," on page 10. His tips will tell you what to look for under the hood, and around your tires.

Have you ever wondered how to make your garage band a legit group that people actually pay to see? Mike Esposito tells you how to turn your Guitar Hero aspirations into reality on page 16. After reading this article, we hope you don't crack your voice when you share your enthusiasm with other band members, but if you do, Justin Marini's voice crack chronicles, "Altering Egos," on page 18, will make you feel a little bit better about your sudden tonal variation.

You don't have to be in the hockey team's locker room to have wondered how our favorite alum made his way from Prep stud, to NHL superstar. Take a look at Joe Bastone's interview with Chris Drury on page 11; he may just have answered one of the questions you've always wanted to know. If you do happen to be gearing up for a game this winter and you're tired from hitting the books all night, don't reach for an energy drink looking for an extra boost. Ray Buckley and Austin Phelan will stimulate your anxiety when you read what they have to say about the hidden ingredients that you won't find by reading the label on the can (page 5). When you're more concerned about grabbing some grub, than quenching your thirst, but aren't sure what to make, check out our short order recipes Joe Owen, Kevin Hines, and James Palma have cooked up. When the house is as empty as your stomach, turn to pages 6 and 7, for some quick and easy meals.

The first ever issue of *Off Campus* is a trial run produced in a senior English elective class. The course, Writing Essentials: Research and Reporting for Magazines has been given the green light for the fall, so look for more issues next year.

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Editor

OFF CAMPUS

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Energy Drinks

Kids nowadays are constantly trying to get a boost from caffeinated energy drinks, but how much is too much?

by RAY BUCKLEY, AUSTIN PHELAN
photograph by RAY BUCKLEY

Teenagers frequently enjoy pounding energy drinks. They provide an extra kick that gets them through the day, or perhaps gives them the thrill of an energy rush. But the consumption of these beverages can produce harmful affects to the body, and have no real contributions to one's health.

Energy drinks are the fastest growing beverage category in the United States. According to Consumer Reports, people in the United States spent $744 million on caffeinated beverages during the year ending June 17, 2007, a 34% increase over the previous year. A can of high-caffeine energy drink generally provides about as much caffeine as a cup of coffee. Red Bull for example has double the amount compared to a can of Coke. But label readers can be easily misled. Nancy Murphy, nutritionist from Fairfield explains, "The amount of caffeine in these energy drinks is actually higher than advertised, because there is caffeine hidden in ingredients such as guarana and taurine." Due to its alleged high level of caffeine and tuarine (a neutral crystalline substance obtained from bile), Red Bull has been banned in some countries. As of this year Norway, Uruguay, and Denmark have prohibited the sale of Red Bull.

It should be understood that, while popular, none of these caffeinated drinks are actually good for you. Most of these drinks are required to display a warning explaining that certain people should not drink the product. "The effects of energy drinks vary depending on the person who is drinking it," says Murphy. Children should be limited to less than 100 milligrams. But most tested energy drinks have more than 8 ounces per can or bottle. Anyone who drinks the whole container consumes up to 200 milligrams of caffeine and up to 260 calories.

The effects of an energy drink on a child could be fatal, compared to an adult consuming a drink. Consuming very high levels of caffeine has also been associated with increased heart rate, nausea, restlessness, anxiety, and tremors.

It is commonly thought that athletes should consume these energy drinks before competing in an event. This is completely false. "Energy drinks do not sustain for long periods of time, and are often followed by a "crash"," says Murphy. There have even been instances in the death of athletes after consuming several energy drinks. Nancy Murphy recommends using sport drinks such as Gatorade during competition or training since they help the body recover after it has been sweating. She says that protein shakes are a safe alternative as well because they provide short energy bursts produced by the carbs, which is equalized by long term energy produced by the protein. If you can find a more productive and safer substitute for energy drinks such as protein shakes and sport drinks, then that is the way to go.

Macho Nachos

Move over mom, this is a man's job. Everyone loves nachos, but few know how to pile up a perfect plate.

by JOE OWEN, KEVIN HINES, JAMES PALMA
photograph by JOE OWEN

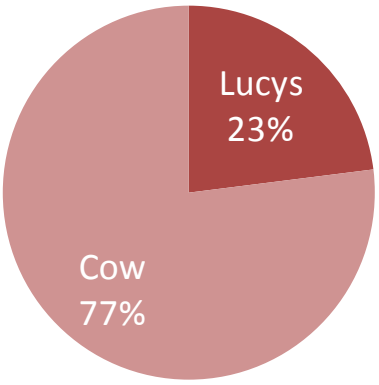
Ingredients:

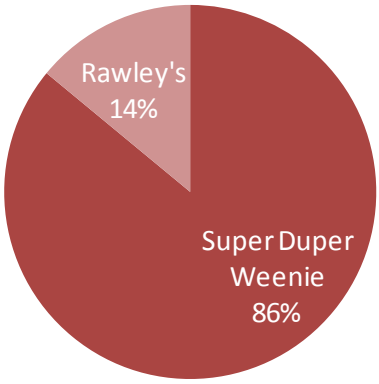
1 bag of Tostitos Chips
1 bag of Sargento cheese (Four Cheese Blend)
½ pound of ground beef or
½ pound Shredded Chicken Breast or
½ pound of shredded pork
1 cup shredded lettuce
1 container of Hormel chili (with beans)
1 cup diced tomatoes
½ cup jalapeño peppers
½ cup of chopped onions
Olive oil
Salt and Pepper

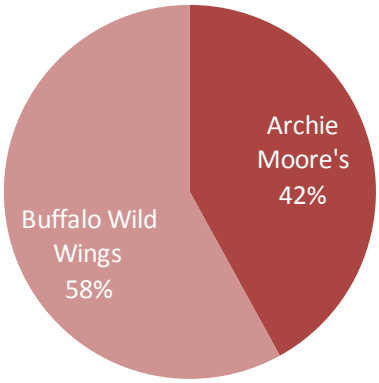
Preheat oven and set at 350°. Pour olive oil into a pan, enough to coat the bottom, turn the flame on medium. Take the chopped onions and sauté them in the pan until golden brown. Then mix in your choice of ground beef, shredded chicken, or shredded pork with the onions to flavor the meat. Nuke the Hormel chili and mix the meat with the chili in a bowl, let sit. Cover a cookie sheet with tin foil. This will allow you to slide the nachos off the tray and onto a plate when finished baking. Take half the bag of chips and spread them over the covered cookie sheet, then spread half of the meat and half of the bag of cheese over the chips. This will ensure two tasty layers. Pour the rest of the bag of chips and the remaining meat and cheese over your first layer. Place tray on the highest rack. Place the nacho platter in the oven for 5 minutes; make sure you check the chips because they can burn easily. When the cheese is melted throughout, remove the tray and sprinkle the shredded lettuce, diced tomatoes, and jalapeno peppers on top. Dive in with both hands.

You Decided...

These are the best places to scarf some good eats in Fairfield County.







Bird's Nest

When it's too late to eat breakfast and too early to eat lunch, finding the right snack can be a challenge. Luckily, we've found the answer.

The bird's nest is a simple yet satisfying meal when you are left to cook a meal on your own. The ingredients are one egg, butter, and bread. First, cut a hole in the center of the bread. I like to use a glass to make the hole perfect. The next step is to butter the piece of toast. Put the piece of toast on the frying pan and fill the hole with egg. Flip the toast half way through cooking. To spice it up I like to add diced peppers or tomatoes. This is one of the easiest meal's to make and you can enjoy it at any time.

-KEVIN HINES

My Boy is Whipped!

Are you whipped? We'll give you five questions to decipher if you or any of your boys actually are. We also asked some girls next door for some do's and don'ts when first meeting someone.

by JAMES WORSFOLD, CONNOR KELLY, RYAN WESTBERG

photographs by JAMES WORSFOLD

We all have that friend that is occupied in a relationship. If he is being held hostage by the allure of a beautiful girl, its hard to blame him, but you can certainly try to help him step out of his day dreams and into reality. Now that we're in high school, more legitimate relationships will develop, and your days of treating her to the Pretzel Time stand in the mall are over. Often times you need to make sacrifices. However, this does not mean changing the person you are. Being your own man starts with making independent decisions.When someone is whipped, independence is as foreign as time with the boys. Since it's difficult to define what it means to be whipped, we created some questions to help you figure it out. Most guys that actually are whipped can't see it. Show him our check list, and maybe he'll snap out of it. Here are the top five ways to tell if you're whipped:

1. You never seem to hang out with just the boys on the weekends.

Step up, and step out with your friends on the weekends. Having lunch at Mike's during a free period on Wednesday doesn't count. Do a better job of balancing who you spend time with. If she really cares about you, she'll appreciate your loyalty to your friends. Your boys will be around in a few months if she isn't. You're a popular, busy guy, that's who she should want to be with.

2. During these rare times when you're with your friends, you're always texting her.

The flow of hanging back with your friends is completely thrown off. You zone out on what's happening because you're focused on your next text. If you're seen peeking and hiding a text to your girl, you're whipped.

3. You're willing to see a chick flick, even though there are much better movies out.

If you've seen, "Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants" (one or two), you're whipped.

4. You give her an exact description of what you do every day.

A tell-tale sign that you're whipped. Nobody wants to pull a Johnny Drama. We love him for always looking out for his "baby bro," but we know how his relationship ended with his foreign friend.

5. Your clothing style changes to fit her wants.

If your sweatshirt and jeans are not acceptable, than neither is she.

Superbad Lines

We asked some girls next door about what we should do when meeting someone and here are their do's and don'ts.

DO

•**Be confident.** Smile. Make eye contact.
•**Dress to impress.** Wear wrinkle free attire that doesn't look like you just got back from practice.
•**Give her a genuine compliment.**
•**Ask low key questions** to get the conversation started.

DON'T

•**Be cocky**. Vince Vaughn's characters may be funny, but trying to be him isn't. Lose the lines and you won't lose her attention.
•**Be shy**. If McLovin can have success, so can you.
•**Be a slob.** The indifferent slob look might be cool at an all guys school, but not on Friday night.

Winterize your Wheels

Winter can be cruel, especially to your car. Follow these tips from licensed mechanic Paul Rizzo, and you won't get left out in the cold.

by MATT PEKAR
photograph by DAN DELOMA

Under the Hood
You might be as familiar with car parts as Tommy Boy is with brake pads, but you should at least know our check list.

- Make sure that your antifreeze will protect your engine in temperatures -25 degrees. Some popular brands of antifreeze include Peak and Prestone.
- Check all lights as well as other electrical connections. Keep your battery clean and charged. Be sure it is free of rust and corrosion. Check your hoses and belts for any soft spots and cracks. Replacing worn belts is a must!
- If your current wipers are leaving streaks, replace them. Keep your windshield washer fluid level up.
- Check your tires for at least 50 percent thread on them. Otherwise you will not have sufficient traction to control your vehicle in the snow. A good way to check your thread is to stick a penny upside down into any groove on your tire; if you can still see Lincoln's head or even the 'In God We Trust' letters, then it is time to change tires. Goodyear and Michelin have good selections on winter tires, try one of them.

Junk in the Trunk
Nothing is worse than getting stuck in the snow. Should you find yourself spinning your wheels, you'll be glad to have these items.

- A shovel and a bag or bucket of sand. Play sand will work well for traction if you get stuck. Simply throw some under the driving wheels.
- Keep a few flares in your car too. If you are stuck in a place where it is dark and there aren't many people around, flares can help draw attention to you.
- If you do start to experience electrical problems, be sure to keep a can of WD40 in your car. Spray the leads, plugs, and distributor cap which will help you short term. Your car manual should show you where these parts are located.
- If you're not a member of AAA or another automotive towing club, join today!

Q&A:with Chris Drury

The NHL All-Star and 1999 Rookie of the Year has won State Championships at Fairfield Prep, a National Championship at BU, and the Stanley Cup with the Colorado Avalanche. Here he answers some of OC's questions to see what he enjoyed most.

by JOE BASTONE

OC: *How do the fans in the NHL compare to those at Fairfield Prep?*

CD: There is nothing like a Prep bomb squad, but the fans at the Garden are awesome.

OC: *What was your favorite part about Prep Hockey?*

CD: My favorite part of Prep hockey was being part of such a great hockey tradition.

OC: *Is being a professional athlete as much fun as a high school athlete?*

CD: Being a professional athlete is a dream come true...but one of the greatest thrills in my life was playing four years of Prep hockey and baseball.

OC: *When you played for Prep, what was the toughest rink to play at?*

CD: When I was at Prep I think the toughest rink to play at was the Wonderland of Ice. We didn't lose too many games at home and I know visiting teams hated to come and play us there.

OC: *How were you able to transition into each level you played at, and still be a winner?*

CD: From high school to college and from college to the pros I always tried

to make the transition easier by working as hard as I could. I figured if I did that then the rest would take care of itself.

OC: *Where was your favorite place to eat when you went to Prep?*

CD: Vinny's pizza in Bridgeport.

OC: *Who was your toughest teacher at Prep?*

CD: I always had the toughest time with any Math class.

OC: *What was your favorite class at Prep?*

CD: My favorite classes at Prep were Anthropology/Sociology taught by Mr. Szablewicz and anything taught by Bruce Jaffe or John Roche.

Career Planning

What does our current economic downturn mean for your first internship or job? We were given simple suggestions to combat complicated problems.

by TIM NASH
photograph by PAUL MICHELI

What happened?

Shortly before 1 a.m. on September 15th in New York, Lehman Brothers Holdings announced that their multibillion dollar company was filing for bankruptcy under the governmental protection plan entitled chapter 11. Chapter 11 is a bankruptcy code created by the United States government that allows large corporations to declare bankruptcy yet still stay in business in order to reorganize their debt and contract responsibilities. Even with the protection of the United States government, they were bought out by Barclays Plc five days later.

A day after the announced bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers, another familiar company AIG- "American International Group" suffered a liquidity crisis. AIG's stock prices dropped from an all time high $70.13 down to a measly $1.25. In the case that AIG would fail, AIG insured itself with 441 billion dollars. However, 57.8 billion dollars of the 441 were composed of unpaid loan debts. At this time, not only did Lehman Brothers fail, AIG, the 18th largest company in the world was taking its last few steps towards bankruptcy. In a final act of desperation, the United States government eventually passed a 700 billion dollar Bill to save us and AIG from a total collapse similar to the Great Depression.

The Job Market

Even with government intervention, our economy is still on the roller coaster from hell. The housing market is in the gutter, our dollar is smaller than ever and seemingly every bank is talking merger. Not to mention that the unemployment rate is at a fourteen year high at 6.7 percent. In this year alone, there have been more than a million job cuts from private sector jobs. In October, 240,000 jobs were lost and it is believed that number will increase by 300,000 in November. As of now, more people have applied for job loss benefits than in the past sixteen years.

The government will continue increasing their own debt to prevent further financial losses. However, the automotive industry is asking for a bailout plan similar to what the insurance industry recently received. If the government passes it, they will forfeit the dollars ranking compared to other countries. If they don't, the average job loss figures could double what they are currently. But maybe the big three auto makers will survive after all. Maybe all this doom and gloom will pass us by while we're still in school, and our country will be stronger for having learned these harsh lessons. Maybe there has never been a better time to be discerning how our own talents could create a viable career path in the stability of our classroom desks?

What does all this mean for you?

The current financial environment has changed fields such as investment banking for a long time. Lower earnings and more competition for fewer jobs will most likely be the new standard for at least the short term. When this storm gains some distance from both Wall Street and Main Street, hopefully the job market will not be as saturated as it is now, and we can step into stable positions. But, it doesn't hurt to diversify yourself while completing your undergraduate work. Being multi-lingual in an increasingly global environment is a significant advantage as well. Most college juniors are currently scrambling to land those highly sought after internships, which are an important way to get your foot in the door at a major corporation. They help to confront the overwhelming conundrum most recent college grads face: how can I become a strong candidate for entry level positions that seek applicants with experience? You could of course, look at this economic mess in a different way. Perhaps, it is an exciting time to find out what you are passionate about, and spend your days as a student honing skills and readying yourself to engage the real world, confronting our real problems in hopes of offering real solutions. There isn't a better time to figure out your own gifts, and begin pursuing the right spot, where you can begin making a difference.

Watch Your Mouth

The use of smokeless tobacco, more commonly known as "dip" is becoming a growing problem in today's society, specifically for teenage users. The American Cancer society projects over 35,000 deaths in 2008 due to mouth cancer caused by this smokeless tobacco. Most users remain ignorant to the inherent dangers of dipping.

by JAKE VAN SANT, TIM LINCOLN

Use of Dip Today

The majority of the players in any major league baseball game look like they have a fat lower lip and can often be seen spitting unceasingly. The truth is that tucked behind their lower lip lays a clump of tobacco. This nationally broadcasted sport is one of the influences that has prompted the continued widespread use of dip. Teenagers lead the way with the most noticeable increases since the turn of the century. Five years ago, the American Cancer Society conducted a survey on drug use by Connecticut youths. They concluded that around 7,400 teenagers used smokeless tobacco, with 5,500 of them being high school students. Dip is most commonly used by males, but surprisingly the boy to girl ratio of dip use was only 4 to 1 in the survey. In other surveys, the ACS has concluded that about 20% of high school males actively dip.

Dangers of Smokeless Tobacco

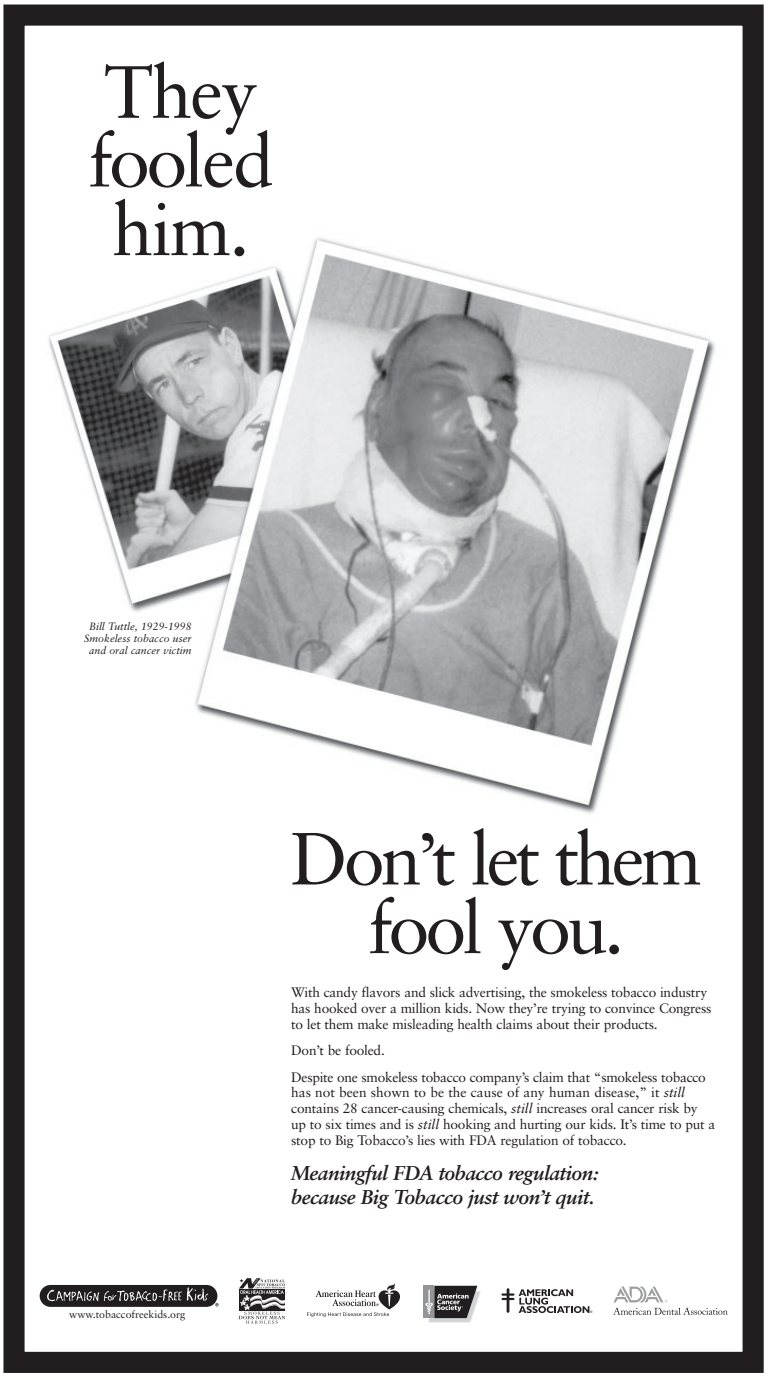
One of the main reasons why the use of dip has spread so rapidly is the lack of knowledge that "dippers" have of its' health risks. There is a common misconception that dip is not nearly as dangerous as cigarettes, which is one of the primary reasons why people think it's okay. The fact is that dip and cigarettes are composed of the same deadly substances, and that smokeless tobacco is actually much more threatening to your bodies' health.

Dip is more dangerous for several reasons. First, it is made up of nicotine and tar, just like cigarettes, with almost ten times the amount of nicotine. The second reason is that the tobacco is concentrated is one specific area (lip and gums), making the effect much greater. The high amount of nicotine in such a small area is very harmful to the users' mouth. However, the dangers are not just limited to the areas where the tobacco actually is. Smokeless tobacco is most common for causing general mouth cancer (oral carcinoma), but is also the cause of gum cancer and disease, throat cancer, lip disease, and tooth decay. The lasting effects of these various illnesses vary according to the diagnosis. Loss of a lip, loss of a jaw, discoloration or loss of teeth, and throat surgery are just a few of the dangers that come along with the use of dip.

When the tobacco enters your blood stream through your lip, it then goes onto narrowing blood vessels, leading to an increased heart rate and blood pressure. Overtime, this could eventually be the cause of heart disease and death. One sign that the tobacco is affecting the lip is if a canker sore develops in your mouth. This is a warning that it is time to stop.

The Road to Recovery

As long as cancer has not been developed, the mouth can recover. There have been many instances in which a long time tobacco user has quit and seen a full-scale recovery. When asked about this subject, oral surgeon, Dr. Dennis Bird recalls a patient he treated. This woman had clear signs of smokeless tobacco use on her lips and gums. After seeing these signs Dr. Bird suggested to her that she stop using the tobacco and explained the dangerous side affects that accompany the use. She had no idea that it was harmful and cancer causing, and stopped immediately after her visit. After returning weeks later for a checkup, she experienced a full recovery. Dr. Bird was astonished at the lack of any traces of the past tobacco abuse. The mouth is one of the most regenerative parts of the body but it cannot recover if it has passed the point of cancer. This is why teens must quit while they still can. While quitting is just as viable an option for a serious dipper as it is for a casual dipper, once a certain line has been crossed all hope of a complete recovery is lost.



Teens need to realize that dipping is dangerous and senseless. This habit that so many people see as harmless is actually life threatening. A sore lip can quickly transition into the need for surgery which can disfigure the face, jaw, and lips. Teens need to watch their mouths, because contrary to common misconceptions, smokeless tobacco can kill.

How To Get Your Band Some Recognition

If you're in a band then you know that the hardest thing to do, other than being able to play an instrument and produce music, is getting your band noticed. The same challenge goes for a musician trying to get their name in lights. It's the first step towards becoming a rock star so you should really know what it takes to make the proper statement. George Engel, owner and operator of independent record label Sling Slang records provides us with some exclusive tips.

by MICHAEL ESPOSITO

What is your role in the music industry and what does it involve?

Simply put, the role of Sling Slang is to help support the CT original music scene and it's artists through the producing of quality songs, shows and anywhere else we can help.Sling Slang Records and it's divisions, Ten Foot Reach Records and Skinny Pond Records are independent music labels, developing, producing, promoting and distributing CT's original music, artists and their songs.

How can artists develop more fans? Where are the basics of marketing for beginners?

Building a loyal-listener-and-show-going-fan-base is an important facet of developing the 'whole package'. The part of it that gets ignored too often is the part that family, close friends, and the one or two 'fans' that show up regularly at your shows (or practices!) play. The importance of developing a fan base one fan at a time shouldn't ever be over looked. One loyal fan leads to another and so on. Appreciate and never take for granted the importance of each and every one that supports your band and it's music.

When looking for new artists what grabs your attention and what does not?

First and foremost, artists that present new, creative and innovative, music styles, get my attention. Add to that, a willingness to learn and creatively grow. There are so many genres that have been done; now they're dead. So, bands that are playing the same old, same old get a little boring to me.

What are some important qualities that you look for in upcoming artists?

As I've said, creativity. Then, sometimes equally as important, work ethic, and a realistic attitude. No one is going to be knocking on the door to make you rock stars. If it happens, it takes a lot of hard work. You might find an example of it not taking a lot of hard work but those are few and far between!

If you had to choose, which quality do you think is most important?

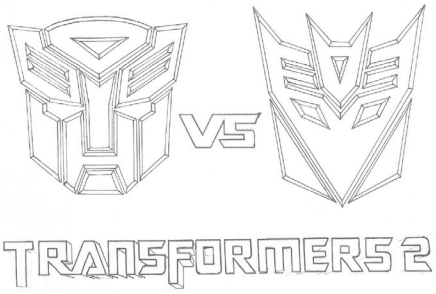
There isn't one thing that is the most important thing. At Sling Slang and the other label divisions we look for bands and solo artists that we think we can work with, that have an understanding of what we are about, that want to work at producing quality recordings and promote the same, through shows, the internet, radio, hard press and where ever the opportunity arises.

Are there any tips you can offer to eager upcoming artists?

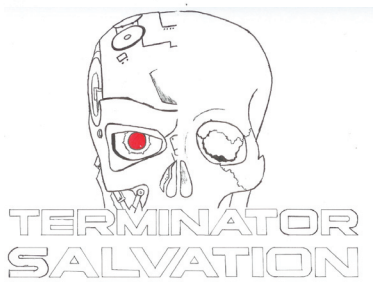
Let me just add these thoughts; there is a better chance of winning the Power Ball then making it monetarily as a performing original music band or solo artist. Not impossible, but hard. I've heard it said once that the 'real' artists are the ones who are still writing songs, playing shows and growing creatively after they've come to the realization that they might not ever make it in the national music world! Sling Slang is here to help support the CT original music scene and it's artists; and although a national or world audience would be pretty awesome and every day we work towards that, for us (well, for me) it's all about supporting the artist's music passion and producing the very best songs we can!

Coming soon in '09

by ROSS RISKIN
illustrations by MICHAEL ESPOSITO



The sequel we've all been waiting for. Our favorite childhood transforming robots were brought to the big screen last year and became a blockbuster smash. This movie should be on everyone's list. How could a film with action/comedy/romance/ and the imagination of childhood be a disappointment? The turnout for Transformers 2 could be greater than the first. This movie really needs no explanation. Robots fighting robots, humans chasing robots, and robots chasing humans. You won't want to miss this.



Christian Bale tackles the famous role of John Connor in the 4th addition to the Terminator series. This movie is certainly action-packed and has the ability to boost Christian Bale's fame even higher (after previously starring in the Dark Knight and Batman Begins). This movie takes place in the future; following the surviving men and women who decide to fight back against the machines. This movie will be on the hotlist and will definitely be a top choice in 2009.

Just the thought of the amount of horror in movie remakes these days is terrifying. However, this remake should produce better results than prior attempts and sequels. This is a revival of the 1980s classic thriller around the time of Halloween and Nightmare on Elm Street. The original was scary 30 years ago. This movie will be released the day before Valentine's Day in 2009. Bring a date and she'll be holding on for dear life.

G.I. Joe

It's about time. Making this movie was inevitable after the creation of Transformers. Another classic cartoon/comic from the 80s brought to the big screen and just in time. The action/adventure film "boom" has been present over the last couple of years and it is here to stay. The cast looks pretty promising with Dennis Quaid and Brendan Fraser. This movie will have almost as big a turn out as Transformers 2 and will definitely be worth seeing. Let's just hope they kept the theme song.

Old School Dos

Look out for this critically acclaimed sequel. The first one left us dying on the floor, but will this do the same? It is not uncommon for highly anticipated comic sequels to flop. But because this movie has kept the original cast, along with new additions, it has a chance to prove most critics wrong. Let's just hope Will Ferrell returns for part 2 of this hilarious movie. He has never disappointed before and we don't want him to start now.

Top 10 Disney Channel Original Movies

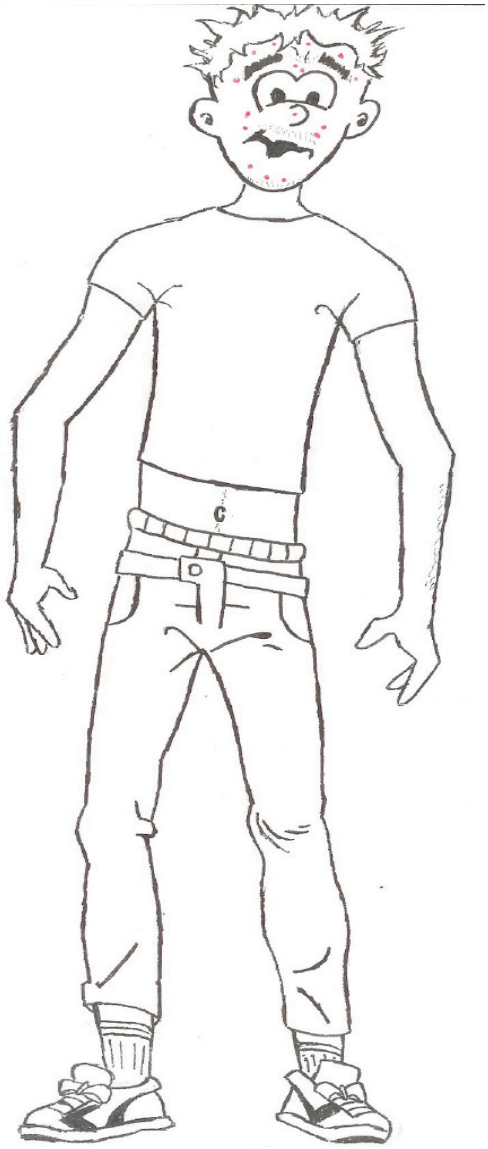
Admit it; you've debated it in the café, the classroom, and in the car. We have finally concluded this debate with a Disney Channel Original Movie Top 10 List.

1. Brink!
2. Johnny Tsunami
3. The Luck of the Irish
4. Jumping Ship
5. Motocrossed
6. Halloweentown
7. Zenon: Girl of the 21st Century
8. Smart House
9. Phantom of the Megaplex
10. Double Teamed

Altering Egos

by JUSTIN MARINI
illustration by MICHAEL ESPOSITO

Being an adolescent male can be really unnerving. From awkward growth spurts, zits, and the constant need for more sleep, any guy will agree that the end to the "madness" of puberty cannot come soon enough. Perhaps the most annoying obstacle on the path to adulthood is those tragic and unpredictable voice cracks. Every guy's voice is bound to crack, but unfortunately this does not make the experience any less embarrassing.



Because of how unpredictable a voice crack is, we guys are left vulnerable to all sorts of awkward encounters that seem to compromise our manliness. While the cracking of a voice is never welcomed, there are certainly times when one voice crack is worse than another. These worst case scenarios of tonal "slip ups" offer the most extreme levels of embarrassment. The award-winners include having your voice crack during the peak of a heated argument, for any reason in any weight room, in front of a crowd, and when introducing yourself.

A few months back, I eagerly left school ready to hang out with some of my friends, in an attempt to curry the favor of a female acquaintance. The night was going well without any real hitches. Her friends and my friends seemed to be getting along quite well, and the night was quickly coming to a close. As the girls were heading out, we began exchanging phone numbers, generally enthusiastic about hanging out again soon.

The girls were almost to their cars and while waving I yelled, "see you la—ter." My voice climbed three

octaves. I had hit the mother load—the Super Bowl of all voice cracks—the embarrassment of calling out to a crowd of girls was a searing blast of utter humiliation. A quick awkward silence, followed by an eruption of laughter from both parties made playing it off impossible.

Maybe we shouldn't take ourselves so seriously, but some situations are easier to shake off than others. As guys, we need to always be aware of the possibility of voice failure, especially in front of large crowds. Recently, I witnessed a high school aged male give a very heartfelt speech on his family history. In his speech, he also made a lot of great points about the injustices in our own nation, the problems President Barack Obama will face, and many great thoughts on the war in Iraq. The speech left the audience in complete shock. Unfortunately, they were not in awe of the beauty of his words or the unfortunate realities he described, but rather his voice.

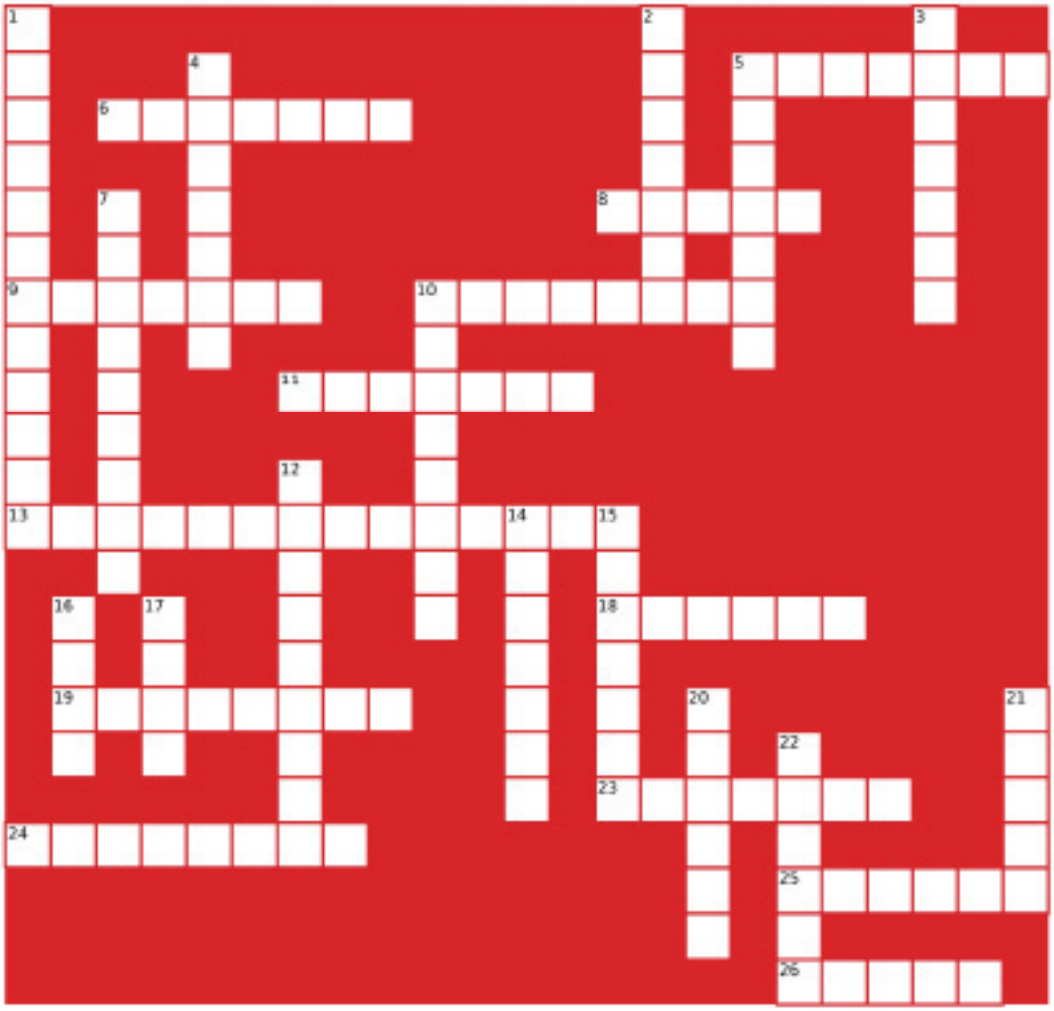
It seemed to crack like clockwork after every second word. Since his voice was amplified, his cracks were of a much higher force than your average run of the mill tonal variation. It sounded like nails on a chalkboard mixed with a screeching ape, leaving chills down your spine.

I could not believe my ears. These cracks were of a completely different caliber. The staccato screeches that radiated throughout the auditorium put the audience on edge. Some even seemed distressed from both the intensity of the noise and how extraordinarily embarrassing the speaker must have been. What I found even more astonishing though, was the guy giving the speech was not even flinching at his cracks. He was so committed to what he had to say that no single jump in the pitch of his voice would stop him from speaking. It would be great if the rest of us could be so impervious to the pain our teenage voices inflicted, but how else would we learn to laugh at ourselves?

OFF CAMPUS

NFL

TRIVIA



Across

5 Player with the most career punt returns for a touchdown.
6 Highest paid defensive player in the NFL.
8 Player with the highest passer rating in a career.
9 Longest touchdown run in NFL history.
10 Player with the most yards gained in a game.
11 "Ocho Cinco".
13 Highest passer rating for a rookie in NFL history.
18 Oldest current NFL player.
19 Famous Packers coach, and trophy.
23 Player with the 3rd most rushing yards in a career.
24 Winner of the longest game in NFL history.
25 Corey Sears who plays for the " " eats a whole lemon before every game.
26 Running back who posted the same number of yards in his rookie season and his last.

Down

1 Name of Chicago Bears mascot.
2 Team with 32 playoff victories.
3 Team with the most league championships.
4 Player with 320 consecutive games played.
5 Most passes attemted in a rookie season.
7 Winner of the first Hiesman trophy.
10 Team with the most consecutive games lost in a season.
12 Player with the most yards gained in a season.
14 NFL Commisioner.
15 Player with the most field goals in a season.
16 Fastest NFL player in 2005.
17 Team with the most safties in a game.
20 "Chunky" quaterback.
21 First team to have cheerleaders.
22 "The Bus".